

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 1 of 71



Dakota Brush

Brooms, Brushes, Mops, Can Liners, Paper Products.

Get Ready for Spring With
Wash Brushes & Squeegees

397-9337

104 N. Main, Groton

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Dakota Brush Ad
- 2- Gov. Dennis Daugaard's Weekly Column
- 3- Bills signed into law
- 4- Rep. Kristi Noem's Weekly Column
- 5- EarthTalk
- 6- Sen. John Thune's Weekly Column
- 7- Help Wanted at Groton Care & Rehab
- 7- Book Fair Ad
- 7- BDM Rural Water Ad
- 7- Henry Township Review Board Notice
- 8- Sen. Mike Rounds' Weekly Column
- 9- Black Hills gold mine plan ignites protests
- 14- State DI T-shirt Design
- 15- Today in Weather History
- 16- Today's Forecast
- 17- Yesterday's Weather
- 17- Today's Weather Info
- 17- National Weather Map
- 18- Daily Devotional
- 19- 2018 Community Events
- 20- News from the Associated Press

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**

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 2 of 71



2018 Legislative Session Accomplishments

As I write this, the South Dakota State Legislature is concluding the main run of its legislative session. This has been a productive year in Pierre, and I think South Dakotans can be proud of what has been accomplished.

Most importantly, our state continued its streak, going back to statehood, of a balanced budget. Our budget is honestly balanced. We used ongoing revenue streams to fund ongoing expenses, and one-time revenues only for one-time purposes. We do not rely on accounting tricks. We maintain a budget reserve fund equal to ten percent of expenditures. It is for this reason that our state has earned and maintained a AAA bond rating, which speaks to our fiscal strength.

When I proposed a state budget in December, revenue growth was very slow. For that reason, I was not able to propose inflationary increases for education, Medicaid providers, or state employee salaries. Fortunately, our state's economy has ticked upward in the last three months, so the state budget we passed will include increases for all of those recipients. We were also able to allocate dollars to the state employee health plan, to keep employee costs as low as possible.

The budget also includes funding to continue the dual credit program for high school students, to contribute toward a new Precision Ag facility at SDSU and a health education building at Lake Area Tech, and to construct a state veterans cemetery near Sioux Falls. The Building South Dakota economic development also received a reliable, long-term revenue source.

This year, the legislature passed numerous bills to modernize our state's alcohol industry. The emerging micro-brewing industry will be able to expand and to sell their products to bars and consumers. Farm wineries gained greater flexibility to operate as well. For the first time in decades, the entire alcohol title was rewritten, increasing clarity and easing the regulatory burden.

We also recognized that the open waters compromise, which the legislature passed last summer in a special session, is working, and we passed legislation to make the compromise permanent. Although access to public waters will always be an issue, after twenty years we have finally brought certainty and found an answer that is working for landowners and sportsmen.

Bills were also brought to strengthen our ties to our tribes. Legislation was passed allowing tribal governments to extradite their members back from county jails, if they choose. We also passed legislation recognizing the right of tribal members to wear traditional regalia, such as an eagle feather, at high school graduations.

Significantly, every single accomplishment I have mentioned was passed on a bipartisan basis. With the partisan gridlock in Washington, South Dakotans can be proud that our legislature takes on big issues in a practical, bipartisan fashion.

I first came to Pierre for the legislative session in 1997 when I was first elected a state senator. I spent six years as a senator, eight years as lieutenant governor, and now eight years as governor. Over those twenty-two sessions, I have served with hundreds of good people – men and women, Republicans and Democrats, farmers, teachers, nurses and attorneys.

South Dakota's legislators are not career politicians. They come to Pierre for a few weeks to serve their friends and neighbors, and then they return home to live amongst the people they serve. In the coming days, if you happen to see one of your legislators, please say thank you for a job well done.

Gov. Daugaard Signs Open Waters Compromise Sunset Repeal; Also Signs Other Bills Into Law

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed House Bill 1081 yesterday, repealing the sunset clause regarding the recreational use of nonmeandered water. Gov. Daugaard also signed the following bills:

SB 97 – provide a special motor vehicle license plate for certain women veterans.

SB 140 – revise provisions regarding an objection to a custody or visitation order.

SB 144 – revise certain provisions related to party affiliation on voter registration cards.

SB 148 – revise the list of organizations that may approve and accredit a nonpublic school.

SB 164 – prohibit certain instances of inserting a urinary catheter without consent of the patient.

SB 165 – revise certain provisions regarding child custody and visitation and the enforcement of those provisions.

SB 169 – revise certain provisions regarding confections that contain alcohol and to declare an emergency.

SB 212 – revise certain provisions regarding the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications assistance to schools.

HB 1007 – require any initiated measure to embrace only one subject.

HB 1054 – revise certain provisions regarding crimes that are considered violent for parole calculation purposes.

HB 1083 – revise certain provisions regarding permits to carry a concealed pistol and to declare an emergency.

HB 1104 – revise certain provisions regarding the arrest of certain victims of domestic abuse.

HB 1106 – authorize hunting preference points to be granted to persons age ten years or older.

HB 1110 – increase the penalty for certain subsequent convictions of hiring for sexual activity or promoting prostitution.

HB 1121 – revise the fees for certain on-sale and off-sale retail liquor licenses.

HB 1155 – create provisions regarding the language development of deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

HB 1162 – provide for the placement of a proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot at a special election held at the same time as the next primary election, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.

HB 1248 – revise certain provisions regarding filing and recording secured transaction records with the Office of the Secretary of State.

HB 1270 – adjust the period of time requiring the use of lighted front and rear lamps on motor vehicles.

HB 1273 – revise certain provisions regarding convention facility on-sale licenses to sell alcoholic beverages.

HB 1281 – revise certain provisions regarding persons on probation and to declare an emergency.

HB 1318 – authorize the South Dakota Health and Educational Facilities Authority to transfer or grant excess reserves to any South Dakota governmental entity.



Not for Sale

There was a sting operation conducted in Watertown in February 2013. Undercover ads were placed on a website that's known for trafficking young girls for sex called Backpage. Over the course of two days, the ad received 110 responses.

This is not a major city. It's someone's hometown. It's a place with a sense of community – a place built on the idea of a strong family and an understanding of what's right and what's wrong. And yet even in this community, websites like Backpage have been able to facilitate the buying and selling of our children.

As we saw in the Watertown sting operation, criminals use the internet to hide their disgusting requests. In fact, studies have shown around 70 percent of child sex trafficking survivors were at some point sold online. Websites like Backpage are profiting immensely because of it.

By some reports, Backpage is responsible for 70 percent of prostitution advertising among the major websites that carry such ads. And it's believed that more than 90 percent of Backpage's profits come from their adult advertisements.

These "adult advertisements" may have contained adult content, but in many cases, it was children they were selling. According to court documents filed with the California Department of Justice, these sales earn the owners of Backpage between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million a month in California alone.

With this evidence in mind, it's clear Backpage is a standout in this area. Their business model relies on the buying and selling of human beings, and it needs to end.

Knowing this, the House passed the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act, which I cosponsored. This bill aims to crack down on websites that knowingly facilitate the buying and selling of our children. It makes sure states and victims have the tools they need to hold these sickening websites legally accountable. After all, sex predators should never be able to find immunity by hiding behind a computer screen.

Additionally, work continues on legislation I introduced to expand housing opportunities for survivors. In many cases, those who have been trafficked require stronger security protocols and different support services than other victims of violence. My legislation is designed to extend transitional housing, healing and hope to many more trafficking survivors.

But not every solution to human trafficking is a federal solution. You too can play a role by learning what to look out for. The U.S. State Department includes these among the red flags: living with an employer, poor living conditions, multiple people in a cramped space, inability to speak to an individual alone, signs of physical abuse, and submissive or fearful behavior. For urgent situations, dial 911. You may also call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

Every 30 seconds, a child is sold for sex. While we often think of it as a problem that primarily exists overseas, the reality is that it occurs in our backyards too. We have to fight back. We have to let the world know that our kids are not for sale.

EARTHTALK ™

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: Now Trump is going to allow the importing of elephant "trophies" after all! Where do things stand overall now in the fight to protect endangered species, especially as wildlife now also face threats from climate change? -- Mark Harrison, Sumter, SC

In what some see as another capitulation to the National Rifle Association (NRA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) undid an earlier ban on importing elephant parts from Africa, now allowing hunters to get permits on "a case-by-case basis."

News like this makes the whole wildlife situation seem grim—and it is. But many scientists and activists are working hard to try to secure protections for threatened species and wildlife habitat in the face of many assaults by the pro-development Trump administration and Republican-controlled Congress.

Back in mid-2016, candidate Trump's talk of reneging on the Paris climate accord didn't bode well for wildlife facing increasing threats due to global warming. After all, many of the 340 species added to the nation's endangered species list during President Obama's watch got there due to climate-related threats.

