

Groton Daily Independent

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BLOCKER NEW CONSTRUCTION
CONSTRUCTION REMODELING
HOOP BARNs

(605) 216-2677 (605) 226-4062

Last day of school is . . .

About nine inches of heavy snow fell in the Groton area this week. The total moisture was .94. Groton School was called off Monday and Tuesday. I29 from the North Dakota border to the Iowa border was closed and I90 from Sioux Falls to Murdo was closed.

The final day of school is now set for Friday, May 25.

It's Boys' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Langford Area
Lions**

VS

Colman-Egan Hawks



Wednesday, March 7, 2018
at Huron Arena, 6:00 pm
ROUND OF 16

**Garbage Pickup will be on Wednesday,
March 7th this week NOT TUESDAY!!
Thanks for your cooperation!!**

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****

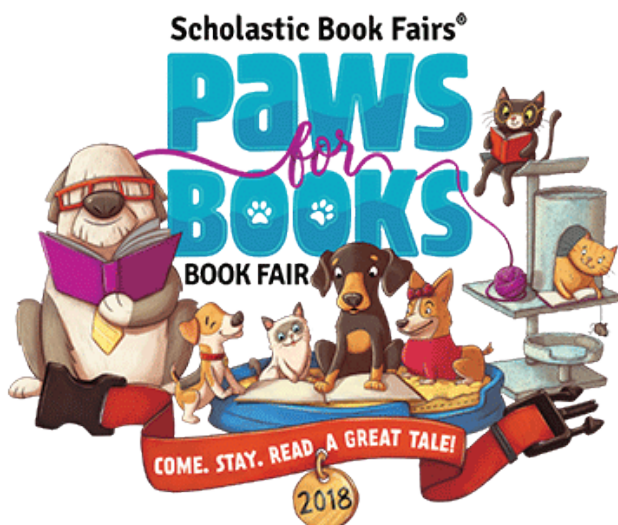
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Disfunctional Nonsense wins at Region DI

The Senior Level DIfunctional Nonsense will advance to the state Destination ImagiNation event to be held in Pierre, April 7. The team placed first in regional competition held Saturday at the Groton Area Elementary School. In back, left to right, are Kayla Jensen, Hailey Monson, Julianna Kosel and Sage Mortenson; in front, left to right, are Rylee Rosenau and Alyssa Fordham. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



"Paws for Books"
Scholastic Book Fair
When: Tuesday, March 13, 2018
3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Where: Groton Area Elementary
School Library

Maintenance Supervisor Wanted:

Under the direction of the Facility Administrator, the Maintenance Supervisor oversees the daily operations of the Maintenance. Performs maintenance and repair of physical structures of buildings.

Day Shift C.N.A. Wanted

Sign-on Bonus

☆☆☆ **\$1,500 for CNAs** ☆☆☆

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

EOE/AA/M/F/V/D-Drug Free Workplace



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton



Boiled Dino Dumpling Guys win at Regional DI

The Boiled Dino Dumpling Guys placed first in the elementary division and will compete at state. In back, left to right, are Jacob Tewksbury, Winston Clark, Corbin Weismantel, Axel Warrington, Lincoln Krause, and Nicholas Groeblinghoff. (Photo by

Paul Kosel)



Bazang Boys place second at DI Region

The middle school team of the Bazang Boys placed second at the Regional DI Tournament. They are Ryan Groeblinghoff, Jackson Dinger and Carter Barse. They will compete at the state level to be held April 7 in Pierre. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



From left to right- Mrs. Desiree Yeigh-director, Stella Meier (Alto Saxophone), Rease Jandel (Bass Clarinet), Mr. Austin Fordham-director. (Courtesy Photo)

Meier, Jandel performed in Middle School All State Band

On March 2nd-3rd about 200 middle school students formed together in Pierre for the 19th Annual South Dakota Middle School All State Band. Representing Groton this year were 8th graders Stella Meier and Rease Jandel. Stella represented the top honor band and had the privilege to work with director Dr. Christopher Unger from Augustana College. Rease represented the festival band as a section leader and had the privilege to work with director Mrs. Mary Cogswell of Brookings, SD. The audition process for this band requires sending in a recording of a chromatic scale, a selected major and minor scale, an etude in 4/4 time, and an etude in 6/8 time. There were a total of 450 auditions sent in from the state of South Dakota. Due to strict copyright laws, the concert was not recorded or broadcasted this year. The concert received a standing ovation, and the ladies represented Groton well. Congratulations Stella and Rease on a wonderful accomplishment.

The Life of Troy G. Roettele



The memorial service for Troy G. Roettele, 46, of Aberdeen, SD, will be 10:30am, Thursday, March 8, 2018, at Aberdeen Christian Fellowship, with Pastor Jon Droege officiating. The family would like friends to wear casual attire to the service. Inurnment following at Sunset Memorial Gardens. Troy died Saturday, March 3, at Aberdeen Health & Rehab surrounded by his son and all siblings.

Visitation will be 4:00-6:00pm, Wednesday, with family present, and a prayer service at 6:00pm at Spitzer-Miller Funeral Home, 1111 South Main Street.

Troy Roettele was born March 18, 1971 to Gordon and Doris (Quam) Roettele in Aberdeen, SD. He grew up on the family farm north of Columbia. He attended elementary school in Columbia through the 5th grade. He then attended school in Groton, graduating from Groton High School in 1989. Troy enjoyed wrestling and weight lifting as school activities. Troy was fun loving and was known for playing pranks. After school, he worked for different farmers in the surrounding area for several years.

Troy married Stacey Sanborn on November 27, 1993 in Aberdeen. To this union, a son, Lane, was born. Troy worked several years for Custom Sheet Metal. After moving to Rapid City, SD, Troy started Roettele Remodeling. He also worked for Action Mechanical while in Rapid. He moved back to the Columbia/Aberdeen area and continued his remodeling business and sub-contracted for Custom Sheet Metal in Aberdeen. Troy could build just about anything. In July of 2016, Troy started working for his cousins on their farm.

Troy was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in October of 2016. He fought a courageous battle with cancer for almost a year and a half. Troy loved the staff at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls and referred to the nurses there as his "Little Life Savers." Troy said he lived every day by the Serenity Prayer and enjoyed time with his friends at the Yellow House. He belonged to Aberdeen Christian Fellowship.

He loved being outdoors and especially enjoyed hunting with his dog Nut, fishing, and working at the Brown County Speedway. He liked snowmobiling, riding horses, and was a member of the Jim River Riders. Troy loved the western way of life. Troy especially enjoyed and supported his son, Lane, in archery, football, bull riding and Lane's guitar playing. He was a member of the Whitetail Bowman Club.

Grateful for having shared Troy's life are his son, Lane Roettele, Belle Fourche, SD; his siblings: Lynn Frohling, Kansas City, MO, Duane (Cheri) Roettele, Columbia, Denise (Charles) Knecht, Houghton, Paula (Dewey) Huettl, Aberdeen, Pamela (Richard) Siefkes, Bath, and Tracie Gates, Bath.

Preceding Troy in death are his parents, Gordon and Doris, his brother Dallas, and his dog, Nut.

BDM RURAL WATER SYSTEM, INC.

38th Annual Meeting



Monday, March 26, 2018

6:00 p.m.

BDM Building, Britton, SD

Lunch after the meeting • Door Prizes

- **Board and Management Report**
- **Election of Directors**

Please attend your water system's annual meeting!

The Life of Dwight Allan Knoll



Funeral services for Dwight Allan Knoll, 69, Aberdeen, SD, are 2:00pm, Saturday, March 10, 2018, at Spitzer-Miller Funeral Home, Pastor Drew Becker officiating. Military honors by Sidney L. Smith American Legion Post 24. Dwight died Friday, March 2, at his home in Aberdeen, SD.

Visitation: two hours prior to the service at Spitzer-Miller Funeral Home, 1111 South Main Street.

Dwight Allan Knoll was born April 30, 1948, to Darrel and Doris (Hovland) Knoll. He grew up in Groton, SD, and attended country school near Warner. Dwight attended high school in Warner through his junior year when his family moved to Moses Lake, WA. After graduating from high school in 1967, Dwight joined the United States Army. He served in the infantry in Korea as a Sargent in the arms room. After receiving his Honorable Discharge, Dwight returned to Washington. He then moved to Aberdeen, where he held several jobs. He was owner of Violet Ray Laundromat, worked for A.Y. McDonald Supply, Cross Country, House of Glass, and did construction work with his son for Jarvis Construction. In 1991, they moved to Warner and lived there until moving back to Aberdeen in 2001. Dwight retired in 2010 due to his health.

Dwight was a member of the NRA, White Tails Unlimited, and the Sheriff's Association. He loved hunting and especially enjoyed bow hunting deer. He was an avid fisherman and spent many hours out on the water with Kenny Erickson and friends. Dwight collected M&M's figures. Attending auction sales was a favorite pastime of his. He enjoyed NASCAR and followed Kyle Busch. His year was made when the Philadelphia Eagles won the Super Bowl. Dwight was very thankful for everything his sons did for him and was extremely proud of his four grandchildren.

Grateful for having shared Dwight's life are his two sons: Allan (Melissa) Knoll and Laramie Knoll, both of Aberdeen; four grandchildren: Jensen, Kennedy, Emily and Sophia Knoll; and three siblings: Clyde Knoll, Mansfield, SD, Kevin Knoll, Puyallup, WA and Sheila Main, Renton, WA.

Preceding Dwight in death are his parents, Darrell and Doris Knoll.

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Gov. Daugaard Signs Bills Into Law

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Daugaard signed the following bills into law yesterday morning:

SB 10 – provide for the resolution of conflicts by multiple initiated measures and amendments to the Constitution adopted at the same election.

SB 50 – authorize the Board of Regents to contract for the construction of the American Indian Student Center at South Dakota State University and to make an appropriation therefor.

SB 51 – authorize the Board of Regents to contract for the construction of an athletic support facility at South Dakota State University and to make an appropriation therefor.

SB 53 – authorize the Board of Regents to sell existing real property in Pennington County and to acquire real property in Pennington County for the use and benefit of the South Dakota State University West River Agriculture Center.

SB 54 – make an appropriation for the payment of extraordinary litigation expenses and to declare an emergency.

SB 58 – revise certain provisions regarding tax increment financing districts.

SB 106 – establish certain provisions regarding the placement of a foster child with a relative or close family friend.

SB 114 – revise certain provisions regarding the removal and storage of abandoned vehicles.

SB 119 – provide certain provisions regarding the furnishing of fraudulent disability documentation when renting accommodations.

SB 126 – revise certain provisions regarding municipal annual reports.

SB 139 – revise certain provisions relating to child support.

SB 147 – authorize local governing bodies to establish the per diem rate for housing and development commissions.

SB 167 – revise certain provisions regarding the consideration of joint physical custody of a minor.

SB 209 – revise certain provisions regarding the Nutrient Research and Education Council.

HB 1093 – authorize certain insurance transactions and policies in a language other than English.

HB 1107 – revise and repeal various provisions regarding the construction and maintenance of county and township highways and bridges.

HB 1236 – provide for the acquisition of certain motor vehicle titles by auction agencies in certain circumstances.

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Today in Weather History

March 7, 1998: A winter storm tracked across South Dakota resulting in heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches across most of central South Dakota from the evening of the 6th into the afternoon of the 7th. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Fort Pierre and near Stephan, 7 inches at Blunt, Pierre, and Murdo, and 8 inches across far southern Jones and Lyman counties. Many activities were canceled, and travel was significantly disrupted, especially on Interstate-90.