Last Fall the White House denied petitions to add some 25 threatened wildlife species—including the Pacific walrus, Florida Keys mole skink, and eastern boreal toad—to the nation's endangered species list. Officials from USFWS cited "uncertainty" over the future effects of climate change as a rationale.

"You couldn't ask for a clearer sign that the Trump administration puts corporate profits ahead of protecting endangered species," says Noah Greenwald of the non-profit Center for Biological Diversity (CBD). "Denying protection for these 25 species despite the imminent threat of climate change and ongoing habitat destruction is typical of the Trump administration's head-in-the-sand approach."

The appointment of Ryan Zinke to head the Department of Interior was further proof that President Trump values resource extraction on public lands over conservation of wildlife.

And the story only gets worse. This past January, USFWS initiated proceedings to take the Canadian lynx off the threatened list altogether and downgrade a number of other species from endangered to threatened.

CBD has led the charge in filing several concurrent lawsuits against these moves by the Trump administration. Most recently, the group filed suit in federal court to overturn the White House decision to deny threatened protection for the Pacific walrus. "We're confident the court will see this...as a politically driven decision that completely ignores the agency's legal obligations to protect imperiled wildlife," says CBD attorney Emily Jeffers.

Meanwhile, the legislative branch isn't helping wildlife or its advocates much either. Congress' 2018 budget bill is chock full of "riders" aimed to cut endangered species protections for wolves in Wyoming and the Midwest, the greater sage grouse of the Southwest and other iconic American wildlife species, not to mention cuts to funding to bolster states' endangered species protection programs.

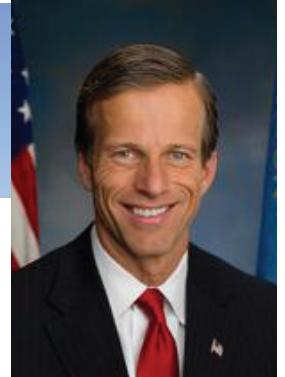
Wildlife lovers everywhere can keep their fingers crossed that upcoming mid-term elections will at least be a step in the right direction — as long as Democrats can gain seats in the House and Senate — when it comes to saving the wildlife that helped make America great in the first place.

CONTACT: CBD, biologicaldiversity.org; USFWS, www.fws.gov.

EarthTalk® is a weekly syndicated column produced by Doug Moss and Roddy Scheer for the non-profit EarthTalk. To find out more, submit a question, or make a donation, visit us at EarthTalk.org.



John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Cherry Blossoms, a Capitol Tour, and a Cup of Joe

The recent blizzard that blanketed communities across South Dakota with a fresh layer of the white stuff was a harsh reminder that Mother Nature's winter grip remains strong. Punxsutawney Phil didn't do us any favors either. So, while snow still covers a vast majority of the state, spring will be here before we know it. And not a moment too soon, I might add. With spring comes spring break, and with spring break comes a surge of vacationing families and students to the nation's capital, which is as exciting and predictable as the change in seasons itself.

If your family or organization is one of the many that will be making the trek from South Dakota to Washington, D.C., this spring, we'd love to see you. Not only will you be able to enjoy some warmer weather (hopefully) and soak up the sights, like the famous Japanese cherry blossoms, but my office can assist you with things like booking tours of federal buildings, including the Capitol, Supreme Court, or Library of Congress. If you need help, just send us an email, give us a call, or stop by in person.

If you decide to stop by my Washington office, which I hope you do, I'd like to extend an open invitation to your family or organization for the South Dakota Sunrise Coffee, which I host weekly with Sen. Mike Rounds and Rep. Kristi Noem. It's a free event that is open to any South Dakotan who is in town. While folks enjoy coffee and donuts, the congressional delegation will provide an update on what's happening in Congress and then open it up for feedback to hear what's on your mind.

If you're interested in attending one of the upcoming events, call my office or visit my website, www.thune.senate.gov, and search "sunrise coffee" to sign up. It's a great opportunity. More than 500 South Dakotans attended these events last year, and I hope we can welcome even more people, including you and your family, in 2018.


Already at this year's Sunrise Coffees, in addition to the families that have been in town visiting, we've seen representatives from South Dakota State University, Oglala Lakota College, Sisseton Wahpeton College, the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars, Sanford Underground Research Facility, the South Dakota Small Business Development Center, the South Dakota Corn Growers Association, and many more.

While my job as your senator requires me to be in Washington at times, a lot of the important work gets done when I'm back home in South Dakota, traveling the state and meeting with people in communities, large and small. So, if I don't find you at a Sunrise Coffee, I'll be sure to catch you back in the 605. Don't be a stranger.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 7 of 71

Scholastic Book Fairs®



Paws for Books
BOOK FAIR

"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



1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton

Henry Township Review Board Notice

Henry Township Equalization Meeting Notice:

Notice is hereby given that the governing body section will serve as review board of Henry Township, Brown County. They will be meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, March 19, 2018, at Doug Abeln Seed Company office for the purpose of reviewing and correcting of the assessment set of the tax districts for the year 2018. All persons considering disputing their assessments are requested to notify the clerk of the board no later than March 15, 2018. Hearings are by appointment only.

Darlene Sass
13120 403 Ave, Groton
Henry Township Clerk

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!



FARM Act Necessary to Prevent Farmers and Ranchers from Being Subject to Needless EPA Regulations

Farmers and ranchers in South Dakota work hard to grow and raise quality products for consumers. They also take great pride in caring for our natural resources and making sure they are available for future generations to use. The federal government should not needlessly get in the way of the work they do to help feed and fuel a growing population.

I recently co-sponsored the Fair Agricultural Reporting Method (FARM) Act, a bipartisan bill to protect farmers and ranchers from EPA reporting requirements for animal waste emissions. This legislation, which was introduced by Senator Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) and now has 33 bipartisan cosponsors, also prevents activist interest groups from attempting to redefine congressional intent related to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) in the future. Our bill would provide producers with greater certainty by reinstating the status quo producers have been operating under since EPA's 2008 final rule exempting them from this reporting rule.

Let me take a moment to explain why our bill is necessary. In 1980, CERCLA was established to manage hazardous waste and respond to environmental emergencies and natural disasters. It was meant to be used to clean up land that was identified by the EPA as hazardous or contaminated, and make sure that local communities are able to safely manage hazardous waste. Animal waste contains ammonia and hydrogen sulfide, which are both considered hazardous substances under CERCLA, so in 2008, the EPA amended the rule to exempt animal waste at agricultural operations from CERCLA reporting requirements.

However, in 2017, a court case against the EPA initiated by an environmental activist group resulted in a decision that reversed the animal waste exemption, leaving approximately 200,000 ag producers subject to burdensome, time-consuming and costly reporting requirements for animal waste emissions. Congress never intended these be imposed on family farming operations, who are already responsibly and safely working to produce enough food and fuel for a growing global population.

As the chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Oversight, I recently held a legislative hearing on the FARM Act. We were able to hear from witnesses involved in farming and ranching about how EPA reporting requirements on animal waste have impacted their businesses, including Todd Mortenson who runs a ranch in Stanley County. Todd explained to the committee that the FARM Act will help make sure farmers and ranchers are able to focus on doing their jobs, rather than complying with unnecessary paperwork requirements.

South Dakota's farmers and ranchers are some of the hardest working people I know. The FARM Act prevents them from being subject to needless regulations that have no environmental benefit – so they can focus on working on their land and feeding the world. I look forward to working with my colleagues to get it across the finish line in a timely manner.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 9 of 71

Black Hills gold mine plan ignites protests

One paved road leads in and out of Rochford, a remote Pennington County town that suddenly has become the center of a heated and growing debate over a proposal to mine for gold in a pristine part of the northern Black Hills.

With state permits in hand, a Canadian prospecting company has begun drilling exploratory holes just south of Rochford to test its theory that potentially historic quantities of top-grade gold may lie beneath the ponderosa pines and rocky hillsides around the town.

If gold is found, Mineral Mountain Resources of Vancouver foresees a future for Rochford in which the firm or another major mining company could remove millions of ounces of gold, putting it on scale with the famed Homestake Mine that operated in nearby Lead for more than a century. Company officials say they can explore safely and that mining can be done underground with minimal impact.

But the drilling and potential for mining have set off a wave of opposition and protest. One Rochford resident has joined environmentalists and Native Americans who fear the drilling and mining could destroy a secluded section of the Black Hills, harm fish and wildlife, and foul Rapid Creek, which provides fresh water to Rapid City.

Protesters held a march opposing the drilling and three members of the Cheyenne River Tribe filed a lawsuit to block further exploration. In remarks to federal officials, Oglala Sioux Tribe President Scott Weston warned that "a war" with "bloodshed" may be waged if drilling continues.

Quiet town, loud protests

In many ways, the town of Rochford, population 8, epitomizes the character of the northern Black Hills of South Dakota.

The air is crisp and smells pleasantly of pine. Towering ridges encircle the almost uninhabited downtown. Bicyclists dodge deer when pedaling the Mickelson Trail that rolls like a ribbon alongside Rapid Creek. Fly rods are more or less mandatory.

There's no cell phone service, no gas station, no grocery store. The only touristy touch is the iconic burger-and-beer hangout known as Moonshine Gulch Saloon, which serves locals, outdoor enthusiasts and the bikers who trek to scenic Rochford during the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally every August.

For a growing cadre of environmentalists and Native Americans, it's unthinkable that the town and pristine hills around it could be considered the site of a huge new gold mine.

One opponent has already noticed signs of industrial activity around Rochford, such as widened forest roads and increased truck traffic. Many in the increasingly vocal opposition say mining could spoil the land, desecrate sacred Native sites, and contaminate the water of Rapid Creek which flows to Pactola Reservoir and makes up part of the drinking water supply for Rapid City.

"There's absolutely no reason to destroy this," said John Hopkins, a Rochford resident. "It's beautiful, it's sacred, it's irreplaceable."

In company materials online, Mineral Mountain said the Rochford claim could become "another Homestake," a reference to one of the world's most productive gold mines and an enterprise that shaped the cities of Lead and Deadwood just 20 miles north of Rochford.

The reference may have helped the company raise money for exploration, but the mere mention of



Moonshine Gulch is a popular tourist attraction in the Black Hills. It is located near the site of a proposed mining operation. Photo: Bart Pfankuch

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 10 of 71

Homestake has heightened the fear of opponents.

They envision another open-pit gold mine in their beloved Black Hills, not unlike Homestake's roughly square-mile, 1,250-foot deep pit that is now the dominant physical feature in downtown Lead.

Mineral Mountain CEO Nelson Baker, however, dismisses that idea. Baker said the depth and type of gold he expects to find in Rochford does not lend itself to an open cut-type mine, but rather an underground operation whose only visible above-ground feature would be a mineshaft opening.

"There's no way we would consider putting an open pit in Rochford," Baker said, noting that open pit mines typically produce lower-quality gold than underground operations.

However, Baker cannot guarantee what another mining company could do if Mineral Mountain sold its claims, though in an email he stated: "I assure you that, even if we turn this project over to a third party, there is no economic reason to consider an open pit scenario."

Even though Homestake produced 40 million ounces of gold, created thousands of jobs and helped build the Lead-Deadwood region during its 126-year history, the mine also took a toll on the environment.

**"There's absolutely no reason to destroy this.
It's beautiful, it's sacred, it's irreplaceable."**

– John Hopkins, Rochford resident.

According to a 1971 study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Homestake discharged 312 pounds of cyanide and 2,700 pounds of suspended solids daily into a tributary of Whitewood Creek, which flows into the Belle Fourche River. The agency estimated that historically more than 270,000 tons of arsenic from Homestake were discharged into the creek. In 1981, an 18-mile section of Whitewood Creek was declared an EPA Superfund site that took 15 years to remediate.

About seven miles east of Lead, the Gilt Edge Mine remains one of only two EPA Superfund sites in South Dakota. The EPA and state of South Dakota have spent more than \$105 million over the past two decades to clean up arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper and lead contamination present when Canadian-based Brohm Mining declared bankruptcy and abandoned the mine in 1999. The company left behind 150 million gallons of acid-contaminated water in three open pits and millions of cubic yards of acid-generating rock, according to EPA documents.

Mineral Mountain has a blemish of its own in the Black Hills. The firm hired a contractor to drill exploratory holes near Keystone in the Central Black Hills from 2012-15. In November 2012, a torn liner at the drill site leaked a small amount of bentonite and other drilling fluids into Battle Creek. The spill was quickly contained and caused no significant damage to the creek, according to the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The spill was an extremely rare event for Mineral Mountain, and the company changed contractors and began to use a sturdier liner after the leak, Baker said.

Only one major gold mine remains in operation in the northern Black Hills – the Wharf Mine, which operates an open-pit gold mine about four miles west of Lead. The mine, owned by Chicago-based Coeur Mining, employs about 215 people and produced more than 96,000 ounces of gold in 2017. According to a report by the International Cyanide Management Institute, the Wharf Mine uses cyanide in its gold separation processes and is fully in compliance with all safety regulations regarding the chemical.

Concerns over the potential for contamination of Rapid Creek and groundwater supplies have drawn the ire of groups that fight to protect water in western South Dakota. Their cause gained steam when a retired mining executive released a report that showed how water contaminated near Rochford could flow to Pactola Reservoir, one source of fresh water for Rapid City, in just 29 to 36 minutes.

The report by George "Duff" Kruse was titled "Save Rochford & Rapid Creek" and spawned a Facebook page of the same name. Kruse's report contained frightening photos of other U.S. mining disasters paired with the phrase, "Is this what we want to happen to Rapid Creek and Rochford?"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 11 of 71



This map shows the general area within which a Canadian prospecting firm has bought mining claims near Rochford. The map also shows where the company is now conducting exploratory drilling. Graphic: Matt Jensen Marketing

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 12 of 71

Several Native American tribes are also fighting to stop the project, including the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, whose members filed a lawsuit in Pennington County court in February to stop the project. The suit alleges that Mineral Mountain illegally transferred its existing gold mining permit to a newly created South Dakota affiliate of Mineral Mountain.

Tribal members also say the proposed mining area is within a few miles from the Pe Sla lands, one of the Sioux Nation's most sacred sites near Deerfield Lake. Four Sioux tribes paid \$9 million for roughly 2,300 acres of land at Pe Sla, which means "Heart of Everything," in 2012 and 2014.

The sacred opposition to mining is coupled with practical concerns for many tribal members. Carla Marshall of Rapid City, an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, said that mining disrupts the natural world and puts the future of humankind at risk.

"For them to come in and start using that water and start drilling into Mother Earth, that disturbs the heavy metals that are encased in Mother Earth for a reason," Marshall said. "The whole issue here is trying to protect our water for future generations, and that's not just a Native issue."

About 50 people, many Native American, held a protest march in Rochford in late February. Hopkins, the mine opponent, said law enforcement presence was heavy. Forest Service spokesman Scott Jacobson said state officers and sheriff's deputies were present for the march.

Jacobson said Forest Service officials have been meeting with tribal leaders to hear their concerns and explain details of the permit application to drill on public land, which remains under review. The agency has received more than 100 public comments regarding the application, he said.

"Our eyes are wide open," he said. "We're just trying to make sure there's dialogue and conversation." Authorities may have reason to be concerned given the lengthy environmental protests over the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota in 2016, and the recent comment by tribal president Weston.

"You will have war if this happens," Weston told Forest Service officials, according to a report in the Native Sun News Today newspaper that was confirmed by Jacobson. "There will be bloodshed because we have to stand up for our children and our grandchildren."

Firm promises safety

Mineral Mountain Resources, has purchased the mining claims to hunt for gold on 7,516 acres, or about 12 square miles. The firm obtained the necessary state permits and hired a Colorado company, First Drilling, to drill as many as 120 prospecting holes up to 4,000 feet deep at a dozen drilling sites just south of Rochford to test Mineral Mountain's theory that gold is present in financially worthy amounts.

Mineral Mountain, which paid \$250 for a state permit and put up a \$20,000 bond, is pumping water for drilling from Rapid Creek just east of Rochford.

During the first phase of drilling now underway, Mineral Mountain plans to sink nine holes about 4 inches wide on private land to obtain core samples to check for gold. Each phase of drilling, if successful, may lead to further phases of drilling. Once the drilling is complete, the hole is closed and capped.

The firm has an application filed with the U.S. Forest Service to drill up to 21 exploratory holes on public land near Rochford. That application is pending and still under review, according to Jacobson.

According to its temporary water use permit with the DENR, the firm can use 200 gallons of water per minute, or roughly 300,000 gallons a day up to a total of 1.8 million gallons through May 1. When the temporary water permit expires, the firm must apply for a new permit.

Drilling is taking place 24 hours a day in 12-hour shifts. The drilling water is recirculated to optimize use and eventually deposited in an environmentally safe area, Baker said.

Mineral Mountain is led by Baker, a 75-year-old Canadian who obtained an environmental engineering degree from the South Dakota School of Mines in Rapid City in the late 1960s. Baker said he has been involved with exploration of 1,000 potential mine sites during his career. Mineral Mountain formed in 2010 and has conducted 20 mineral explorations, he said.

Baker said his company is committed to safety, following all state and federal regulations "to a T," and to protection of the environment. He said the firm has already invested about \$7 million to prospect in the Black Hills over the past five years, including about \$2 million to buy mine claims near Rochford. The

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 13 of 71

firm paid \$500,000 to purchase the former Standby Gold Mine where it is starting its exploratory drilling.

The firm also spent \$500,000 for a high-resolution aerial study of the Rochford topography that indicated the likely presence of gold and makes more than \$100,000 in annual payments to the state of South Dakota to keep its mine claims registered.

Early indicators show the Rochford area holds substantial gold deposits, Baker said. He said the Homestake Mine likely would have mined the area if the price of gold had remained sustainable and if the company had not run into financial difficulties. But with gold prices hovering around \$1,335 an ounce, and positive preliminary signs, exploration is worth the cost, he said.