1717 - The Great Snow, a composite of four winter storms to hit the eastern U.S. in nine days, finally came to an end. Snow depths averaged 60 inches following the storm. Up to four feet of snow fell around Boston MA, and snow drifts 25 feet high were reported around Dorchester MA. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1932 - A severe coastal storm set barometric pressure records from Virginia to New England. Block Island RI reported a barometric pressure reading of 28.20 inches. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Forty-five cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Huron SD hit 80 degrees, and Pickstown SD reached 81 degrees. Rochester MN and Rockford IL smashed their previous record for the date by sixteen degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - High winds along a sharp cold front ushered snow and arctic cold into the Central Rocky Mountain Region and the Northern Plains. Snowfall totals in Utah ranged up to sixteen inches at Brighton. Winds gusted to 66 mph at Rapid City SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Blustery northwest winds ushered arctic cold into eastern U.S. Burlington VT reported a record low of 14 degrees below zero. Snow and ice over the Carolinas replaced the 80 degree weather of the previous day. High winds and heavy surf caused five million dollars damage along the North Carolina coast. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



1990 - A major ice storm left much of Iowa under a thick coat of ice. It was the worst ice storm in at least twenty-five years for Iowa, perhaps the worst of the century. Up to two inches of ice coated much of western and central Iowa, with three inches reported in Crawford County and Carroll County. As much as five inches of ice was reported on some electrical lines. The ice downed 78 towers in a 17-mile stretch of a high voltage feeder near Boone costing three electric utilities fifteen million dollars. Damage to trees was incredible, and clean-up costs alone ran into the millions. Total damage from the storm was more than fifty million dollars. (Storm Data)


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| Wed Mar 7 | Thu Mar 8 | Fri Mar 9 | Sat Mar 10 | Sun Mar 11 | Mon Mar 12 | Tue Mar 13 |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | | | |
| 26° F | 27° F | 31° F | 31° F | 31° F | 35° F | 35° F |
| 4° F | 14° F | 17° F | 16° F | 12° F | 22° F | 24° F |
| NW 13 MPH Precip 20% | S 6 MPH | SSE 9 MPH Precip 20% | NW 13 MPH Precip 20% | WNW 8 MPH | S 8 MPH | S 7 MPH |

Today
20s





 light morning snow
along and east of the James River Valley



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Check out your latest forecast at
www.weather.gov/abr



Record Highs for Today
in the 60s and 70s

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Mobridge | 64° in 1968 |
| Pierre | 69° in 2006 |
| Aberdeen | 70° in 2016 |
| Sisseton | 69° in 2000 |
| Watertown | 74° in 2000 |

Published on: 03/07/2018 at 4:16AM

3/7/2018 4:13 AM

Highs in the 20s today will be 10 to 15 degrees below normal, and well below the record highs for today. Record highs range from the low 60s to mid 70s! Only light snow or flurries expected this morning along and east of the James River Valley.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 27.8 F at 1:05 AM

Low Outside Temp: 18.5 F at 8:23 PM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 26.0 Mph at 1:53 PM

Precip: .94 moisture total

Snow amount around 9 inches

Today's Info

Record High: 70° in 1916

Record Low: -24° in 1995

Average High: 35°F

Average Low: 16°F

Average Precip in March: 0.20

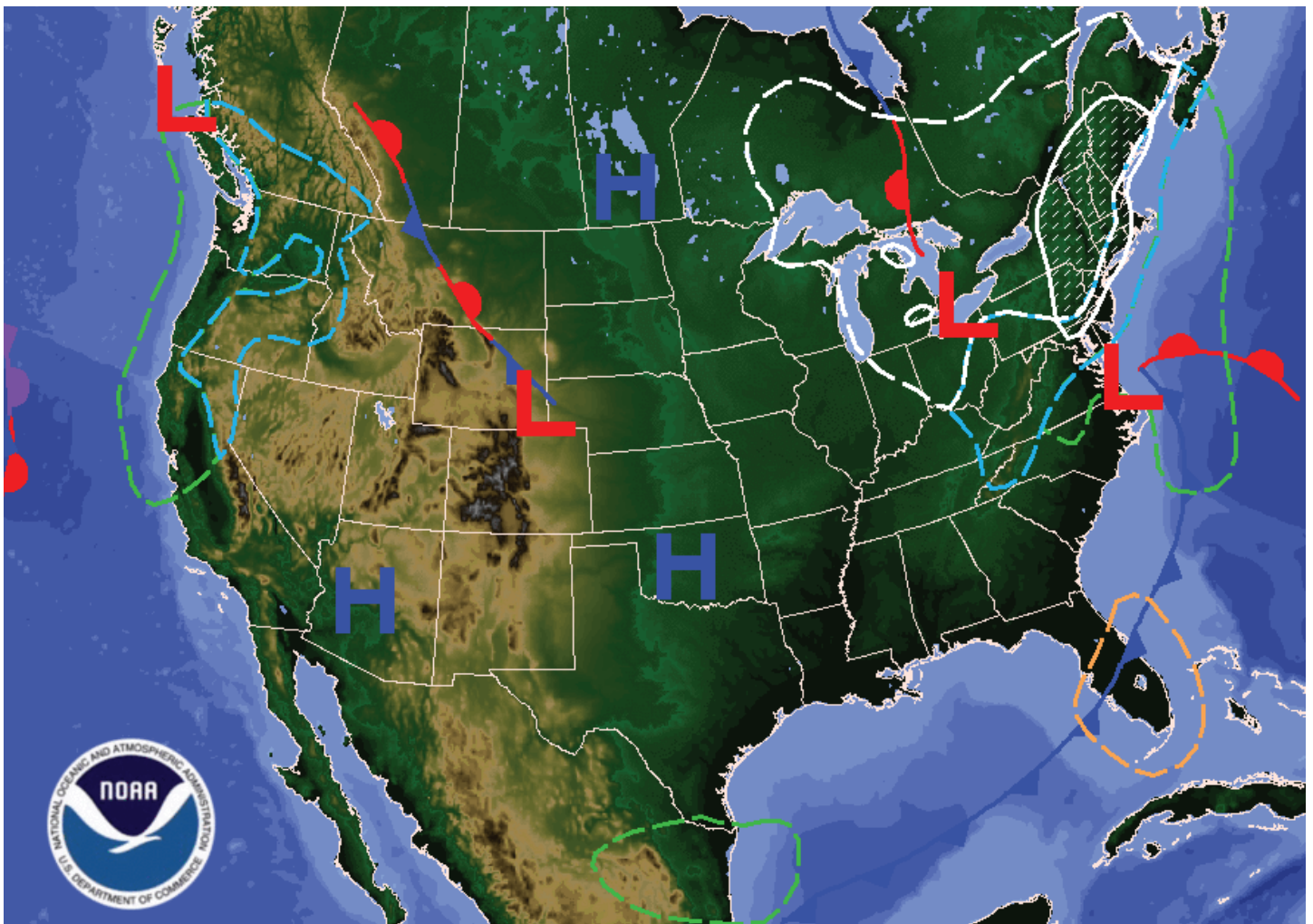
Precip to date in March: 0.94

Average Precip to date: 1.22

Precip Year to Date: 1.35

Sunset Tonight: 6:29 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:59 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Mar 07, 2018, issued 4:14 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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EVERYONE HAS A PART

Martin Luther, who is recognized for his work in reforming the church, had one deep desire that drove him every day of his life: he wanted everyone to have a copy of the Bible and a song book in their own language. He had an unswerving belief that people needed God to speak to them directly through His Word and the songs they sang during times of worship at home. This was not a new idea, but one that had its beginnings in the earliest worship of the Lord.

Music and God's Word have always been a very important ingredient in worship. When there is joy in the hearts of the faithful, praising God is a natural part of life and is always evident in times of worship. With shame and sorrow the captives of Babylon admitted this in Psalm 137:4. As their captors ridiculed them for it they said, "How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?" Sin separated them from God and they lost the joy of their salvation. It will do the same to us.

In the Old Testament we find many occasions of God's children coming together to sing and shout and praise the Lord. In Psalm 95:1 the "worship leader" looked at the crowd before him and said let's "sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation." That invitation remains open to us today.

When we pause and ponder the grace of God in saving us and becoming our "Rock" - our only source of safety and security in times of trial and temptation, defeat and despair - it's time to lift our voices in worship.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to rejoice in the goodness of Your grace and lift our voices in shouts of joy and praise. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 95:1 Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/13/2018 Elementary School Carnival, 5 p.m.
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2018 Historic Trinity Church Pump Organ Concert.
- 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

Fire causes extensive damage at Kadoka motel

KADOKA, S.D. (AP) — Fire has extensively damaged a motel in Kadoka.

Officials say a three-alarm fire at the El Centro Motel on South Highway 248 Tuesday caused substantial damage to two wings of the building. KOTA-TV reports firefighters were able to stop the fire from spreading into the largest wing of the complex.

Firefighters were hampered by strong wind gusts and several propane tanks on the property. No one was injured.

The South Dakota Fire Marshal's Office, the Jackson County Sheriff's Office and Kadoka police are investigating.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

01-04-26-35-39, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 5

(one, four, twenty-six, thirty-five, thirty-nine; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$265 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$348 million

Jenkins, Daum lift Jackrabbits back to NCAA tourney

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Jackrabbits are tourney bound again.

David Jenkins Jr. scored 29 points, Mike Daum had 25 points and 11 rebounds, and South Dakota State beat South Dakota 97-87 on Tuesday night to win the Summit League Tournament championship, clinching the Jackrabbits a third straight NCAA Tournament berth.

Daum was the Summit League Player of the Year, but was limited to 27 minutes because of foul trouble. Jenkins stepped up in his place in the first half with 16 points — he came in averaging 15.8 points per game.

"I made sure I stayed aggressive at all times," Jenkins Jr. said. "I just took what the defense gave me."

The Jackrabbits went on a 30-17 run with Daum on the bench. The first half featured 11 lead changes before SDSU opened things up.

SDSU took a 47-35 lead into halftime, with Daum getting just six points in seven minutes. He entered the game averaging 23.8 points and 10.4 rebounds per game.

"We're not often times forced to play that many minutes in a half without Mike," SDSU coach T.J. Otzelberger said. "If you look at our team night in and night out, different guys step up. If you're a great team, that's what you do."

Reed Tellinghuisen added 18 points and 11 rebounds for SDSU (28-6), which has won 11 straight. The Jackrabbits shot 48 percent from the field, including 14 for 28 from the 3-point line.

SDSU built the lead to 20 in the second half before South Dakota mounted a challenge midway through the half. Brandon Key's basket for the Jackrabbits made it 57-37 with just under 16 minutes to play. At that point, South Dakota was just 2 for 12 from the field in the second half.

"We really struggled guarding them, and they were cooking on all cylinders," South Dakota coach Craig

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Smith said. "I just didn't put our guys in a good enough position to win, especially during that run in the first half."

The Coyotes chipped away at the lead. Nate Fuller came off the bench and scored five straight to cut it to 40-28 with 13:07 to play. It was the first time South Dakota had been within 12 since 40-28 late in the second half.

Tyler Hagedorn scored 11 of his 15 points in the second half for the Coyotes (26-8) to help fuel the run, which dwindled SDSU's lead to six with just under three minutes to play.

Jenkins' 3-pointer with 1:38 to play pushed the lead back to 11 at 90-79.

South Dakota's leading scorer, Matt Mooney, led the Coyotes with 30 points but was 9 for 26 from the field, including 3 for 11 from the 3-point line.

Tyler Peterson had 15 points and six rebounds for South Dakota.

BIG PICTURE

South Dakota State: The 28 wins is an SDSU team record.

South Dakota: The Coyotes are hoping to finally edge SDSU next year, with Mooney returning for his senior season after averaging 18.3 points per game as a junior.

HE SAID IT

"To Coyotes fans: I know it doesn't help, but I'm sorry. I played really bad and I'm sorry I didn't come through," Mooney said.

DEFENSIVE EFFORT

The 97 points allowed by South Dakota is the most this season for the Coyotes.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at the championship game was 11,114, the largest ever for a Summit League championship game.

UP NEXT

South Dakota State: The Jackrabbits head to the NCAA Tournament for the third straight year and for the fifth time in seven years. They've never won an NCAA Tournament game.

More AP college basketball: <https://collegebasketball.ap.org> and https://twitter.com/AP_top25

Senate passes single-subject rule for constitutional changes

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state Senate has approved a measure that would ask South Dakota voters to require that constitutional amendments encompass only a single subject.

The chamber voted 28-6 Tuesday to approve the resolution, which would put the constitutional change on the general election ballot. The House must approve changes made in the Senate for it to advance.

House Speaker Mark Mickelson, the sponsor, has said supporters want to make sure that voters understand what they're voting for at the polls. Critics have questioned how the plan would work.

Panel named to review lawmaker conduct code, but never met

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A top South Dakota legislative official appointed a special panel earlier this year to review state lawmakers' code of conduct after a Democratic senator proposed new anti-harassment rules. The panel never met.

Senate Majority Leader Blake Curd, the special panel's chairman, said he doesn't think there's a "compelling reason" for the group to convene. He told lawmakers Tuesday that the issue is well-handled in the Legislature's current rulebook and best left until next session. The main part of the 2018 legislative session ends this week.

"Just because we have a committee doesn't mean we have to have a hearing, right? It doesn't. There's no requirement in statute that we meet," Curd told The Associated Press.

But others argue harassment at the Capitol should have been reviewed this year.

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Susan Kroger, co-chair of LEAD South Dakota, a nonprofit group that encourages women to enter politics, said the lack of action tells her that lawmakers aren't taking the issue seriously.

"I'm very disappointed that they've chosen not to follow through on their commitment to look into this issue and make changes in order to create a space that women really feel safe in," Kroger said.