If an economically feasible amount of gold is found, a major international mining company, such as Goldcorp of Canada or Newmont Mining of Colorado, would likely be sold the rights to establish and operate the mine, Baker said.

However, it could take more than a decade and upward of \$300 million to make the mine a reality, Baker said.

But as the son of a prospector whose son, Brad, is also now a prospector with Mineral Mountain, Baker believes the gold is worth going after. "All my life, I've been exploring and looking for mineral deposits,"



This bridge on Bloody Gulch Road over Rapid Creek leads to the site where a Colorado contractor hired by Mineral Mountain Resources is conducting exploratory drilling for gold in the Black Hills. Photo: Bart Pfankuch

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 14 of 71

he said, "because for me it's a passion."

Baker said that zeal extends to his firm's commitment to follow all applicable regulations and to the protection of natural resources, including returning drilled areas back to their natural state.

"We're good corporate citizens and we're just as much environmentalists as the locals are there," Baker said, noting he has never before encountered such resistance to an exploration effort. "Rest assured we're going to make absolutely sure we don't destroy any land."

Battle will go on

But promises from Baker will not satisfy fierce project opponents like Hopkins.

Hopkins is a 72-year-old retired Army major who served in Quang Tri during the Vietnam War and survived prostate cancer after being exposed to Agent Orange.

Hopkins, an Ohio native, said he has lived all over the world and chose Rochford to spend his final days due to the beauty, remoteness and ability to ride his horses with ease off his property just southwest of town.

"The Hills are just full of life," he said. "It's an experience living here. It's gorgeous from morning to night."

Hopkins is aware of Rochford's role in mining history, which includes numerous small abandoned gold mines in the Hills and hundreds of small claims staked throughout the area. On a recent drive through the exploration area, Hopkins pointed out a ramshackle wooden stamp house used by miners in the late 1800s not far from his property. But he said those were smaller operations that did not have the capacity to do as much damage as a major modern gold mine.

He regularly traverses the area of the exploratory mining, using a camera and a notebook to document what he believes may be violations of the permit issued to Mineral Mountain.

Hopkins said after six months as a budding activist – attending meetings, participating on conference calls, keeping up with documents and regulatory filings – that he and his wife are already tiring of the fight.

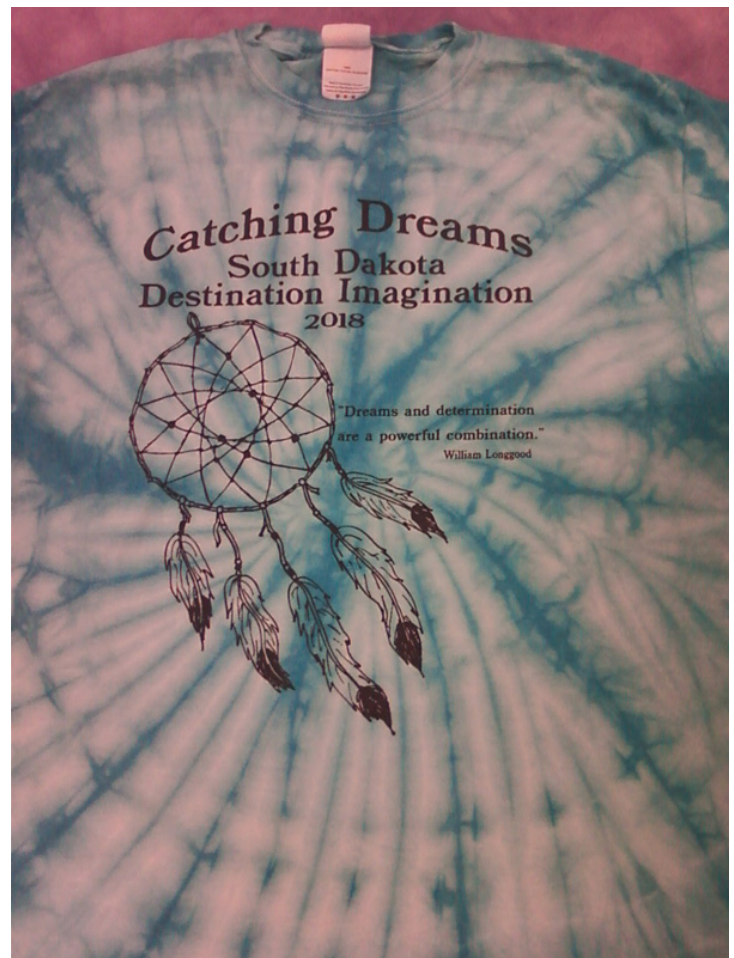
"My nature is to be out in the woods hunting or riding horses," he said. "I'm not an environmentalist to speak of, but this one has me up in arms."

Yet, he said he won't give up until he has done all he can to protect the Black Hills and his rural lifestyle.

"They're going to get 60 million ounces of gold ... and then they're going to take off because they're from Canada," Hopkins said. "They don't care about this territory; all they want is the gold."

About Bart Pfankuch

Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal. Bart has spent almost 30 years as a reporter and editor.



State DI Shirt

Here is the new design of the T-shirt that will be sold at State Destination Imagination Tournament to be held April 7 in Pierre.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 15 of 71

Today in Weather History

March 10, 2005: High winds of 35 to 45 mph with gusts to near 70 mph occurred across all of central and northeast South Dakota from early morning to early evening. The high winds overturned a semi-truck near Mound City; knocked a large branch down onto a pickup truck in Selby; blew a glass door of a store in Clark off; tore a sign down in Aberdeen, and ripped the roof off a mobile home in South Shore.

March 10, 2009: A low-pressure system tracking across the panhandle of Oklahoma into the Great Lakes region produced moderate to heavy snow across northeast South Dakota from the morning to the evening of the 10th. Strong north to northwest winds gusting to 45 mph resulted in blizzard conditions. Travel became difficult, if not, impossible across northeast South Dakota. Interstate 29 between Watertown and the North Dakota border was closed for several hours. Several minor accidents occurred along with some injuries. Snowfall amounts included; 3 inches near Milbank; 4 inches near Columbia, Summit, and at Sisseton; 5 inches at Waubay and Wilmot; 6 inches 10 miles northeast of Sisseton, Britton, and Roy Lake; 7 inches in Webster and Westport.

Bitter cold air filtered in behind the low-pressure system bringing record cold to the area. On the 11th, Aberdeen and Sisseton broke their record low highs for the date with afternoon highs only reaching zero. The record at Aberdeen had been in place since 1896. Sisseton also set a record low of 14 degrees below zero on March 12th.

1884: John Park Finley issued the first experimental tornado prediction. Finley had studied the atmospheric parameters that were present during previous tornadoes. Many of these same criteria are still used by operational forecasters today. But the use of tornado forecasts would be banned just a few years later and would remain banned until 1952.

1912 - The barometric pressure reached 29.26 inches at Los Angeles, CA, and 29.46 inches at San Diego CA, setting all-time records for those two locations. (David Ludlum)

1922 - Dodge City, KS, reported a record 24 hour total of 17.5 inches of snow. (The Weather Channel)

1986: Severe thunderstorms and tornadoes hit Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. A total of 19 tornadoes occurred. Three of the tornadoes in Indiana reached F3 intensity. A densely populated subdivision of Southeast Lexington, Kentucky was heavily damaged by a tornado. Twenty people were injured, and 900 homes were destroyed or demolished. A very strong thunderstorm downburst hit the Cincinnati area. At the Greater Cincinnati Airport, windows were blown out of the control tower, injuring the six controllers on duty. At Newport, Kentucky, 120 houses were destroyed from winds estimated from 100 to 140 mph.

1987 - Strong northwesterly winds ushered arctic air into the eastern U.S. Gales lashed the middle and northern Atlantic coast. Winds gusted to 50 mph at Manteo NC and Cape Hatteras NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A winter storm produced snow and high winds in the Central Rocky Mountain Region. Snowfall totals in Utah ranged up to 42 inches at Alta, with 36 inches reported at the Brian Head Ski Resort in 24 hours. Winds gusted to 72 mph at La Junta CO and Artesia NM. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thirty-four cities in the central and southwestern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. The high of 85 degrees at Hanksville UT was a record for March, and Pueblo CO equalled their March record of 86 degrees. Hill City KS warmed from a morning low of 30 degrees to an afternoon high of 89 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)


1990 - Thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather from southeast Iowa to central Indiana and north central Kentucky. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Fort Knox KY, and hail two inches in diameter west of Lebanon IN. Evening thunderstorms over central Oklahoma deluged Guthrie with 4.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - As many as four people are injured, one is killed and homes were damaged in Center Hill and Pearson, AR, by an EF2 tornado.

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 16 of 71

Sat Mar 10	Sun Mar 11	Mon Mar 12	Tue Mar 13	Wed Mar 14	Thu Mar 15	Fri Mar 16
35°F	31°F	33°F	35°F	41°F	48°F	40°F
22°F	12°F	10°F	18°F	22°F	32°F	26°F
SSW 10 MPH	NNW 14 MPH	NW 7 MPH	SSW 8 MPH	SSW 10 MPH	S 16 MPH	WNW 15 MPH




**Snow
Timing:**


Morning

Afternoon

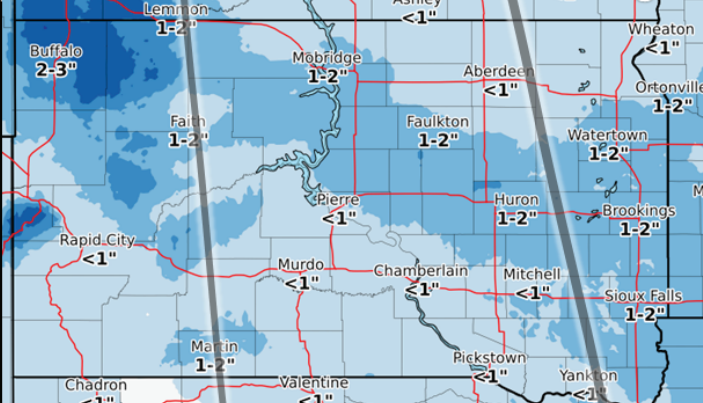
**Late
Afternoon
& Tonight**




Mainly Snow over Northern SD and western MN




Breezy Afternoon along and west of the Missouri River



Snow Amounts Expected through Tonight



Wintry Mix through this afternoon over Southern SD. Changing to all Snow.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

Published on: 03/10/2018 at 4:50AM

Graphic Created:
3/10/2018 4:40 AM

While precipitation will mainly stay in the form of snow over the northern half of South Dakota and Minnesota, a wintry mix will remain possible through early evening south. Accumulating snow will be most likely over western South Dakota this morning, central South Dakota this afternoon, and eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota late this afternoon and tonight. The highest amounts of around 1 to 2 inches of snow, is expected to stretch from northwestern to southeastern South Dakota. Breezy afternoon winds will also be possible along and west of the Missouri River this afternoon.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 17 of 71

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 34.5 F at 3:38 PM

Low Outside Temp: 14.8 F at 4:43 AM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 14.0 Mph at 4:10 PM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 65° in 1913

Record Low: -24° in 1948

Average High: 37°F

Average Low: 18°F

Average Precip in March: 0.30

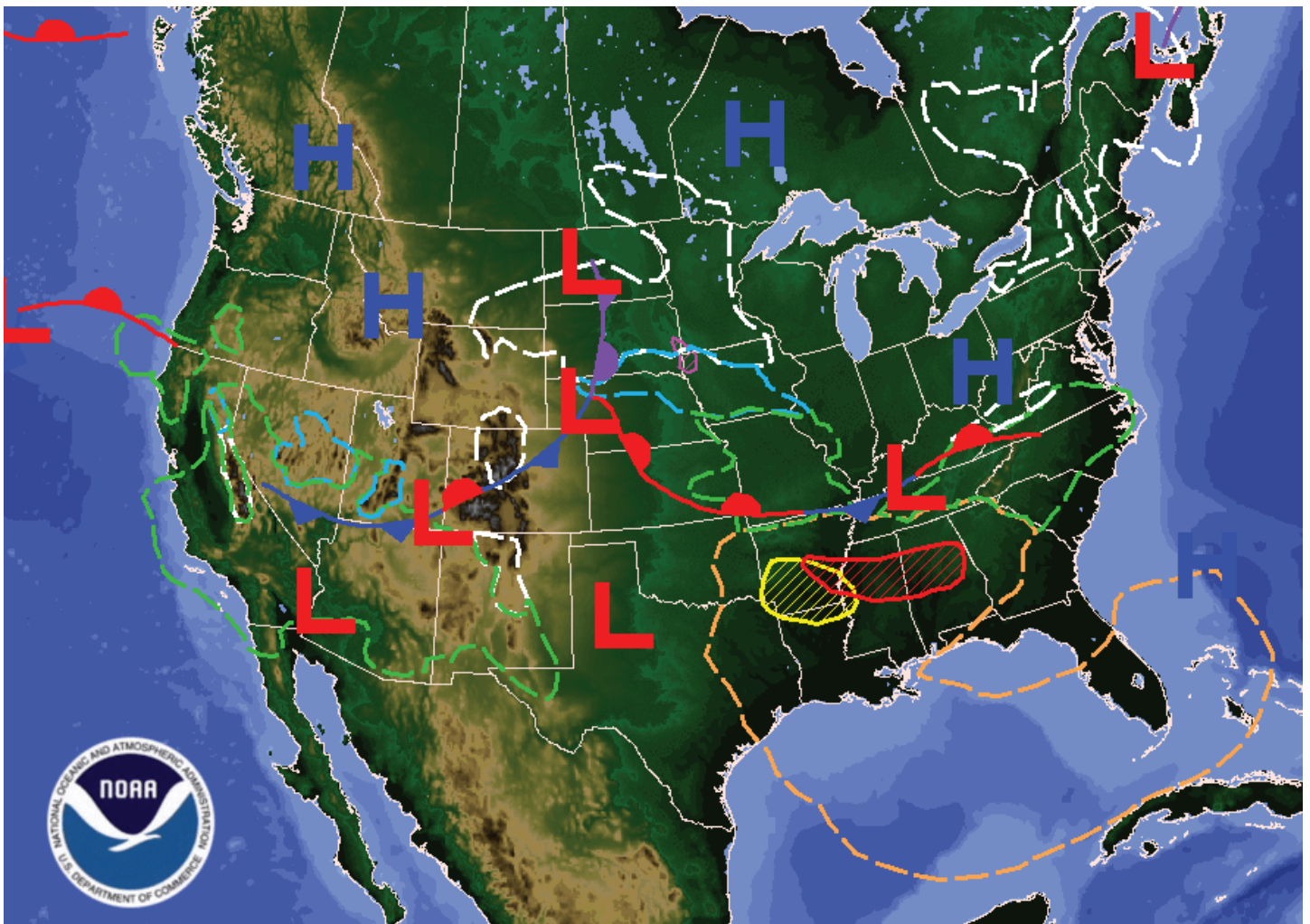
Precip to date in March: 0.94

Average Precip to date: 1.32

Precip Year to Date: 1.35

Sunset Tonight: 6:33 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:53 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Mar 10, 2018, issued 4:05 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Orrison 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)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 18 of 71



ARE YOU LISTENING?

A family in Calgary, Alberta, Canada purchased a well trained and very expensive guard dog to protect their home and belongings. It brought them great peace and comfort and reduced their fears of someone invading their home.

One evening as the family gathered together to watch their favorite television program the dog began to bark. "Hush, Sarge," said the father. But Sarge refused to stop barking and looked anxiously from one family member to another. They refused to be bothered as they watched the show. It was too entertaining.

Finally, the program was over and the father excused himself and went upstairs to go to bed. As he entered his bedroom, he realized that the dog had been trying to get their attention. A thief had carefully and quietly entered their home, opened their safe and stolen their most valuable possessions. The warning of the dog could not get their attention and alert them to danger.

"Today," (or listen now) warned the Psalmist, "if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts!" Often God tries to "get our attention" to warn us of impending dangers. He does His best to speak to us through His Word or a friend, a verse of Scripture or a sermon. He reaches out to us in love and compassion - anxious to warn us of the attractiveness of sin, the power of temptation and the destruction that awaits us. But, like the family in Canada, we are so often too involved in the things of this world to hear His warning.

Prayer: Lord, open our ears to hear, our eyes to see, and make our hearts ready to respond to Your voice. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 95:7b & 8 Today, if you will hear His voice: "Do not harden your hearts,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 19 of 71

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 20 of 71

News from the Associated Press

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Class A Semifinal

Madison 60, West Central 44

St. Thomas More 63, McCook Central/Montrose 54

Consolation Semifinal

Aberdeen Roncalli 58, Vermillion 45

Belle Fourche 79, Crow Creek 53

Class B Semifinal

Castlewood 70, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 64

Hanson 48, Ethan 32

Consolation Semifinal

Sully Buttes 41, Avon 40

Warner 60, Faith 45

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

George Sinner, North Dakota governor in tough times, dies

By **JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — George Sinner, the farmer-philosopher who served as North Dakota's governor during one of the state's roughest economic times, has died. He was 89.

His son, George B. Sinner, confirmed the death Friday. Boulger Funeral Home in Fargo posted on its website that he died at Eventide Senior Living Communities.

The Fargo native studied philosophy in college and considered becoming a priest. But family and public service beckoned.

George B. Sinner said his father never talked about money and was always focused on helping others.

"My dad picked up hitchhikers. He cared about immigrants. When I was a child he brought a young man home from one of the local colleges who was a visiting student from Africa, for Christmas," his son said.

"That's who he was and how he lived."