Republican Senate President Pro Tempore Brock Greenfield named the group in January to look into the code of conduct after Senate Democratic leader Billie Sutton proposed rules changes that would have required nonpartisan legislative staff to conduct investigations into harassment allegations. Lawmakers didn't adopt the changes.

The discussions followed news reports about women who experienced sexism and harassment around the South Dakota statehouse. Last year, a House lawmaker who admitted to having sexual contact with two interns resigned.

Greenfield said he brought up the issue Tuesday in the Joint Legislative Procedure Committee because he didn't want to leave the impression that "it's remained unaddressed and that we haven't pursued the action that we said we would pursue." Greenfield said he would be seeking additional information.

Curd cited ethics, professionalism and sexual harassment training held in January for lawmakers and staff in telling the Joint Legislative Procedure Committee about the special panel's lack of action this year. Curd also said he chose not to calendar meetings for the review panel in part because of discussion about the training with Sutton.

Sutton said he didn't speak to Curd about the special panel. Sutton, a Democrat running for governor, said he wishes the issue had been dealt with this legislative session.

"The reality is, at the very least, they could have met and even said, 'We don't think changes are necessary,'" Sutton said. "But they didn't even meet at all."

Senate passes bill placing 'Marsy's Law' fix on June ballot

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The Senate has passed legislation to place a constitutional fix to the "Marsy's Law" victims' bill of rights before voters at the June primary.

Senators voted 25-8 Tuesday to approve the bill, sending it back to the House for a vote.

It would put the constitutional amendment before voters June 5 and budget \$200,000 for the move. Costs include printing a nonpolitical ballot.

Republican Sen. Jim Bolin, a supporter, says it would save counties money. Officials say Marsy's Law is spiking costs for counties.

But Democratic Sen. Troy Heinert, a bill opponent, says the constitutional amendment should go before general election voters.

The actual amendment that would ask voters to make changes to Marsy's Law is advancing as a separate legislation.

A special election for statewide ballot questions was last held in April 2001.

SDSU women win 8th Summit League tourney title in 10 years

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Summit League player of the year Macy Miller had 16 points, 11 rebounds, four assists and three steals and South Dakota State snapped rival South Dakota's 20-game winning streak with a 65-50 victory on Tuesday for its eighth automatic NCAA Tournament bid in 10 seasons.

Second-seeded SDSU lost both regular-season matchups this season by six points or fewer but remained undefeated against South Dakota in the Summit championship game at 4-0.

Ellie Thompson added 14 points and Tagyn Larson chipped in with 13 for South Dakota State (26-6), which dominated points in the paint with a 36-16 margin in front of a crowd of 8,700. Madison Guebert, the league's second-leading scorer at 15.1, finished with six points on 2-of-10 shooting.

South Dakota (26-6) was the second team in Summit League history to go undefeated in conference play — the first in 24 years. The Coyotes entered with the sixth longest winning streak in the country with their last loss coming against Tulsa on Dec. 16.

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Ciara Duffy led the top-seed Coyotes with 12 points. Jaycee Bradley, who tied a tournament record with seven 3-pointers in a 51-point quarterfinal victory over Fort Wayne, was held to six points as South Dakota was just 6 of 30 from 3-point range. The Coyotes entered averaging 75 points per game.

Since the 2008-09 season, South Dakota ('14) and Western Illinois ('17) are the only other two teams to win the conference tournament.

Poor road conditions after Dakotas storm lead to a fatality

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Poor road conditions in the Dakotas after a winter storm have led to a fatality. The North Dakota Highway Patrol says a 35-year-old Fargo man driving a pickup rear-ended a snowplow on an icy Interstate 29 in Grand Forks County on Tuesday morning.

Transportation officials have reopened all of I-29 in eastern South Dakota and all of I-90 in southeastern South Dakota, but caution that travel conditions are still poor.

Many South Dakota school districts have canceled classes. Gov. Dennis Daugaard closed state offices in 23 counties.

In North Dakota, Williston State College remains closed. Many elementary and secondary schools opened late. State transportation officials have lifted a no travel advisory for the state.

Senate passes new rules for initiative petition circulators

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Senate has approved a bill that would require ballot measure campaigns to provide more information about their signature gatherers to the secretary of state.

The chamber voted 20-13 Tuesday to approve the bill. Changes made by the Senate must be debated in the House.

The measure would require that circulators give the Secretary of State's office residency information including their driver license number, the length of time at their current and past two addresses and their state of voter registration.

House Speaker Mark Mickelson, the bill's main sponsor, has said it would make it easier for courts to decide if circulators are residents.

Democratic Sen. Troy Heinert, an opponent, says the bill is an attempt to make it harder to put measures on the ballot.

Zinke says Interior should be a partner with oil companies

By DAVID KOENIG, AP Business Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke says his agency should be a partner with oil and gas companies that seek to drill on public land and that long regulatory reviews with an uncertain outcome are "un-American."

Speaking Tuesday to a major energy-industry conference, Zinke described the Trump administration's efforts to increase offshore drilling, reduce regulations, and streamline inspections of oil and gas operators.

"Interior should not be in the business of being an adversary. We should be in the business of being a partner," Zinke said to a receptive audience that included leaders of energy companies and oil-producing countries.

Zinke said the government should shorten the permitting process for energy infrastructure — it shouldn't take longer than two years.

"If you ask an investor to continuously put money on a project that is uncertain because the permit process has too much uncertainty, ambiguity, (it) is quite frankly un-American," he said.

The Interior Department manages 500,000 million acres — one-fifth of the U.S. land mass — as well as the lease of offshore areas for oil drilling. One-fifth of U.S. oil production takes place on land or water that the Interior Department leases to private energy companies.

Environmentalists accuse Zinke and the administration of undercutting environmental rules to help oil,

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gas and coal companies.

Alex Taurel, a legislative official with the League of Conservation Voters, said Tuesday that Zinke "thinks our public lands are nothing more than an ATM for his industry friends. If anything is un-American, it's this administration's persistent attacks on America's public lands."

In January, the Trump administration proposed to open up nearly all coastal areas to oil drilling, although Florida was dropped after the Republican governor and lawmakers objected, citing risk to the state's tourism business.

As he has before, Zinke defended the plan, which faces fierce opposition from governors and lawmakers along the entire West Coast and much of the East Coast.

Zinke said he would listen to local objections, and he noted that states have leverage if they oppose drilling in federal water off their coastlines — they would have to approve pipelines and terminals to handle the oil.

"You can't bring energy ashore unless you go through state water," he said.

Zinke said the United States won't exhaust its resource of fossil fuels in our lifetime, but that cleaner-burning natural gas will take on a bigger role.

The Trump administration, he said, is "pro-energy across the board," and he tried to dismiss an environmental disadvantage to burning fuels that emit carbon linked to climate change. All fuels, he said, have consequences.

When solar facilities are built on public land, people can't hunt or pursue other recreation there, he said, and wind turbines "probably chop up as many as 750,000 birds a year."

Zinke acknowledged, however, that "certainly oil and gas and coal have a consequence on carbon."

Zinke began his comments with a shout-out to his boss, President Donald Trump, calling him "a delightful boss," before explaining Trump's goal of encouraging U.S. "energy dominance." He has frequently criticized former President Barack Obama.

U.S. oil production surged during Obama's tenure and has kept growing, recently surpassing 10 million barrels a day, thanks to increasing output from shale formations in Texas, North Dakota and elsewhere.

State House bottles craft brew bill, sends it to governor

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A bill that would ease a state production limit and other regulations on South Dakota craft breweries is headed to Gov. Dennis Daugaard for his signature.

The state House voted 63-3 Tuesday to approve the bill, which passed unanimously through the Senate. Daugaard has pushed for the brewing overhaul, saying state regulations are stifling the industry.

Republican Rep. Tim Reed, a supporter, says the bill would help young businesses.

The compromise measure advancing to Daugaard comes after competing microbrewing measures at the statehouse initially pit beer distributors against craft brewers.

The final legislation would create a microbrewery license allowing the businesses to produce 30,000 barrels of beer annually, up from 5,000 barrels, and let craft brewers bypass distributors to sell up to 1,500 barrels of their suds each year directly to bars.

Family sues companies involved in 2016 Sioux Falls collapse

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The family of a man who died in a 2016 Sioux Falls building collapse has filed two lawsuits alleging the developer and construction company were responsible for the tragedy.

Construction worker Ethan McMahon died Dec. 2, 2016, in the Cooper Lounge collapse. His brother, John F. McMahon, was also working at the site during the collapse and witnessed Ethan's death.

John F. McMahon and their father, John J. McMahon, filed separate lawsuits Monday alleging Hultgren Construction used a "trial-by-error mentality" while performing construction and demolition activities, the Argus Leader reported.

The lawsuits also name Legacy Developments & Consulting Co., project engineer Rise Structural Associates and three limited liability companies with ownership stakes in the project, Boomerang, CLP and Olympia. The McMahons' attorney, Vince Roche, declined to comment.

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The lawsuits allege all defendants were aware that a load-bearing wall was damaged because a family residing in an upstairs apartment warned them of a crack that formed during demolition.

"Hultgren, Legacy, CLP, Olympia and Boomerang knew or should have known the crack impaired the structural integrity of the load-bearing common wall, which created a significant, foreseeable risk the wall would give out and the entire structure would collapse," the lawsuits states.

Hultgren didn't immediately respond for comment. The company is under an ongoing criminal investigation, which opened in August. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration also levied two dozen violations and \$200,000 in fines against Hultgren Construction after an investigation into the collapse. They appealed, which is stalled while the criminal investigation is underway.

Legacy Development spokeswoman Stacy Jones said they're reviewing the complaint.

Justin Christensen, president of Rise, said he was unaware of the lawsuits and that the company wasn't involved in the demolition of the Copper Lounge.

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

Noem calls for greater South Dakota government transparency

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Republican U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem on Tuesday called for greater transparency in South Dakota government as she runs for governor this year.

Noem unveiled what she called her Sunshine Initiative. She said that if elected governor, she would work to "throw open the doors" not only at the state Capitol, but also would encourage county commissions and school boards to give South Dakotans greater access to how government decisions are made.

"Remember, your state government should be serving you, and that really is my goal," Noem said in a Facebook Live event.

Among Noem's proposals is using free technologies such as YouTube to bring meetings "into every home." She also wants a more modernized and easily searchable Open.SD.gov website and a property tax toolkit that would allow taxpayers to see where their money goes.

Noem also said she supports a "common sense" reporter shield law, limiting the state's ability to negotiate confidential settlements unless necessary to protect a victim's privacy, and a review of existing open meeting laws.

While government bodies may need to go into executive session to discuss hiring or firing personnel, those sessions should not be used to hide budget discussions, Noem said in her initiative.

Noem said that while crossing the state, she hears people questioning whether state government is accountable.

"These proposals would make sure that voters can believe it truly is," she said.

Two other candidates for governor, Democratic state Sen. Billie Sutton and Republican Attorney General Marty Jackley, also support increased government transparency and have committed to supporting legislation that would give the public access to additional government records including officials' correspondence.

Authorities ID Alexandria woman killed in I-90 rollover

HUMBOLDT, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified the victim of a single-vehicle crash in McCook County. The Highway Patrol says 43-year-old Diane Bryant of Alexandria was driving a sport utility vehicle that rolled in the median on Interstate 90 about 11:15 p.m. Friday.

She was pronounced dead at the scene, about 5 miles west of Humboldt. She was traveling alone.

Pine Ridge woman gets 15 years in fatal 2016 shooting

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Pine Ridge woman accused of driving a getaway car in a fatal shooting outside a youth center on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation has been sentenced to 15 years in federal prison.

Thirty-one-year-old Tiffanee Garnier was accused of helping the assailants of Vincent Brewer III in Oc-

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tober 2016.

The Rapid City Journal reports that Garnier pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the slaying that authorities say was linked to a drug debt. The U.S. attorney's office says Brewer was shot more than a dozen times after playing in a basketball tournament at the center.

Three are charged with first-degree murder and conspiracy in the attack.

Garnier at one point was charged with first-degree murder, but that charge was dismissed under her plea deal with prosecutors.

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

Once a rising star, Nashville ex-mayor freefalls with affair

By JONATHAN MATTISE, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Before her sudden fall, former Nashville Mayor Megan Barry was a progressive, pro-business rising star among Tennessee's struggling Democrats in a firmly red state.

She officiated the city's first gay marriage before being elected in 2015. She pushed for tremendous growth, helping shape an ever-changing skyline of construction cranes and new high-rises.

When the Barrys' only son died of a drug overdose in July, people across the country rallied to console her and her husband Bruce. She was the face of a key ballot referendum coming up in May that will ask voters to shoulder tax increases to help build a \$5.4 billion transit system.