The father of 10 children became a well-known Democrat, serving in the Legislature in the 1960s and early '80s before defeating Republican incumbent Allen Olson for governor in 1984. His gubernatorial campaign included a television commercial that showed a farmer pitching cow manure, which Sinner compared to his opponent's campaign statements.

Looking back a decade later, Sinner told a group of students in Fargo that he didn't think about running for governor until 1982, after he had served in the Legislature.

"I wasn't really needed on the farm anymore," he said. "And I suddenly realized I was as qualified as anybody to run the state."

His administration, from 1985 through 1992, spanned one of the roughest periods in North Dakota's economy. The state was hit hard by drought in the late 1980s, and slumping oil prices turned a western North Dakota boom into a bust. In 1990, Sinner endorsed a special day of prayer on the state Capitol

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 21 of 71

grounds to pray for rain.

He also vetoed what would have been the country's toughest abortion law at the time in 1991, saying he agreed with the Roman Catholic view that abortion was wrong but believed the issue was the role of law. The proposed law would have banned abortions except in cases of rape, incest or when a woman's life was in danger.

"Government must not overstep its bounds," he said in his veto message. "It must not play God."

Sinner was born in Fargo in 1928, and grew up in nearby Casselton. He attended St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, where he received a bachelor's degree in philosophy.

Sinner was part of a farm partnership, Sinner Brothers and Bresnahan, in Casselton. He served in the state Senate from 1962 through 1966, as a delegate to North Dakota's Constitutional Convention in 1972, and on the State Board of Higher Education before being elected to the state House in 1982. He was elected governor two years later.

His first term as governor began with a state Supreme Court battle over when Sinner could legally take office and fill two court vacancies. The high court ruled in Sinner's favor, and he became governor on Jan 1, 1985.

During his term, Sinner pushed for higher income, sales and gasoline taxes, as well as plans to restructure the executive branch of state government and reorganize North Dakota's school districts. But his tax proposals were referred and rejected by voters, along with his restructuring plan.

In July 1991, Sinner had heart bypass surgery in Rapid City, South Dakota, after suffering chest pains while attending a conference there. That fall, he said his health was fine but he had decided not to seek a third term. He made the decision, he said, while on a hunting trip, and decided that, "It was time that I spend some time with a little less involvement and a little less pressure."

Since Sinner left office North Dakota has had an unbroken string of four Republican governors.

Sinner lobbied to become President Bill Clinton's agriculture secretary but was twice turned down because Clinton was seeking someone from the South. (Clinton eventually chose Mike Espy from Mississippi and later Dan Glickman from Kansas.) Sinner instead went to work for Minnesota-based American Crystal Sugar Co. as its vice president of public and governmental affairs, but kept in touch with Clinton, whom he had gotten to know when Clinton was Arkansas' governor.

"North Dakota lost a great leader and a great man today in former Gov. George Sinner, a family friend and true champion for farmers and our rural way of life," North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum said in a statement released Saturday, adding that his "deepest condolences and heartfelt prayers" extended to Sinner's family and all those touched by his legacy. "Gov. Sinner led our state through one of its most difficult chapters during the farm crisis and drought of the 1980s, and also through one of its proudest moments during the 1989 centennial. We are deeply grateful for his many years of dedicated service to the state, his community and farm groups, as he stayed true to his rural Casselton roots and worked across the aisle for all North Dakotans and the land he cherished."

Sinner, who raised 10 children with his wife, Jane, was known as someone who liked to tell jokes — but wasn't especially good at it. Even political opponents liked him as a person.

"Bud was probably one of the most honest men we'll ever have in state government," former House Speaker Ron Anderson once said.

Bill Marcil, publisher of The Forum newspaper in Fargo, said at a party for Sinner in 1992 that affection for him crossed party lines.

"Regardless of his political leanings or personal views, people like George Sinner," Marcil said, "and that's just a plain fact."

Funeral arrangements are pending with Boulger Funeral Home in Fargo.

This story has been corrected to note son's name is George B. Sinner and that George Sinner was part of the farm partnership, Sinner Brothers and Bresnahan.

South Dakota's waters mediator earns trust with landowners

By LUKE HAGEN, The Daily Republic

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — He's the state's non-meandered waters mediator.

Kevin Robling was put on special assignment by the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Department last year to implement House Bill 1001, aka the non-meandered waters legislation enacted following a special session in June last year.

His job puts him at the epicenter of what sometimes seems to be an insurmountable task — helping outdoor enthusiasts find common ground with South Dakota landowners to allow recreational opportunities such as fishing and hunting.

"It's bridging that gap on both sides," the 32-year-old said in a recent interview with The Daily Republic. "It's a lot of agreements, landowner discussions, trying to keep waters open and opening waters that have been closed."

Although he holds a difficult position, Robling said progress is being made on several fronts to bring landowners and outdoor enthusiasts closer to compromise.

GF&P has staffers across the state working on the non-meandered issue, but Robling is coordinating the efforts. He earned his title as special projects coordinator for the state Game, Fish & Parks Department directly from GF&P Secretary Kelly Hepler shortly after last year's special session.

For about two decades, South Dakotans battled the public vs. private non-meandered waters issue that led to the new legislation and, eventually, the creation of Robling's main duty, The Daily Republic reported.

Hepler called Robling a "rising star" in the department and explained there is a specific reason he got the call for the non-meandered mediator work.

"Kevin has the unique ability to garner trust and is totally committed to improving landowner relations, which in the end will not only benefit anglers and hunters in northeast (South Dakota), but across this state," Hepler said. "I think you will see some positive results from Kevin's work after session."

But finding middle ground between outdoor enthusiasts and landowners takes time, Robling said. And much depends on what's decided by legislators during this session.

The law passed last year opened non-meandered waters to public use, unless posted by the landowner, with the caveat that, if it's marked closed, the water is open by permission.

The current law expires June 30 unless it is extended. Gov. Dennis Daugaard proposed a bill extending the expiration date to June 30, 2021. Meanwhile Rep. Larry Rhoden, R-Union Center, proposed a bill that removes the expiration date so the laws would run until the Legislature repeals them. Both bills are one roll-call from final passage. Daugaard supports Rhoden's bill.

The House and Senate have been debating the topic this week. While many South Dakotans wait in anticipation for a final resolution at the Capitol, Robling said progress is being made with landowners.

Fourteen organizations from around South Dakota — which includes associations in agriculture, tourism and others — support extending the bill in hopes Robling and other officials with the state can work out agreements with landowners to allow open property for recreational use. Robling said "very positive" work has been made.

According to GF&P, there are 244,285 acres of accessible non-meandered water in South Dakota. They're labeled "accessible" because they can be accessed via a public access point such as a road. But about 5,000 of those acres, or 2 percent, have been closed by landowners through a process that requires them to mark the water with signs and/or buoys.

Since taking his new job, Robling has spent hours speaking to landowners who've marked off their property and there's a common theme during each discussion.

"They want the person to call them and ask for permission, and the vast majority of the time they'll grant that. ... The other thing is they just want to be respected," Robling said. "They want people to pick up their garbage and respect them as far as not driving on their fields."

If legislators extend the bill, Robling and Hepler believe some of the 5,000 closed acres will be reopened, but no final agreements are in place at this time. Robling said he's in discussions with numerous landown-

ers who are eyeing the work of the Legislature and waiting for action.

"There's tons of work to be done and there always will be," he said. "There's relationship building that needs to occur three, five and 10 years from now."

Robling grew up on a farm in southern Minnesota and was a center for South Dakota State University from 2004 to 2008, the first four years the football team played in Division I.

Robling has lived in Colman, Rapid City, Clark and now lives in Pierre with his wife and two children and has worked for GF&P since 2011.

He has other duties on top of the non-meandered waters issue, and said the best way for outdoor enthusiasts to help the situation is to show respect and appreciation to landowners.

"I hope people give GF&P time to do our jobs to the best of our abilities," he said. "We're going to continue to keep working hard each day to make sure recreational opportunities are provided in this state, while meeting the needs of the landowners. We have to balance those needs. Remember, recreation and respect, and all waters are open by permission."

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

South Dakota bladesmith designs, crafts original knives

By **PATRICK ANDERSON, Argus Leader**

BERESFORD, S.D. (AP) — Steve Grosvenor sorted through a drawer of different types of wood before reaching for a pristine white bone resting on his workbench.

"This is bison," Grosvenor said.

Some of the most incredible aspects of Grosvenor's artistry are the materials he uses.

Leather, bones, wood and smelted metals. Not mention a dash of French's yellow mustard.

The hot dog condiment is part of the treatment process he uses in his custom knife-making.

Grosvenor is one of fewer than 200 journeyman bladesmiths in the world with the training and credentials to do what he does: forge high-end knives. The 50-year-old South Dakota native entered the national spotlight last year by appearing on the popular History Channel competition, "Forged in Fire."

"I tried to focus on the project and not on the environment," Grosvenor said. "If you make a mistake you really don't have time to recover."

Grosvenor did more than just compete.

He won the four-way contest in an episode that aired in May, impressing judges with a blade made from a steel cable and an Afghan knife called a Charay, the Argus Leader reported.