But Barry's quick political ascent seemed to hit the dirt on Tuesday after a wild, five-week freefall, as she pleaded guilty to stealing thousands of taxpayer dollars to carry on an affair with her former bodyguard and resigned.

Barry stunned the city in late January when she confessed to the extramarital relationship, which began in spring 2016 and continued as her popularity and accomplishments grew. She said the affair ended, but hasn't disclosed when.

"While my time today as your mayor concludes, my unwavering love and sincere affection for this wonderful city and its great people will never come to an end," the 54-year-old Barry said at a news conference shortly after appearing before a judge. She did not take questions.

In court, Barry didn't say how she stole money from the city, but investigators have said they believe she engaged in the affair while she was on city-paid trips and Forrest was on the clock. The district attorney's office later said the money Barry paid was for Forrest's travel expenses while he was on personal time.

Barry and her former bodyguard, police Sgt. Robert Forrest, separately pleaded guilty to felony theft. Barry's resignation was part of a plea bargain with prosecutors. She and Forrest were sentenced to three years' probation.

Barry also agreed to reimburse the city \$11,000, while Forrest will return \$45,000 that authorities said was paid to him in salary or overtime when he was not actually performing his duties as security chief.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation closed its separate investigation after the plea deal was reached, according to an agency spokeswoman.

Authorities found two nude or partially nude photos of a woman that were taken by Forrest's phone while he was on duty. The photos were shot last May and October, on days that Barry's travel schedule shows she was on trips to Washington.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation did not identify the woman in the pictures, and Barry has said that if the photos are of her, they were taken without her knowledge.

Vice Mayor David Briley, a fellow Democrat, said his car wouldn't work Tuesday morning, so he decided to take the bus. Soon after, he learned he was about to become mayor.

After he was sworn in Tuesday evening, his first words were: "I need some coffee."

He called Barry "a friend" and said he hoped she would be able to move past "a horrible moment" in her life.

Briley also promised transparency and said he will work to restore the public trust.

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A special election to choose a new mayor will be held Aug. 2.

Barry apologized when she revealed the affair in January. She denied breaking the law, rebuffed calls for her resignation, and said her husband remained committed to their marriage.

"This is a very bad day. And I'm going to have several more bad days. But this is not my worst day," Barry said then. "And I will tell you I know the difference between a mistake -- I made a serious mistake -- but this is not a tragedy."

Barry had maintained a high profile in the city, appearing routinely at concerts and other events and spearheading a successful effort to bring professional soccer to Nashville.

Before becoming mayor, Barry earned an MBA from Vanderbilt University and was an ethics and compliance officer in the telecommunications and health care industries.

Forrest, who had spent more than 31 years with Metro Nashville Police and supervised the mayor's security detail over three administrations, has retired. His wife filed for divorce soon after the relationship became public.

Police records show Forrest's overtime more than doubled from 2014-15 to the 2016-17 budget year.

The new mayor, in a statement, called it "a hard day for Nashville" but said Barry's resignation "will enable us to regain focus on the important work of our city."

Snowy nor'easter brings threat of more power problems

By KRISTEN DE GROOT, Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Another snowy, blowy nor'easter threatened a new round of power outages as it swirled ashore early Wednesday, causing officials to close schools and government offices and raising concerns for utility customers still trying to bounce back from an earlier storm.

A wintry mix of snow and light rain started falling early Wednesday in many areas, but the precipitation was expected to soon turn to all snow in most areas and then continue through the day.

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning that stretched from eastern Pennsylvania to most of New England, which was due to be in effect through Thursday morning. Snow accumulations could easily surpass a foot in areas west of the I-95 corridor, with some places in northwest New Jersey forecast to get up to two feet.

"I'm not looking forward to another round of this, but it is what it is," Chris Martin said as he prepared to leave his Toms River, New Jersey home and head to work at an information technology firm in Philadelphia. "All in all, it hasn't been a terrible winter, and it seems that March is always our worst month for major storms. We're a hearty bunch, so some snow and rain isn't going to stop us."

Martin had already arranged to stay in Philadelphia overnight, preferring not to take a chance with the expected treacherous road conditions.

"I keep telling myself spring is tight around the corner," Martin said with a laugh. "If Mother Nature wants to give us one last blast of winter, that's up to her."

Heavy, wet snow and gusting winds could take down trees already weakened from last week's storm and snap power lines, adding to stress for customers who've gone days without power.

Utility workers took advantage of milder temperatures and sunshine Tuesday in their scramble to restore electricity to thousands of customers around the Northeast.

The outages turned to outrage for a New Jersey man whose home had been without electricity since Friday. Robert Winter, 63, threatened to kidnap a utility company employee and blow up a substation, according to police in Vernon. He was charged with making terroristic threats.

More than a foot of snow is expected for some interior areas, the weather service said. Pennsylvania's Poconos Mountains and parts of western Massachusetts could see up to 18 inches.

Damaging winds are forecast with gusts of up to 60 mph on Cape Cod, 45 mph at the Jersey shore and 30 mph around suburban Philadelphia.

Depending on the storm's track, communities along the Interstate 95 corridor could see heavy rain, heavy snow or a mix of both.

Transportation departments in Philadelphia and Boston loaded up salt trucks and treated roads Tuesday, and some airlines waived ticket change fees for airports in the storm's projected path, such as Newark, Philadelphia, Boston and New York's JFK.

Amtrak canceled some train service Wednesday, and regional rail trains in Philadelphia will be operating on a weekend schedule.

School districts and municipal operations around Pennsylvania and Connecticut are closed for the day. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf declared states of emergency.

The National Weather Service urged people to stay off the roads to allow emergency and road crews to do their jobs. Some areas will get as much as 2 to 3 inches of snow an hour. Officials advised homeowners to be careful while shoveling, saying the weight of it has been known cause heart attacks.

A slight consolation is that the storm is not expected to bring the coastal flooding like the one last week. Some New England and New Jersey communities are still feeling the effects of that storm.

Associated Press writer Bruce Shipkowski, in Toms River, New Jersey, contributed to this story.

S. Korean president says talks won't ease pressure on North

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Wednesday downplayed concerns that the resumption of inter-Korean dialogue will be accompanied by an easing of international sanctions and pressure on North Korea over its nuclear program.

Moon made the comments in a meeting with political party leaders a day after South Korea announced an agreement with the North to hold a rare summit in April. Senior South Korean officials who met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang on Monday also said the North expressed a willingness to hold talks with the United States on denuclearization and normalizing ties.

Conservative opposition leaders expressed concern during Wednesday's meeting at Seoul's presidential palace that North Korea could use the talks as a way to reduce the pressure, and also questioned whether the North is genuinely interested in abandoning its nuclear weapons.

"The sanctions and pressure on North Korea aren't maintained by South Korea alone — these are actions based on U.N. Security Council resolutions, and then there are strong unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States," Moon said, added that the pressure on the North could only be reduced by "substantive progress" on denuclearization.

"These international efforts (to pressure the North) cannot be loosened by inter-Korean dialogue. We don't aim for that to happen and it's also impossible."

Moon's presidential national security director, Chung Eui-yong, who led the South Korean delegation that met with Kim, is to leave for the United States on Thursday to brief U.S. officials on the outcome of his trip to the North. Chung told reporters on Tuesday that he received a message from North Korea intended for the United States, but didn't disclose what it was.

Japan has responded cautiously to the South Korean announcement of summit talks, saying Tokyo's policy of keeping maximum pressure on North Korea is unchanged.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said Wednesday that dialogue for dialogue's sake is meaningless and that the allies "should fully take into consideration lessons from our past dialogues with the North, none of which achieved denuclearization." He said Japan is on the same page as the United States, citing U.S. Vice President Mike Pence as saying Washington's pressure campaign is unchanged, with all options still on the table.

China, which is North Korea's only major ally, cheered the exchanges between the Koreans and called for a return to six-nation talks on denuclearization that it previously hosted.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters Wednesday that China was "pleased to see the positive outcomes from those exchanges and interactions between the two sides. ... We hope the North

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and South will earnestly implement their consensuses and proceed with the process of reconciliation and cooperation.”

Associated Press writers Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo and Chris Bodeen in Beijing contributed to this report.

Democrats, women candidates score big in Texas primaries

By WILL WEISSERT and PAUL J. WEBER, Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Women running for Congress surged to big wins and Democrats smashed recent turnout levels in Texas’ first-in-the-nation 2018 primary elections, giving Republicans a potential glimpse of what’s ahead in the first midterms under President Donald Trump.

Energized and angry Democrats in Texas, where the GOP has dominated for decades, came out in force to surpass 1 million voters Tuesday — the first time the party has eclipsed that benchmark in a midterm primary since 2002, just months after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Equally striking was the showing by women on the ballot: Of the nearly 50 women running for Congress in Texas, more than half won their primaries outright or advanced to runoffs. What’s more, at least three of those runoffs in May will feature women going head-to-head, including a key race for Democrats in their bid to take control of the U.S. House this fall.

“It’s Trump. It’s Trump,” said Veronica Escobar, who won her Democratic primary and is now poised to become one of the first Hispanic women to represent Texas in Congress.

“I’ve spoken to innumerable senior citizens, retirees, parents of disabled children, people who understand what this administration means to their families. And they’re afraid.”

Not all women fared so well. Kathaleen Wall, a Republican megadonor in Houston who pumped \$6 million of her own money into her race for Congress, failed to survive a crowded nine-person field despite outspending all other candidates and having the backing of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott.

Wall’s failure was also a potential warning sign of the limits of Republicans going all-in on Trump this election year. She partly staked her candidacy on TV ads that told voters there was little daylight between her and the president, who remains popular among GOP voters despite his rough edges and low approval ratings nationwide.

For all the talk of renewed Democratic energy heading into the 2018 midterms, Texas Republicans also set a new benchmark for turnout in a midterm election.

More than 1.5 million people voted Tuesday in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate, won by incumbent Ted Cruz. That beats the previous record of 1.48 million in 2010, during former President Barack Obama’s first term.

Democrats showed up despite the long odds this November of ousting Republicans such as Cruz — who released a radio ad after clinching the GOP nomination Tuesday night, telling voters that Democratic opponent Beto O’Rourke “wants to take our guns.”

O’Rourke, a congressman from El Paso, has called for banning AR-15-style assault rifles in wake of last month’s mass shooting at a Florida high school that killed 17 people.

Neither that tragedy nor a mass shooting at a Texas church last fall played as dominant campaign issues in Texas, but with the GOP’s majority in Congress on the line this fall, Democrats showed up.

Democrats have their sights on flipping three GOP-controlled congressional seats in Texas that backed Hillary Clinton over Trump in 2016, including a Houston district where liberal favorite Laura Moser forced a runoff with Lizzie Pannill Fletcher. Another is a sprawling district that runs along the Texas-Mexico border, where Gina Ortiz-Jones advanced to a May runoff and another woman, Judy Canales, was battling to join her.

“I think that a Congress that is only 20 percent women is not where we need to be,” Ortiz Jones said. “This is not a spectator sport. We’ve got to participate, all of us and that’s what’s important.”

College students waited more than an hour to vote in liberal Austin and rural counties offered Democratic candidates for the first time in years. Many women ran in a record eight open congressional races

this year in Texas — two of which are up for grabs after longtime GOP incumbents abandoned plans for re-election amid scandal.

While 2002 was a high water mark for Democratic turnout in Texas it also showed the limits of the exuberance for turning the state blue. In November that year, the Democrats running for statewide office were all beaten, just as they have been since 1994.

For Republicans, the primary was a vivid exhibition of the Trump effect in GOP politics. George P. Bush, the Texas land commissioner, won a contested primary after he cozied-up to a president who once called his dad, Jeb, a pathetic person.

Trump won Texas by 9 points in 2016. It was the smallest margin of victory by a Republican presidential candidate in Texas in 20 years, but Cruz dismissed talk of a Democratic takeover this fall.

"Left-wing rage may raise a bunch of money from people online, but I don't believe it reflects the views of a majority of Texans," he told reporters after winning the nomination.

Democrats will have a tough time winning statewide races in November despite the "Trump effect" because they have fielded little-known candidates against top Republicans, such as Republican Gov. Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick. Even Attorney General Ken Paxton, who has been indicted on felony securities fraud charges, clinched his party's nomination unopposed.

Abbott will face either Lupe Valdez, who was Texas' first Hispanic, lesbian sheriff, or Andrew White, who opposes abortion and whose father, Mark, was governor in the 1980s.

Follow Will Weissert on Twitter: www.twitter.com/apwillweissert

Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: www.twitter.com/pauljweber

Wave of exits from West Wing sparks talk of brain drain

By **ZEKE MILLER** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump once presided over a reality show in which a key cast member exited each week. The same thing seems to be happening in his White House.

Trump's West Wing has descended into a period of unparalleled tumult amid a wave of staff departures — and despite the president's insistence that it's a place of "no Chaos, only great Energy!" The latest key figure to announce an exit: Gary Cohn, Trump's chief economic adviser, who had clashed with Trump over trade policy.

Cohn's departure has sparked internal fears of an even larger exodus, raising concerns in Washington of a coming "brain drain" around the president that will only make it more difficult to advance his already languishing policy agenda. While Trump has publicly tried to dispel perceptions of disarray, multiple White House officials said the president has been pushing anxious aides to stay on the job to try to staunch the bleeding.

"Everyone wants to work in the White House," Trump insisted during a news conference Tuesday. "They all want a piece of the Oval Office."

The reality is a far different story.

Vacancies abound in the West Wing and the broader Trump administration — with some jobs never filled by the president and others subject to repeat openings. The job of White House communications director is soon to be empty again after the departure of its fourth occupant, Hope Hicks.

"They are left with vacancies atop of vacancies," said Kathryn Dunn-Tenpas, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who tracks senior-level staff turnover. Her analysis shows the Trump departure rate has reached 40 percent in just over a year.

"That kind of turnover creates a lot of disruption," she added, noting the loss of institutional knowledge and relationships with agencies and Congress. "You can't really leave those behind to your successor."

Turnover after a year in office is nothing new, but the Trump administration has churned through staff at a dizzying pace and allies are worried the situation could descend into a free-fall.

One White House official said there is concern about a potential "death spiral" in the West Wing — each

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departure heightening the sense of frenzy and expediting the next.

Multiple aides who are considering departing, all speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters, said they didn't have a clue whom the administration could find to fill their roles — adding that their desire to be team players has kept them on the job longer than planned. But a number warned they were nearing a breaking point.

"You have situations where people are stretched to take on more than one job," said Martha Joynt Kumar, director of the White House Transition Project.

She cited the example of Johnny DeStefano, who oversees the White House offices of personnel, public liaison, political affairs and intergovernmental affairs. "Those are four positions that in most administrations are each headed by an assistant to the president or a deputy assistant," Kumar says.

The overlap between those qualified to work in the White House and those willing to take a job there has been shrinking too, according to White House officials and outside allies concerned about the slow pace of hires.

Trump's mercurial decision-making practices, fears of being drawn into special counsel Robert Mueller's probe and a stalled legislative agenda are keeping top-flight talent on the outside.

"Most of all, President Trump hasn't demonstrated a scrap of loyalty to current and former staff, and everyone knows it," said Michael Steel, a former aide to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and former House Speaker John Boehner.

Trump acknowledged that he is a tough boss to work for, saying he enjoys watching his closest aides fight over policy.

"I like conflict," he said Tuesday.

Since his days on the campaign, Trump has frequently and loudly complained about the quality of his staff, eager to fault his aides for any mishaps rather than shouldering responsibility. But his attacks on his own staff have sharpened in recent weeks, and he has suggested to confidants that he has few people at his side he can count on, according to two people familiar with his thinking but not authorized to discuss private conversations publicly.

Hicks' departure will leave a gaping hole in the president's inner circle. She served as both media gatekeeper and confidante.

A number of other aides have expressed worry about the legal implications — and steep bills — they could face if ensnared in the ongoing Russia probe. The probe has had a chilling effect on an already sluggish White House hiring process, according to officials, and there is wide concern that working for Trump could negatively affect career prospects.

Meanwhile, hopes for significant governing achievements in the coming years — akin to the GOP tax bill passed in December — are growing fleeting, as Republicans face a daunting electoral environment this fall.

Morale has plunged among West Wing aides in recent weeks. A number of staffers point to the departure of staff secretary Rob Porter in mid-February as beginning the tailspin. Not only was Porter a popular figure — allegations of domestic violence against him stunned staffers — but his departure undid some of the progress made on streamlining the White House's chaotic policy process. A permanent replacement has yet to be named for the post.

Moreover, chief of staff John Kelly's shifting explanations for how he handled the Porter matter — including, in the eyes of some, outright lies — damaged his reputation among staffers who had seen Kelly as a stabilizing force in the turbulent West Wing.

The administration has been understaffed from the onset, in part due to the president's refusal to consider hiring even the most qualified Republicans if they opposed him during the campaign, according to a White House official not authorized to speak publicly about personnel matters.

The White House did not immediately announce a replacement for Cohn, whose deputy, Jeremy Katz, departed in January. Among those under consideration for Cohn's job are CNBC commentator Larry Kudlow and Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, according to a person familiar with the discussions.

In a riff Saturday at the Gridiron Dinner, an annual white-tie affair featuring journalists and officials,

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Trump engaged in a rare bout of self-deprecating humor, comparing the Oval Office job to his past career as the host of the reality-television show "The Apprentice."

"In one job I had to manage a cut-throat cast of characters, desperate for TV time, totally unprepared for their roles and their jobs and each week afraid of having their asses fired, and the other job I was the host of a smash television hit."

Several White House aides in the audience laughed in their tailcoats and ball gowns. But the joke, they knew, was on them.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Catherine Lucey, and Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

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

Trump says he'll push tariffs despite pressure from GOP

By KEN THOMAS and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Warning of economic fallout, congressional Republicans and industry groups pressed President Donald Trump on Tuesday to narrow his plan for across-the-board tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum. Trump appeared unmoved, declaring, "Trade wars aren't so bad."

The president said he planned to move forward with special tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, contending the U.S. has long been "mistreated" in trade deals.

"We're doing tariffs on steel. We cannot lose our steel industry. It's a fraction of what it once was. And we can't lose our aluminum industry," Trump said during a joint news conference with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven.

Hours later, White House economic adviser Gary Cohn, who has opposed the tariffs, announced his plans to depart the White House, another signal that the president intends to go through with the penalties.

The president's pledge for action, which would be in line with a one of his campaign promises, came after House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin called for a "more surgical approach" that would help avert a potentially dangerous trade war. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said there was concern Trump's plan could lead to such disruptive turmoil.

"We are urging caution," McConnell said.

Republican Sen. David Perdue of Georgia, who opposes the tariffs, said after meeting Tuesday with White House chief of staff John Kelly that the administration was willing to consider his views. "Absolutely. There's an openness now," Perdue said.

"I think there's been a step back," said Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan. "I don't think he's reconsidering, but I think he's trying to figure out what his best step is forward."

But those views sounded more like wishful thinking after Trump's news conference, in which he reiterated his plans to impose the tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum imports. He said he'd respond to unfair treatment by foreign countries and huge trade deficits. "We're going to straighten it out and we'll do it in a very loving way," Trump said.

The president also reaffirmed the possibility that Canada and Mexico might not face the tariffs if they are willing to offer more favorable terms under the North American Free Agreement, which is being renegotiated.

Senior White House adviser Jared Kushner and staff from the State Department and National Security Council will be meeting Wednesday with Mexico's president and foreign minister in Mexico City.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told lawmakers Trump was trying to balance protections for beleaguered steel and aluminum producers while "making sure that we don't do undue harm to the economy."

"We are not looking to get into trade wars. We are looking to make sure that U.S. companies can compete fairly around the world," Mnuchin said at a House hearing.

Trump has been keenly aware of how the tariffs may play in a March 13 special House election in western

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Pennsylvania, part of the nation's steel belt, White House officials have said. The president is headlining a Saturday rally in support of Rick Saccone, who is battling Democrat Conor Lamb in the Republican-leaning district.

The dispute over tariffs has exposed a rift between advocates of free trade, who have long dominated GOP circles, and a president who has railed against China and pushed for more protectionist trade policies.

Internally, White House officials who oppose the blanket tariffs have urged the administration to limit the countries that would be affected and to impose time limits. This would help the president say he delivered on his promise and still try to avoid possible negative consequences, said Stephen Moore, a former campaign adviser and now an economist with the conservative Heritage Foundation.

Republicans in Congress and within Trump's administration say industries and their workers who need steel and aluminum for their products would be hurt by Trump's threatened tariffs. They say Americans will face higher costs for new cars, appliances and buildings if the president follows through on his threat and other nations retaliate.

Trump has said the tariffs are needed to preserve the American industries and protect national security. But he has also tried to use them as leverage in the current talks to revise NAFTA.

Business leaders are mobilizing against the tariffs. The Aluminum Association, a trade group representing 114 member companies with more than 700,000 U.S. jobs, told Trump in a letter Tuesday that it was "deeply concerned" about the effects of the planned tariffs and urged him to seek alternatives such as targeting China and other countries with a history of circumventing trade rules.

Ryan said Trump was correct to focus on the problem of the dumping of steel in the U.S. at lower prices. But he said the administration's approach was "a little too broad and more prone to retaliation."

"What we're encouraging the administration to do is to focus on what is clearly a legitimate problem and to be more surgical in its approach," Ryan said.

Republicans have suggested they may try to undercut the tariffs if Trump goes ahead with them. But Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., said he was doubtful the GOP majority would be able to muster the votes to pass legislation to block the special taxes.

Flake said it was tough to dissuade Trump because the president "keeps coming back like a homing pigeon on trade deficits."

Mnuchin defended the possible tariffs, telling lawmakers that Trump "loves farmers and the farm community." Rep. David Young, R-Iowa, responded, "It doesn't seem so with some of the policies that are coming out."

Mnuchin said the administration hopes to release details on the tariffs this week. "He does understand the potential impacts it has on the economy and I think we have a way of managing through this," he said.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Kevin Freking, Martin Crutsinger and Josh Boak in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Ken Thomas on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC>

Things to know from Tuesday's Texas primaries

By **JIM VERTUNO AND BILL BARROW, Associated Press**

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas kicked off primary season ahead of the 2018 midterm election, with implications for Democrats and Republicans alike in an election year that could alter the direction of Congress and statehouses around the country for the final two years of President Donald Trump's term.

Things worth keeping an eye on Tuesday as Texans cast ballots:

THE TRUMP EFFECT AND DEMOCRATIC TURNOUT

Democrats remain underdogs to knock off Republican U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz and Gov. Greg Abbott, but there's been a surge in numbers of Democratic candidates and voters that reflects nationwide momentum for the left since Trump's election.

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There is at least one Democratic candidate in every congressional district — 36 of them — for the first time since 1992. Democrats have 25 contested congressional primaries, and Senate nominee Beto O'Rourke raised \$2.4 million in the final three months of 2017, more than Cruz's \$1.9 million haul.

"We have candidates everywhere, and that means we are reaching voters who haven't heard from Democrats in a long time," says Texas Democratic Chairman Gilberto Hinojosa. "That's a good thing for November."

The president won Texas during the 2016 nominating process and in the November election. Now he's a central figure in midterm primaries. Republican Congressional candidates across the state have pledged fealty to Trump.

It's most obvious in the Republican House primaries for seats opened by retiring GOP incumbents. One example is Kathaleen Wall, who is running for a southeast Texas seat now held by Rep. Ted Poe. One of her 30-second ads alternates between images of Trump and Wall, while a voiceover offers attributes of the two: "Successful businessman. Successful businesswoman. ... Talks tough (Trump). Aims tough (Wall, wielding a rifle). Loudly strong (Trump). Quietly strong (Wall). Great hair (Trump). Greater hair (Wall)."

NATIONAL DEMOCRATS VS. LIBERAL GROUPS

It's not uncommon for the Democrats' House campaign arm to have favorites in a primary, but they stepped beyond that recently, openly criticizing a Democratic hopeful in a Houston-area seat held by Republican John Culberson.

In a memo posted online, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee called Laura Moser a "Washington insider" and blasted her comments published in a 2014 Washingtonian magazine article. Moser said she'd "rather have her teeth pulled out" than live in rural Paris, Texas. Party aides say the comments would be used by Republicans to make Moser unelectable in the 7th Congressional District, but their intervention has miffed Texas Democrats, including some of her opponents.

Liberal groups also have cried foul. Moser is running to the left of other leading candidates, and Our Revolution, Sen. Bernie Sanders' political organization, endorsed her in the wake of the DCCC memo.

The battle is sure to intensify if Moser qualifies for an expected runoff.

GOP HOUSE DISTRICTS THAT WENT FOR CLINTON

Three Texas congressional seats — the 7th District in metro Houston, the 23rd District from San Antonio across border country and the 32nd District near Dallas-Fort Worth — are among the 23 Republican-held seats nationally that sided with Hillary Clinton over Trump in the 2016 presidential race.

Democrats need to flip 24 GOP-seats to reclaim a majority in the U.S. House.

The Houston seat is likely headed to a runoff. The question is whether Moser, the liberal criticized by national Democrats, is among the two candidates. The San Antonio-border country seat could yield a runoff, as well, between Gina Ortiz Jones, an Air Force veteran, and Jay Hulings, a former federal prosecutor.