Grosvenor is a native of Beresford, where he owns and operates Red Rock Tools with his wife, Kay. His knives are all hand-crafted by Grosvenor in Red Rock's unassuming warehouse just east of Beresford's small downtown.

His dedication doesn't end when the blade leaves the shop, Kay Grosvenor said.

"He always says, as long as I'm alive I'll take care of them, sharpen them, or whatever," she said.

Grosvenor is a journeyman smith, which means he spent years as a member of the American Bladesmith Society before eventually designing a knife that holds up under the organization's strict testing.

He's the only knife-maker in South Dakota with the credential. Each blade gets one-on-one attention from Grosvenor. Each one that leaves his forge is singular.

"No matter what I do, I can't make one like it," Grosvenor said.

When a customer orders a forged knife from Grosvenor, they can expect the work to take months. (A quick public service announcement: If customers want a Red Rock blade by next Christmas, they need to get orders in by the end of February, Grosvenor said.)

He not only displays his journeyman certificate on the wall, he also hung the performance knife that helped raise him up from the apprentice level.

During the test, the knife must be able to cut through a hanging piece of rope, chop through a two-by-four without getting deformed, shave hair and bend 90 degrees without cracking beyond one-third the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 24 of 71

width of the blade.

It's that level of skill that helped get Grosvenor a spot on "Forged in Fire." Grosvenor got the casting call in September in a direct message through Twitter. He flew to Brooklyn, New York, in March to film the first part of the episode, which ran in June.

Following a model similar to other reality TV competitions, four contestants are asked to make a blade in three hours to make a blade determined by the show's judges. After the first two elimination rounds, the finalists are given a week to make a judge-assigned style of blade at their home forge.

Kay Grosvenor asked her husband to keep the results secret and watched him win the competition when the episode aired.

"It seemed like it kept going to commercial, it's like come on," she said. "I pretty much knew he won just from a few comments he had made about different things, but still."

The first knife Grosvenor made came from a kit. The second, he made for his cousin in Michigan to fillet salmon.

That's the one Grosvenor remembers as a turning point — the spark that would eventually lead him to light a forge for the first time and start making knives that are stronger, sharper and last longer.

He once brought six fillet knives on a Michigan fishing trip and wound up sharpening them afternoon and night to keep up with all of the cleaning. The knife he made his cousin sliced through 80 salmon, no problem.

"We never had to sharpen it," Grosvenor said.

Knives he makes now, his top-of-the-line forged blades, can clean hundreds of fish before going to the stone, Grosvenor said.

"It's just kind of amazing what they can turn into," Kay said. "He tries real hard to make something that he's proud of."

What Grosvenor saw in his hand-made work was a new future. At first, it was something to do on the side of the tool franchise he owned and operated in Beresford. By the time he decided not to renew the franchise on the retail store in 2013 to focus on Red Rock Tools full time, he already owned the shop at 114 E. Hemlock St.

Like any artist, Grosvenor sees a complexity in blade-making that most people either miss or take for granted.

He's never done learning. Never done perfecting his craft.

"A simple score in music, right? A simple score is just a few notes and it's very straightforward. Nothing fancy," Grosvenor said. "When you get into a forged blade, the score can be Beethoven. I mean, it's just where do you want it to end?"

He likes the science of bladesmithing. He likes the techniques used by master smiths — a credential he is working toward. Grosvenor plans to take the test this year to earn the highest level of qualification offered by the American Bladesmith Society.

Every inch of his forged blades is made by him and no one else.

Making a knife involves wood-crafting, leatherworking, smelting, forging, chemistry, metalworking and more, not to mention running social media, taking photos and tracking online orders. Some of the knives Grosvenor is working on using rock-based steel and a technique called "Damascus," which requires folding the metal thousands upon thousands of times before making the blade.

"This was a rock in North Carolina in March," Grosvenor said, hefting one of the knives he made using the technique.

Grosvenor designs and crafts every piece of each knife he makes, from hilt to tip to sheath.

As for the French's, he uses it to force a patina on blades. Vinegar reacts with the steel to create a protective coating.

Forged knives are in a whole different class than what Grosvenor calls the "knife-shaped objects" most people have in their kitchen.

He can spend a week — sometimes two — on a single knife. The end result is a knife with better balance, better flex, better resilience and a design that is intentional.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 25 of 71

Every piece is built from within: Grosvenor's own soul administered over the rocks and metal and the remains of living things that he takes, treats, carves, sews, grinds, polishes and sets ablaze.

That's probably why he can't hide a grimace when he mentions some of his pieces get left at fish-cleaning stations, never to be seen again.

"This isn't just a slap-it-together-and-throw-it-out-the-door type of thing," Grosvenor said. "That's not who I am. In the end, it's my name on the blade, so it has to represent me."

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

07-17-18-46-66, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 4

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

Estimated jackpot: \$290 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$385 million

Agriculture Secretary: Trump tariffs not as bad as feared

By DAVE KOLPACK, Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Agricultural Secretary Sonny Perdue said Friday that while he's as anxious as farmers are about President Donald Trump's new tariffs, the move doesn't look as bad as he originally thought.

Perdue said during a trip to meet with representatives of North Dakota's agricultural sector that Trump's decision to enact a 25 percent tariff on imported steel and a 10 percent levy on aluminum looks better in the final version than it did when first announced. He joked with farmers in Iowa earlier this week that one option for farmers who fear a trade war may be to pray.

"I was very concerned last week with the surprise announcement on the steel and aluminum tariffs, as most people in the White House were," Perdue said during a press conference at North Dakota State University. "But we hope to turn it into a positive. This president has the unique ability to turn some things that we think are initially negative into positives."

Perdue says the final version looked much better because Canada and Mexico were excluded, which he believes could spark discussions on improving the North American Free Trade Agreement. He said he will be on edge until NAFTA is recertified and reauthorized and the U.S. addresses trade issues with its key importers.

Agriculture producers receive 20 cents out of every dollar from exports. Perdue heard from about 20 farm representatives Friday, most of whom didn't pass the microphone until saying something about trade. Mark Martinson, a durum wheat farmer in northeastern North Dakota, said the U.S. cannot risk losing "China, Indonesia, all those markets."

In addition to Trump backing off on Canada and Mexico, Perdue was relieved the president indicated he was willing to work with Europe and other U.S. allies on improving trade. Canada and Mexico are two of the largest suppliers of agricultural products to the United States, according to Commerce Department figures. In 2016, the U.S. imported \$22 billion in ag products from Canada and exported \$23 billion; the U.S. imported \$23 billion from Mexico and exported \$18 billion.

The European Union, meanwhile, said it is putting together a list of agricultural products it plans to target for tariffs as retaliation to the U.S.

"This is a president who is willing to change his mind over issues," Perdue said. "He came out of the campaign literally believing that everybody in the United States hated NAFTA. And we had to walk in and show him that many of his supporters and voters benefited from NAFTA."

North Dakota U.S. Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp said Perdue has been willing to stand up to the president on the importance of trade to agriculture.

"Secretary Perdue has been a very strong advocate for the farmer on trade," Hoeven said. "No question about it. Right from the start with NAFTA, now with the tariffs, he's been very vocal with the administration on the importance of trade to agriculture."

Heitkamp said the first thing Perdue said to her in their first face-to-face meeting was "trade, trade, trade" and is happy he is pushing back against trade policies that will hurt farmers.

State lawmakers approve \$4.7B budget to cap 2018 session

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Legislature approved a roughly \$4.7 billion state budget Friday that includes higher-than expected funding to education, Medicaid providers and state employees for the upcoming budget year.

The Senate voted 32-3 to pass the budget as the main part of the 2018 legislative session came to a close. Earlier Friday, the House voted 49-17 for the bill that sets state spending for the 2019 budget year, which begins July 1.

The Republican-controlled Legislature benefited from state tax collections projected to climb higher than Gov. Dennis Daugaard anticipated when he proposed his budget plan in December. The budget for the next fiscal year includes roughly \$1.63 billion in general state spending, about \$18 million above the governor's proposal.

"We all know we came into this session thinking we had no money whatsoever," said Rep. David Anderson, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Appropriations. "Fortunately, we were able to come up with a little money through some newfound growth in our economy."

The approved budget includes a 1 percent increase for education, a 1.2 percent salary bump for state employees, and inflationary increases of 2 percent for community-based providers and 0.5 percent for other providers. Daugaard in December had proposed no inflationary education funding increases per student and leaving most state workers without raises for the second straight year.

Eric Ollila, executive director of the South Dakota State Employees Organization, said he hopes the raise has a positive effect on state employees.

"It's far in excess of what the governor proposed originally, which was nothing," Ollila said before the budget passed. "We've come a long way, and I think that state employees should be happy with what we've done this year."

The budget calls for spending roughly \$1.7 billion in federal funds and \$1.4 billion in other state money such as highway funding. The Legislature focuses mostly on how to spend the roughly \$1.6 billion portion of the budget financed with general state taxes.