BETO O'ROURKE vs. TED CRUZ

A key matchup in November will be the Senate race between O'Rourke and Cruz, who easily won their party nominations.

The Democratic congressman outraced the Republican senator in the last quarter of 2017 and has touted his candidacy's grassroots appeal for Texas Democrats who haven't had much to cheer about lately. Cruz, who had only nominal primary opposition himself, isn't taking the race lightly. The senator also is using his stature with endorsements in several of the 21 contested Republican House primaries.

Even before the polls closed Tuesday, Cruz held a conference call to start zeroing in on O'Rourke as a liberal riding a wave of "left wing rage" that won't carry him to victory in Texas.

LOSING LEADERSHIP

Texas has eight sitting House members who are not seeking re-election — six of them Republicans — meaning the state with the second-largest delegation will be losing a lot of experience and leadership in Washington.

The outgoing lawmakers include powerful committee chairs including Jeb Hensarling, 60, who heads the House Financial Services Committee and Lamar Smith, 69, who chairs the House Science, Space and

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Technology Committee.

Each of them hails from solidly Republican districts, but they could be replaced by even more conservative nominees. Both Hensarling and Smith were being term-limited out of their chairmanships but were well positioned to continue exerting veteran House influence had they stayed.

State Sen. Van Taylor, a businessman and Marine Iraq war veteran won the Republican nomination to replace outgoing Rep. Sam Johnson, who has held the seat for the GOP since 1991.

EASY PATH

In other statewide offices, Abbott easily won the Republican nomination for a second term and so did Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, as both faced only token opposition. Attorney General Ken Paxton, who is under felony indictment on charges of securities fraud, is unopposed in the primary.

State Land Commission George P. Bush, the nephew for former President George W. Bush, won the Republican nomination for another term.

Democrats have not won a statewide office in Texas since 1994, the longest streak in the country. Two little-known Democrats — former Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez and Andrew White, the son of former Gov. Mark White — advanced to a runoff for the right to be Abbott's Democratic opponent in November.

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US greets talk of NK nuke concessions with hope, skepticism

By **ROBERT BURNS** and **HYUNG-JIN KIM**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump greeted North Korea's reported willingness to negotiate away its atomic weapons with both hope and skepticism Tuesday, insisting a potential diplomatic breakthrough be tested against the North's long history of deception and threats to target U.S. cities with nuclear missiles.

"I really believe they are sincere," Trump said at a White House news conference, sounding more optimistic than his intelligence chief, Dan Coats, who told a Senate hearing he has "very, very low confidence" that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un intends to give up his nuclear arms.

"Maybe this is a breakthrough. I seriously doubt it," Coats said.

A senior South Korean presidential adviser said Tuesday that Kim expressed a willingness to discuss nuclear disarmament and halt nuclear and missile tests during future talks with the United States. The North didn't confirm those concessions, which would amount to a dramatic about-face for a nation that has frequently vowed to preserve its nuclear arsenal at any cost.

Chung Eui-yong, the South Korean official who spoke after participating in talks with Kim in Pyongyang, also said the North Korean dictator had agreed to meet with South Korea's president at a border village in late April.

North Korea didn't announce what South Korea on Tuesday described as agreements between the rivals. But the North's state media earlier reported Kim had "openhearted" talks with South Korean envoys, expressed his willingness to "vigorously advance" North-South relations and made a "satisfactory" agreement on the inter-Korean summit talks.

Trump, who last fall told Secretary of State Rex Tillerson he was "wasting his time" trying to talk with the North, tweeted Tuesday that "possible progress" had been made in North Korea's capital and that all sides were making serious efforts. He added: "May be false hope, but the U.S. is ready to go hard in either direction!"

Later, in an Oval Office photo session with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven, Trump said the North Koreans "seem to be acting positively," but that the prospects will be clearer when diplomacy moves to the next stage.

"We have come certainly a long way, at least rhetorically, with North Korea," Trump said. Of the possibility for peacefully resolving the nations' deep differences, he said: "It'd be a great thing for the world, would be a great for North Korea, it would be a great thing for the peninsula. But we'll see what happens."

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In Chung's account, Kim indicated he would not need to keep nuclear weapons if military threats against North Korea were removed and his nation received a credible security guarantee. That suggests the possibility Kim will insist in any deal that the U.S. withdraw its nearly 28,000 troops from South Korea. The North sees those forces and their periodic exercises with South Korean troops as a threat to invade the North.

The White House issued a brief statement from Vice President Mike Pence suggesting nothing has changed in that area. A U.S. official said there were no plans to scrap the war games envisioned for next month.

"All options are on the table, and our posture toward the regime will not change until we see credible, verifiable and concrete steps toward denuclearization," Pence said.

Separately, highlighting a less-discussed dimension of the standoff with North Korea, the Pentagon's military intelligence chief told a Senate hearing that Kim has taken a "far different" approach to military preparedness than his father, Kim Jong Il, by imposing greater rigor and discipline in army training. Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, called it a "big change" and implied the improvements should be taken into account in considering the prospect of war on the Korean peninsula.

North Korea's willingness to hold a "candid dialogue" with the United States to discuss denuclearization and establish diplomatic relations follows a year of increased fears of war, with Kim and Trump exchanging fiery rhetoric and crude insults over Kim's barrage of weapons tests. The Trump administration also pushed through some of the harshest economic sanctions any country has ever faced.

Trump said Kim's apparent willingness to negotiate is likely due to the sanctions, and China's role in applying them.

Still, there is wide skepticism that Tuesday's developments will bring genuine peace between the Koreas, which have a long history of failing to follow through with major rapprochement agreements. The United States has made it clear it doesn't want empty talks with North Korea and that all options, including military measures, are in play until the North actually surrenders its nuclear weapons, believed to number around 30.

"We have seen nothing to indicate ... that he would be willing to give up those weapons," Coats said.

Chung said the two Koreas would hold a summit at a South Korea-controlled facility. He said Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in will establish a "hotline" communication channel to lower military tensions, and would speak together before the get-together.

It would be the third such summit since the Koreas' 1945 division. Kim Jong Il met liberal South Korean presidents in Pyongyang in 2000 and 2007. They resulted in a series of cooperative projects that were scuttled during subsequent conservative administrations in South Korea.

Hyung-jin Kim reported from South Korea.

Kim Jong Un gets new image after S. Korea meeting: Statesman

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un grins, just on the verge of a belly laugh, as he grasps the hand of a visiting South Korean official. He sits at a wide conference table and beams as the envoys look on deferentially. He smiles broadly again at dinner, his wife at his side, the South Koreans seeming to hang on his every word.

Kim is used to being the center of gravity in a country that his family has ruled with unquestioned power since 1948, but the chance to play the senior statesman on the Korean Peninsula with a roomful of visiting South Koreans has afforded the autocratic leader a whole new raft of propaganda and political opportunities. He'll get another major chance to shine next month: Seoul says that Kim has agreed to hold a summit meeting — the rivals' third-ever — with South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

The photos released by North Korean state media on Tuesday showing Kim meeting with Moon's envoys on Monday evening are all the more remarkable coming just months after a barrage of North Korean weapons tests and threats against Seoul and Washington had many fearing war.

Kim can be seen in a North Korean TV video smiling and laughing, proposing a toast at the dinner reception, and waving as two limousines carrying the South Korean delegates left the main building of the

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ruling Workers' Party.

The extraordinary images spread rapidly across the southern part of the peninsula a day after the North said Kim had an "openhearted talk" with 10 envoys for Moon. Kim reportedly expressed his desire to "write a new history of national reunification" during a dinner that the South Korean government said lasted about four hours.

The meeting marked the first time South Korean officials have met with the young North Korean leader in person since he took power after his dictator father's death in late 2011. It's the latest sign that the Koreas are trying to mend ties after one of the tensest years in a region that seems to be permanently on edge. The South Korean delegation led by presidential national security director Chung Eui-yong returned to the South on Tuesday and announced the Kim-Moon summit planned for next month. Chung's trip was the first known high-level visit by South Korean officials to the North in about a decade.

North Korea hasn't announced the summit agreement in its own media, more than a half-day after the South's announcement.

Given the robust history of bloodshed, threats and animosity on the Korean Peninsula, there is considerable skepticism over whether the Koreas' apparent warming relations will lead to lasting peace. North Korea, some believe, is trying to use improved ties with the South to weaken U.S.-led international sanctions and pressure, and to provide domestic propaganda fodder for Kim.

But each new development — and especially a summit — raises the possibility that the rivals can use the momentum from the good feelings created during North Korea's participation in the South's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics last month to ease a standoff over North Korea's nuclear ambitions and restart talks between the North and the United States. Seoul said the North also agreed during the talks to impose a moratorium on nuclear and missile tests if Pyongyang holds talks with Washington.

The role of a confident leader welcoming visiting, and lower-ranking, officials from the rival South is one Kim clearly relishes. Smiling for cameras, he posed during the meeting with the South Koreans and presided over what was described by the North's official Korean Central News Agency as a "co-patriotic and sincere atmosphere."

Many in Seoul and Washington will want to know if, the rhetoric and smiling images notwithstanding, there's any possibility Kim will negotiate over North Korea's breakneck pursuit of an arsenal of nuclear missiles that can viably target the U.S. mainland.

The North has repeatedly and bluntly declared it will not give up its nuclear bombs. It also hates the annual U.S.-South Korean military exercises that were postponed because of the Olympics but will likely happen later this spring. And achieving its nuclear aims rests on the North resuming tests of missiles and bombs that set the region on edge.

Kim was said to have expressed at the dinner his "firm will to vigorously advance the north-south relations and write a new history of national reunification by the concerted efforts of our nation to be proud of in the world."

There is speculation that better inter-Korean ties could pave the way for Washington and Pyongyang to talk about the North's nuclear weapons. The United States, however, has made clear that it doesn't want empty talks and that all options, including military measures, are on the table.

Previous warming ties between the Koreas have come to nothing amid North Korea's repeated weapons tests and the North's claims that the annual U.S.-South Korean war games are a rehearsal for an invasion.

Chung's delegation included intelligence chief Suh Hoon and Vice Unification Minister Chun Hae-sung. The South Korean presidential Blue House said the high-profile delegation was meant to reciprocate the Olympic trip by Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong, who became the first member of the North's ruling family to come to South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Kim Yo Jong, who also attended Monday's dinner, and other senior North Korean officials met with Moon during the Olympics, conveyed Kim Jong Un's invitation to visit Pyongyang and expressed their willingness to hold talks with the United States.

Having concluded their Pyongyang trip, Chung's delegation is scheduled to fly to the United States to brief officials about the outcome of the talks with North Korean officials.

President Donald Trump has said talks with North Korea will happen only “under the right conditions.” He was still cautious, tweeting Tuesday’s news was “possible progress.”

A summit next month would be the Koreas’ third. The past two summits, one in 2000 and the other in 2007, were held between Kim’s late father, Kim Jong Il, and two liberal South Korean presidents. They resulted in a series of cooperative projects between the Koreas that were scuttled during subsequent conservative administrations in the South.

Associated Press writers Hyung-jin Kim and Kim Tong-hyung contributed to this report.

Russian plane crash in Syria kills 39 servicemen

By ZEINA KARAM and NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A Russian military cargo plane crashed near an air base in Syria on Tuesday, killing all 39 Russian servicemen on board in a blow to Russian operations in Syria. The Russian military quickly insisted the plane was not shot down and blamed the crash on a technical error.

Meanwhile, shelling near the rebel-held eastern suburbs of Damascus killed dozens of people over the past 24 hours as President Bashar Assad’s government, supported by the Russian military, pushed its assault on the capital’s rebel-held suburbs. International aid workers on a rare humanitarian mission inside the besieged area described dramatic scenes of rescuers trying to pull corpses from the rubble of buildings and children who hadn’t seen daylight in 15 days.

The mission on Monday to the area known as eastern Ghouta was cut short after the government shelling escalated while the aid workers were still inside, calling into question future aid shipments to the encircled region, the last major opposition stronghold near the capital.

Opposition activists and a war monitor said 80 people were killed Monday — the deadliest day since the U.N. Security Council demanded a 30-day cease-fire for Syria — and at least nine were killed Tuesday.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged all parties to implement a cease-fire demanded by the Security Council on Feb. 24 and allow “safe and unimpeded access” for convoys to deliver aid to hundreds of thousands of Syrians in desperate need.

Guterres descried that attacks on eastern Ghouta reportedly killed more than 100 people Monday and that 14 of 46 trucks in a convoy trying to deliver supplies to Douma in eastern Ghouta weren’t able to fully unload, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Dujarric said nearly half of the food carried on the convoy could not be delivered.

“People were telling us very desperate stories. They are tired, they are angry. They don’t want aid, what they want is the shelling to stop,” Pawel Krzysiek, head of communications for the Syrian branch of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said Tuesday.

He said thousands of families were huddled in underground shelters, reluctant to eat in front of each other because of the pervasive hunger, and children who watched as aid workers tried to pull corpses from the rubble.

“No child should be witnessing this in their very early state of development. But the children of Douma and the children of eastern Ghouta unfortunately do, and that’s what makes the situation very, very dramatic,” he said.

Monday’s aid shipment was the first to enter eastern Ghouta amid weeks of a crippling siege and a government assault that has killed some 800 civilians since Feb. 18. Aid agencies said Syrian authorities removed basic health supplies, including trauma and surgical kits and insulin, from the convoys before they set off.

The U.N. said airstrikes and shelling in eastern Ghouta continued for hours while the convoy was unloading supplies.

“After nearly nine hours inside, the decision was made to leave for security reasons and to avoid jeopardizing the safety of humanitarian teams on the ground,” said Jens Laerke, deputy spokesperson for the U.N.’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. As a result, 14 of the 46 trucks in the convoy

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were not able to fully offload critical humanitarian supplies.

Laerke said the team found a desperate situation for people who have endured months without access to humanitarian aid. "Food for civilians was in short supply or prohibitively expensive and high rates of acute malnutrition were observed," he said.

Krzysiek said there was "no electricity so it was extremely dark and we had to go. But we left with heavy hearts because we knew that we are leaving people behind, we know what they will be going through."

The violence called into question future aid deliveries. Another aid convoy is scheduled to enter eastern Ghouta on Thursday, but Laerke said security measures must be guaranteed for this to happen.

Pro-government forces have made swift gains since launching their offensive, seizing roughly 40 percent of eastern Ghouta territory in two weeks, according to the Britain-based Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, and setting off a wave of displacement as civilians flee strikes and advancing forces.

Airstrikes continued Tuesday. The opposition's Syrian Civil Defense search-and-rescue group reported at least nine people were killed in airstrikes on the town of Jisreen. The group, also known as the White Helmets, said two of its volunteers, and 28 others, suffered difficulties breathing following shelling on the town of Hammouriyeh on Monday evening. It accused the government of using "poison gas." The Observatory reported 18 people suffered breathing difficulties, without attributing a cause.

It was the eighth allegation of chlorine gas use reported by the Syrian American Medical Society this year. The reports could not be independently confirmed, and Russia used its Security Council veto to freeze the work of a U.N. body investigating such reports earlier this year. The Syrian government, through the SANA state news agency, denied using chemical weapons.

Meanwhile, the Russian defense ministry extended an offer for armed rebels and their families — not just civilians — to leave eastern Ghouta through a safe corridor set up earlier for civilians, though none have left. It said the rebels were free to leave with their weapons and families unhindered.

Wael Olwan, spokesman for one of the main rebel groups in eastern Ghouta, said the offer was part of Russia's "psychological warfare." He denied reports that rebels were negotiating an exit, adding that the fighters will continue to defend themselves as long as they are under attack.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday's crash of the An-26 military cargo plane occurred just 500 meters (1,600 feet) from the runway of Syria's Hemeimeem military base. It said the plane did not come under fire, adding it would conduct a full investigation.

The base near the Mediterranean coast is far from the front lines of the conflict, but came under shelling in December. Russian military outposts in the country have also come under rebel attacks recently, including a massive drone raid earlier this year involving 13 aircraft equipped with satellite navigation.

It was the second Russian military plane to crash in Syria this year, after a Su-25 ground attack jet was struck by a portable air defense missile over northern Idlib province last month.

Associated Press writer Zeina Karam reported this story from Beirut and AP writer Nataliya Vasilyeva reported from Moscow. AP writers Philip Issa and Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

Trump economic aide Cohn departs after trade disagreement

By **ZEKE MILLER** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top economic adviser Gary Cohn is leaving the White House after breaking with President Donald Trump on trade policy, the latest in a string of high-level departures from the West Wing.

Cohn, the director of the National Economic Council, has been the leading internal opponent to Trump's planned tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum, working to orchestrate an eleventh-hour effort in recent days to get Trump to reverse course. But Trump resisted those efforts, and reiterated Tuesday he will be imposing tariffs in the coming days.

Cohn's departure comes amid a period of unparalleled tumult in the Trump administration, and aides worry that more staffers may soon head for the doors.

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The announcement came hours after Trump denied there was chaos in the White House. Trump maintained that his White House has "tremendous energy," but multiple White House officials said Trump has been urging anxious aides to stay.

"Everyone wants to work in the White House," Trump said during a joint press conference with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. "They all want a piece of the Oval Office."

In a statement, Cohn said it was his honor to serve in the administration and "enact pro-growth economic policies to benefit the American people."

Trump praised Cohn despite the disagreement on trade, issuing a statement saying Cohn has "served his country with great distinction."

Cohn is a former Goldman Sachs executive who joined the White House after departing the Wall Street firm with a \$285 million payout. He played a pivotal role in helping Trump enact a sweeping tax overhaul, coordinating with members of Congress.

Cohn's departure is a blow to Capitol Hill Republicans and business groups who were hoping Trump might listen to their worries on tariffs — and that Cohn would serve as a moderating force as the administration pushes a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Earlier Tuesday, House Speaker Paul Ryan had said talks with the White House were "ongoing" and he was "encouraged" that the White House would adjust course.

"I hate to see Gary go," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told The Associated Press.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., who is trying to persuade the administration to target the steel and aluminum tariffs as narrowly as possible, acknowledged his side of the argument was increasingly outnumbered in the administration.

"I'm sorry to see him go," Toomey said, calling Cohn "a very important voice in encouraging free trade."

Josh Bolten, the President and CEO of the Business Roundtable, which opposes the coming tariffs, called Cohn's exit "a real loss for President Trump and the American people."

Trump loved to boast about the former executive's wealth, but Cohn's tenure in the White House was rocky. Cohn nearly departed the administration last summer after he was upset by the president's comments about the racial violence in Charlottesville, Va. Cohn, who is Jewish, wrote a letter of resignation but never submitted it.

"Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and the KKK," Cohn told The Financial Times at the time. "I believe this administration can and must do better in consistently and unequivocally condemning these groups and do everything we can to heal the deep divisions that exist in our communities."

The comments came as Cohn was under consideration to serve as chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Earlier in the administration, Cohn found himself on the losing side of several contentious battles with Trump's more nationalist-minded aides — including then-chief strategist Steve Bannon — on policies including the announcement of plans to pull the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement.

Cohn had also hoped to steer more than \$1 trillion into infrastructure investments. But the multiple roll-outs by the Trump administration failed to gain traction, often overshadowed by controversial statements made by the president himself.

Cohn often faced ridicule among some inside the White House for being a registered Democrat who last year met with former Republican officials pushing a form of a carbon tax that was designed to reduce the risks from climate change.

Yet his stock improved to the point that he was one of names Trump was floating for chief of staff last month, when it looked like John Kelly was on thin ice. He was a frequent ally of Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump in internal staff struggles.

Cohn told other White House aides in recent weeks that he would have little reason to stay if Trump followed through with his tariff plans, according to a White House official familiar with his views. The official spoke on condition of anonymity.

"I mean it is no secret that he disagreed with Trump on trade and he was opposed to the policy," said Stephen Moore, who served as an economic adviser to Trump's campaign.

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The White House did not immediately announce a replacement for Cohn, whose deputy, Jeremy Katz, departed in January. Among those who have been discussed as potential replacements are CNBC commentator Larry Kudlow and Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney, according to a person familiar with the discussions.

"Will be making a decision soon on the appointment of new Chief Economic Advisor. Many people wanting the job - will choose wisely!" Trump tweeted late Tuesday.

In an earlier tweet, Trump sought to portray himself as the architect of the White House staff changes, writing, "I still have some people that I want to change (always seeking perfection)."

Trump acknowledged he is a tough boss to work for, saying he enjoys watching his closest aides fight over policy. "I like conflict," he said during the press conference.

Cohn was nowhere in sight at the press conference and a seat reserved for him in the East Room was filled by a different aide.

Dating back to the campaign, Trump has frequently and loudly complained about the quality of his staff, eager to fault his aides for any mishaps rather than acknowledge any personal responsibility. But the attacks on his own staff have sharpened in recent weeks, and he has suggested to confidants that he has few people at his side he can count on, according to two people familiar with his thinking but not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

Coinciding with the heated debate over tariffs, Trump's communications director Hope Hicks, one of his closest and most devoted aides, announced her resignation last week, leaving a glaring vacancy in the informal cadre of Trump loyalists in the White House.

Turnover after just over a year in office is nothing new, but the Trump administration has churned through staff at a dizzying pace since taking office last January, and allies are worried the situation could descend into a free-fall.

Making matters worse, the list of prospects to replace departing aides grows shorter as the sense of turmoil increases. Vacancies abound throughout the West Wing and the administration at large, from critical roles like staff secretary to more junior positions in the press office.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Josh Boak, Jill Colvin, Catherine Lucey, Lisa Mascaro, Darlene Superville and Ken Thomas contributed.

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

Trump administration suing California over sanctuary laws

By **SADIE GURMAN** and **DON THOMPSON**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Tuesday sued to block California laws that extend protections to people living in the U.S. illegally, the most aggressive move yet in its push to force so-called sanctuary cities and states to cooperate with immigration authorities. California officials remained characteristically defiant, vowing to defend their landmark legislation.

The Justice Department argued a trio of state laws that, among other things, bar police from asking people about their citizenship status or participating in federal immigration enforcement activities are unconstitutional and have kept federal agents from doing their jobs. The lawsuit named as defendants the state of California, Gov. Jerry Brown and Attorney General Xavier Becerra.

"I say, bring it on," said California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, a Los Angeles Democrat who wrote the sanctuary state bill.

It is the latest salvo in an escalating feud between the Trump administration and California, which has resisted the president on issues like taxes and marijuana policy and defiantly refuses to help federal agents detain and deport undocumented immigrants. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has said it will increase its presence in California, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions wants to cut off funding to jurisdictions that won't cooperate.

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The lawsuit was filed as the Justice Department is also reviewing Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf's decision to warn of an immigration sweep in advance, which ICE said allowed hundreds of immigrants to elude detention. Schaaf said Tuesday the city would "continue to inform all residents about their constitutional rights."

The state laws being challenged were a response to President Donald Trump's hawkish immigration policies and widespread fear in immigrant communities following a campaign in which he promised to sharply ramp up the deportation of people living in the U.S. illegally. The decision to sue California shows Sessions and Trump remain aligned on this priority, even as their relationship has recently deteriorated, with Trump attacking his attorney general and Sessions pushing back.

Brown mimicked Trump on Twitter Tuesday night, writing: "At a time of unprecedented political turmoil, Jeff Sessions has come to California to further divide and polarize America. Jeff, these political stunts may be the norm in Washington, but they don't work here. SAD!!!"

One of California's laws prohibits employers from letting immigration agents enter worksites or view employee files without a subpoena or warrant, an effort to prevent workplace raids. Another stops local governments from contracting with for-profit companies and ICE to hold immigrants. Justice Department officials, speaking to reporters Tuesday, said that violates the Constitution's supremacy clause, which renders invalid state laws that conflict with federal ones.

The Supreme Court reinforced the federal government's primacy in enforcing immigration law when it blocked much of Arizona's tough 2010 immigration law on similar grounds. The high court found several key provisions undermined federal immigration law, though it upheld a provision requiring officers, while enforcing other laws, to question the immigration status of people suspected of being in the country illegally.

Sessions planned to discuss the lawsuit Wednesday at an annual gathering of law enforcement officers in Sacramento.

"The Department of Justice and the Trump administration are going to fight these unjust, unfair and unconstitutional policies that have been imposed on you," he said in prepared remarks. "I believe that we are going to win."

Sessions has blamed sanctuary city policies for crime and gang violence and announced in July that cities and states could only receive certain grants if they cooperate with immigration agents. California is suing to force the administration to release one such grant. The state wants a judge to certify that its laws are in compliance with federal immigration law.

Defenders of sanctuary policies say they increase public safety by promoting trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, while allowing police resources to be used to fight other crimes.

"We're in the business of public safety, not deportation," said Becerra, who insisted the state is on strong legal footing when it comes to dealing with immigration officials. "When people feel confident to come forward to report crimes in our communities or to participate in policing efforts without fear of deportation, they are more likely to cooperate with the criminal justice system altogether."

Sessions' audience Wednesday includes members of the California Peace Officers' Association and groups representing police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, narcotics investigators and the California Highway Patrol.

The groups' members have often been split on sanctuary policies. None of the groups favored the state law restricting cooperation with immigration officials, but only the California State Sheriffs' Association was actively opposed and some individual officials voiced support.

Protesters from labor unions, the Democratic Party and immigrant rights organizations planned to rally along with some state and local elected officials outside the hotel where Sessions will speak.

Becerra, a Democrat who is up for election in November, has been sharply critical of Republicans Trump and Sessions, particularly on immigration policies. He will speak to the same conference later Wednesday.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Cooper and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento contributed to this report. Thompson reported from Sacramento.

Nashville mayor resigns after affair, pleads guilty to theft

By JONATHAN MATTISE, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Mayor Megan Barry, a one-time rising star in the Democratic Party with big plans to remake Nashville, resigned Tuesday after pleading guilty to cheating the city out of thousands of dollars to carry on an affair with her bodyguard.

The resignation marked a swift fall for Barry, who stunned the city in late January when she confessed to an extramarital relationship with the former head of her security detail.

"While my time today as your mayor concludes, my unwavering love and sincere affection for this wonderful city and its great people will never come to an end," the 54-year-old Barry said at a news conference shortly after appearing before a judge. She did not take questions.

Barry and her former bodyguard, police Sgt. Robert Forrest, separately pleaded guilty to felony theft. Barry's resignation was part of a plea bargain with prosecutors. She and Forrest were sentenced to three years' probation.

Barry also agreed to reimburse the city \$11,000, while Forrest will return \$45,000 that authorities said was paid to him in salary or overtime when he was not actually performing his duties as security chief.

A state investigation into the matter was closed after the plea deal, essentially ending the case.

In court, Barry didn't say how she stole money from the city, but investigators have said they believe she engaged in the affair while she was on city-paid trips and Forrest was on the clock. The district attorney's office later said the money Barry paid was for Forrest's travel expenses while he was on personal time.

Authorities found two nude or partially nude photos of a woman that were taken by Forrest's phone while he was on duty. The photos were shot last May and October, on days that Barry's travel schedule shows she was on trips to Washington.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation did not identify the woman in the pictures, and Barry has said that if the photos are of her, they were taken without her knowledge.

Vice Mayor David Briley, a fellow Democrat, was sworn in Tuesday afternoon. His first words were: "I need some coffee." He called Barry "a friend" and said he hoped she would be able to move past "a horrible moment" in her life.

A special election to choose a new mayor will be held Aug. 2.

Barry was riding high when news broke that she had been having an affair with Forrest, whose wife filed for divorce soon after the relationship became public.

At the time, Barry apologized, denied breaking the law, rebuffed calls for her resignation, and said her husband, Bruce, remained committed to their marriage.

Barry's admission followed the painful loss of the Barrys' only child, Max, in July after an overdose on a combination of drugs, including opioids.

"This is a very bad day. And I'm going to have several more bad days. But this is not my worst day," Barry said in January. "And I will tell you I know the difference between a mistake — I made a serious mistake — but this is not a tragedy."

Elected in 2015, Barry maintained a high profile in the city, appearing routinely at concerts and other events and spearheading a successful effort to bring professional soccer to Nashville. She was the point person for a \$5.4 billion transit plan that Nashville voters will consider in a referendum in May.

Before becoming mayor, Barry earned an MBA from Vanderbilt University and was an ethics and compliance officer in the telecommunications and health care industries.

Forrest, who had spent more than 31 years with Metro Nashville Police and supervised the mayor's security detail over three administrations, has retired.

Police records show Forrest's overtime more than doubled from 2014-15 to the 2016-17 budget year.

Barry said their affair began in the spring of 2016, according to court papers. She has said the relationship is over but has not disclosed when it ended.

The new mayor, in a statement, called it "a hard day for Nashville" but said Barry's resignation "will en-

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able us to regain focus on the important work of our city.”

Briley promised transparency and said he will work to restore the public trust.

West Virginia teachers cheer pay hike deal to end walkout

By JOHN RABY, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia’s striking teachers cheered, sang and wept joyfully Tuesday as lawmakers voted to give them a 5 percent raise, ending a nine-day walkout that closed schools across the state.

A huge crowd of teachers packing the Capitol jumped up and down, chanted “We love our kids!” and sang John Denver’s “Take Me Home, Country Roads.” The settlement came after a crippling strike had idled hundreds of thousands of students, forced parents to scramble for child care and cast a spotlight on government dysfunction in one of the poorest states in the nation.

State schools Superintendent Steve Paine said in a statement he was “pleased that our students, teachers and service personnel will return to school” Wednesday.

Dale Lee, president of the West Virginia Education Association, formally declared Tuesday evening that the “work action was over” after a consultation among local organizers. That group is the largest teacher organization in West Virginia and Lee said all 55 West Virginia counties had stood together, adding, “without them, today’s agreement would not have happened.”

Earlier, Lee had said of the teachers: “We know that they’re going to be relieved to do what they love best, and that’s taking care of the kids and educating the kids of West Virginia.”

The West Virginia teachers, some of the lowest-paid in the country, had gone without a salary increase for four years. They appeared to have strong public backing throughout their walkout.

“We overcame. We overcame!” teacher Danielle Harris exclaimed, calling it a victory for students as well. “It shows them how democracy is supposed to work, that you don’t just bow down and lay down for anybody. They got the best lesson that they could ever have even though they were out of school.”

Tuesday marked the ninth day of canceled classes for the school system’s 277,000 students and 35,000 employees.

Teachers walked off the job Feb. 22, balking at an initial bill signed by Gov. Jim Justice to bump up their pay 2 percent in the first year as they also complained about rising health insurance costs.

Justice responded last week with an offer to raise teacher pay 5 percent — a proposal the state House approved swiftly but that senators weren’t so eager to sign off on. Instead the Senate countered with an offer of 4 percent on Saturday, prompting leaders of all three unions representing the state’s teachers to announce the walkout was being extended.

After a six-member conference committee agreed Tuesday to the new proposal, the House of Delegates subsequently passed 5 percent raises for teachers, school service personnel and state troopers on a 99-0 vote. The Senate followed, voting 34-0.

At a bill signing ceremony after Tuesday’s vote, Justice declared victory.

“Today is a new day for education in West Virginia. No more looking back!” he proclaimed, surrounded by jubilant education leaders. “We really have to move away from the idea that education is some necessary evil that’s just got to be funded ... toward ... looking at our children and our teachers and education process as an investment ... That’s all there is to it.”

Missed school days will be made up, either at the end of the school year or by shortening spring break, depending on decisions by individual counties. Justice said that would not mean families would go without their summer vacations, however.

Senate Finance Chairman Craig Blair said lawmakers will seek to cut state spending by \$20 million to pay for the raises, taking funds from general government services and Medicaid. Other state workers who also would get 5 percent raises under the deal will have to wait for a budget bill to pass.

Senate Majority Leader Ryan Ferns, a Republican, said talks with the governor’s office lasted into early Tuesday identifying cuts everyone could agree to.

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Justice said additional budget cuts by his staff will fund the raises, but he insisted in response to a question at the news conference that there would be no damaging cuts to Medicaid or programs that help the poor.

Erick Burgess, a teacher from Mercer County, said he was pleased with the salary increase and hoped the teachers' actions in West Virginia would inspire educators elsewhere.

"Teachers seem to be mistreated throughout the country, so we are hoping other teachers and other public employees step up and tell their government they have had enough," he said.

Associated Press writers Robert Ray in Charleston and Michael Virtanen in Morgantown, West Virginia, contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, March 7, the 66th day of 2018. There are 299 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 7, 1965, a march by civil rights demonstrators was violently broken up at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, by state troopers and a sheriff's posse in what came to be known as "Bloody Sunday."

On this date:

In 1530, Pope Clement VII threatened to excommunicate England's King Henry VIII if he went through with plans to marry Anne Boleyn, who became Henry's second wife after Catherine of Aragon. (The pope made good on his excommunication threat in 1533.)

In 1793, during the French Revolutionary Wars, France declared war on Spain.

In 1850, in a three-hour speech to the U.S. Senate, Daniel Webster of Massachusetts endorsed the Compromise of 1850 as a means of preserving the Union.

In 1918, Japanese corporation Panasonic had its beginnings as Konosuke Matsushita (maht-soosh-tah) founded Matsushita Electric Housewares Manufacturing Works in Osaka. The musical comedy "Oh, Look!" featuring the song "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" opened on Broadway.

In 1926, the first successful trans-Atlantic radio-telephone conversations took place between New York and London.

In 1936, Adolf Hitler ordered his troops to march into the Rhineland, thereby breaking the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') and the Locarno Pact.

In 1945, during World War II, U.S. forces crossed the Rhine at Remagen, Germany, using the damaged but still usable Ludendorff Bridge.

In 1955, the first TV production of the musical "Peter Pan" starring Mary Martin aired on NBC.

In 1967, the musical "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," based on the "Peanuts" comic strips by Charles M. Schulz, opened in New York's Greenwich Village, beginning an off-Broadway run of 1,597 performances.

In 1975, the U.S. Senate revised its filibuster rule, allowing 60 senators to limit debate in most cases, instead of the previously required two-thirds of senators present.

In 1981, anti-government guerrillas in Colombia executed kidnapped American Bible translator Chester Bitterman, whom they accused of being a CIA agent.

In 1994, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that a parody that pokes fun at an original work can be considered "fair use." (The ruling concerned a parody of the Roy Orbison song "Oh, Pretty Woman" by the rap group 2 Live Crew.)

Ten years ago: On the heels of a gloomy report that 63,000 jobs were lost in February 2008, President George W. Bush said "it's clear our economy has slowed" as he tried to reassure an anxious public that the long-term outlook was good. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Samantha Power, who was acting as an adviser to Barack Obama, resigned after calling rival Hillary Rodham Clinton "a monster." Leon Greenman, the only Englishman sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp, died in London at age 97.

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Five years ago: The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously for tough new sanctions to punish North Korea for its latest nuclear test; a furious Pyongyang threatened a nuclear strike against the United States. The Senate confirmed John Brennan to be CIA director, 63-34, after the Obama administration bowed to demands from Republicans blocking the nomination and stated explicitly there were limits to the president's power to use drones against U.S. terror suspects on American soil. Sybil Christopher, 83, the wife of Richard Burton left in 1963 to marry Elizabeth Taylor, and who became a theater producer and nightclub founder, died in New York.

One year ago: WikiLeaks published thousands of documents described as secret files about CIA hacking tools the government employed to break into users' computers, mobile phones and even smart TVs from companies like Apple, Google, Microsoft and Samsung. The Commerce Department reported the U.S. trade deficit jumped in January 2017 by 9.6 percent to \$48.5 billion, the highest level in nearly five years as a flood of mobile phones and other consumer products widened America's trade gap with China. A freight train smashed into a charter bus at a rail crossing in Biloxi, Mississippi, leaving four people dead.

Today's Birthdays: TV personality Willard Scott is 84. International Motorsports Hall of Famer Janet Guthrie is 80. Actor Daniel J. Travanti is 78. Entertainment executive Michael Eisner is 76. Rock musician Chris White (The Zombies) is 75. Rock singer Peter Wolf is 72. Rock musician Matthew Fisher (Procol Harum) is 72. Pro Football Hall of Famer Franco Harris is 68. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Lynn Swann is 66. Rhythm-and-blues singer-musician Ernie Isley (The Isley Brothers) is 66. Rock musician Kenny Aronoff (BoDeans, John Mellencamp) is 65. Actor Bryan Cranston is 62. Actress Donna Murphy is 59. Actor Nick Searcy is 59. Golfer Tom Lehman is 59. International Tennis Hall of Famer Ivan Lendl is 58. Actress Mary Beth Evans is 57. Singer-actress Taylor Dayne is 56. Actor Bill Brochtrup is 55. Author E.L. James is 55. Author Bret Easton Ellis is 54. Opera singer Denyce Graves is 54. Comedian Wanda Sykes is 54. Actor Jonathan Del Arco is 52. Rock musician Randy Guss (Toad the Wet Sprocket) is 51. Actress Rachel Weisz (wys) is 48. Actor Peter Sarsgaard is 47. Actor Jay Duplass is 45. Classical singer Sebastien Izambard (Il Divo) is 45. Rock singer Hugo Ferreira (Tantric) is 44. Actress Jenna Fischer is 44. Actor Tobias Menzies is 44. Actress Sarayu Rao is 43. Actress Audrey Marie Anderson is 43. Actor TJ Thyne is 43. Bluegrass singer-musician Frank Solivan is 41. Actress Laura Prepon is 38. Actress Bel Powley is 26. Actress Giselle Eisenberg (TV: "Life in Pieces") is 11.

Thought for Today: "Caveat actor." (Let the doer beware.) — Latin proverb.