Lawmakers also reshaped the current year's budget to add roughly \$35.5 million in new funding. That includes more than \$8.7 million in one-time dollars to providers and a one-time \$5.4 million payment for state aid to education. It also budgets more than \$11.8 million to fill a hole in the state employee health plan that workers would have had to cover out of their own pockets. Ollila said he would like to see the Legislature study state employee compensation and the state health plan.

Mary McCorkle, president of the South Dakota Education Association, a teacher's union, said educators are pleased they're making progress.

"We continue to have concern about South Dakota being competitive with the neighboring states, being able to recruit and retain teachers for the students of South Dakota," she said. "We're moving forward. We're not moving forward a lot."

The 2018 session started Jan. 9. Legislators will come back to the Capitol on March 26 for the session's final day to debate any vetoes that could come from Daugaard.

Tony Venhuizen, the governor's chief of staff, said in an email that Daugaard is pleased that revenues improved enough for inflationary increases and to fund priorities like a major new precision agriculture facility at South Dakota State University and a state veterans cemetery in Sioux Falls.

House Democratic leader Spencer Hawley, who is facing term limits, urged lawmakers to start thinking long-term.

"At some point in time in the Legislature, we need to become visionaries," Hawley said. "We need to not be ... dealing with the pennies of today. You need to start talking about what do you want to see South Dakota be 10, 20, 30 years from now."

Mom of emaciated girls sentenced to probation

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The mother of two toddlers found so severely malnourished that a pediatrician compared them to prisoners of World War II concentration camps was sentenced to probation for abandoning the children with relatives whom she knew were unfit to care for them.

The sentence for Darcel Featherman on Thursday came a day after her sister, Darshan Featherman, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for withholding food from one of the children, the Rapid City Journal reported .

Darcel and Darshan Featherman were among several people charged after law enforcement authorities on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation found the emaciated girls in November 2016. The 2- and 3-year-old girls weighed just 13 pounds each, one-third the ideal weight for their age.

Darcel Featherman said she gave the girls to her mother and sister because she was homeless without a means to raise them. She and her sister both pleaded guilty to felony child abuse and neglect.

A pediatrician who examined the girls said they would have died if authorities hadn't found them. Court records show the older girl was left blind and unable to walk as a result of head trauma allegedly inflicted by her grandmother Roberta Featherman, who also faces charges.

In a written statement, Darcel Featherman admitted that she knew her mother and sister both had alcoholism, that her mother had anger issues and that her sister also abused methamphetamine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Megan Poppen had asked for a sentence of at least five years in prison for the children's mother. In sentencing her to three years of probation, U.S. District Court Chief Judge Jeffrey Viken noted that Featherman wasn't guilty of starving the children and had made improvements in her life, including finding employment and undergoing treatment.

Poppen said the girls had been systematically starved for about three months before they were discovered. Poppen said the child in Darshan Featherman's custody "had no subcutaneous tissue, just skin and bones."

The judge noted that Roberta Featherman may never receive a sentence; she has been diagnosed with progressive dementia. She and a man who was living with her, Harold Red Owl, face charges of assault resulting in serious bodily injury and felony child abuse and neglect.

The toddlers, now ages 3 and 4, are living with a foster family. Poppen said they're physically improving, but will likely face lifelong battles with eating disorders.

"They don't want to stop eating even when they're full," Poppen said.

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

Sioux Falls man faces charges in son's death

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A grand jury indicted a Sioux Falls man for the death of his 3-month-old son last year after an autopsy found the baby suffered head trauma and numerous brain hemorrhages.

The Argus Leader reports 26-year-old Alejandro Salgado de Jesus faces several charges, including second-degree murder. A grand jury in Minnehaha County delivered the indictment this week.

Salgado de Jesus is being held without bond and already faced assault charges. His son died in December

after being taken off life support but the newspaper reports the exact date is unknown.

Police say Salgado de Jesus initially denied wrongdoing but later told investigators he picked up the baby by the ankles and held him upside down while he patted him in the back.

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

Snowstorm helps ease drought conditions in the Dakotas

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — This week's storm in the Dakotas that dropped several inches of wet snow helped ease drought conditions, with the biggest impact in South Dakota.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor map shows moderate-to-severe drought in South Dakota decreased over the week from 57 percent to 41 percent.

In North Dakota, the drop was less significant, from 65 percent to 62 percent.

The Drought Monitor says the biggest reduction in drought was in the east-central portion of the Dakotas, with smaller improvements farther west.

Suspect shot by Bismarck police officer charged federally

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A man accused of trying to hit a police officer with his vehicle in North Dakota and then fleeing to South Dakota is now being charged with federal crimes.

The Bismarck Tribune reports state charges including attempted murder have been dropped against 22-year-old Ulises Villalobos-Alvarado. A state charge of hindering law enforcement also is dropped against 32-year-old co-defendant Juan Nunez.

The two are now accused in federal court with charges linking them to drug trafficking with a California street gang. Trial is scheduled for early May.

Villalobos-Alvarado was accused of trying to run over a Bismarck officer who subsequently shot him in the arm during a probation search Jan. 18. He later turned himself in at a gas station in Brookings, South Dakota. Nunez was accused of helping him avoid apprehension.

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

1 killed, 3 injured in crash near Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Highway Patrol says one person has died and three others have been injured in a highway crash involving a semi west of Sioux Falls.

Authorities say a 19-year-old woman died when the car she was driving was struck from behind by a minivan as she waited to turn off Highway 42 and was pushed into the path of a semi. The teen died at the scene. A 10-year-old boy in her vehicle suffered life-threatening injuries and was taken by helicopter to a hospital in Sioux Falls.

The driver of the minivan and the semi sustained minor injuries and were treated at the scene.

Officials say charges are possible against the driver of the minivan. The crash Thursday evening closed Highway 42 for several hours.

No one hurt in school bus crash east of Aberdeen

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — No one was hurt when a school bus struck a vehicle east of Aberdeen.

Highway Patrol spokesman Tony Mangan tells the American News that all 11 children on the bus escaped injury in the crash about 4 p.m. Thursday.

Neither driver was hurt. Charges are pending against the 62-year-old bus driver.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 29 of 71

Kadoka woman sentenced for defrauding her former in-laws

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Kadoka woman has been sentenced for defrauding her former in-laws.

The U.S. attorney's office says 39-year-old Tammy Twiss used her ex-husband's name and his parents' banking information to withdraw more than \$20,000 from the parents' account in 2016.

Twiss was convicted of wire fraud. She was recently sentenced to two months in custody and three years of supervised release that will include four months of home confinement. She also was ordered to pay about \$12,000 in restitution.

Twiss also goes by the last name of Eisenbraun.

Rapid City standoff ends with arrest

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A police standoff in Rapid City has led to the arrest of a man wanted on a felony warrant for possessing controlled substances.

Pennington County sheriff's deputies tried to serve a warrant at a residence Thursday, but the man who was wanted barricaded himself inside the home. Rapid City police and sheriff's deputies cordoned off the area and called in a special response team because of the man's history of domestic violence, weapons violations and drug offenses. Authorities did not know if he was armed.

KOTA-TV reports authorities say the suspect climbed out of a window and onto the roof for a time, but then went back in the house. He eventually surrendered.

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

AP reports Trump wants to rely less on White House staff

By CATHERINE LUCEY and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — His staff hollowing out and his agenda languishing, President Donald Trump is increasingly flying solo.

Always improvisational, the president exercised his penchant for going it alone in a big way this week: first, by ordering sweeping tariffs opposed by foreign allies and by many in his own party, then hours later delivering the stunning news that he'll meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

An on-the-spot decision with global ramifications, Trump's agreement to sit down with Kim came after a meeting with a South Korean delegation and took some of his top aides by surprise.

The president has long considered himself his own best consultant, saying during the presidential campaign: "I'm speaking with myself, number one, because I have a very good brain and I've said a lot of things."

Trump has told confidants recently that he wants to be less reliant on his staff, believing they often give bad advice, and that he plans to follow his own instincts, which he credits with his stunning election, according to two people who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about private conversations.

Trump's latest unilateral moves come at a moment of vulnerability for the president. Top staffers are heading for the exits, the Russia investigation continues to loom and Trump is facing growing questions about a lawsuit filed by a porn actress who claims her affair with the president was hushed up.

The White House pushed back against the notion that Trump's decision to meet with Kim was made in haste, with spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders saying, "This has been part of an ongoing campaign that's been going for over a year."

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said Trump takes input from a "diverse set of viewpoints," but added that "he knows it was his name on the ballot and he controls timing, content and tone."

Advisers argue that tales of Trump's freelancing are exaggerated and that in many cases — as with tariffs — he is following through on long-stated promises. Still, the president's decisions, as well as his proclivity for off-the-cuff announcements, frequently leave aides and allies guessing.

News that the president would accept a meeting never taken by a sitting U.S. president came from an

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 30 of 71

unlikely source Thursday evening: a last-minute press statement by a South Korean official standing in the dark on the White House driveway.

With reality-show flair, Trump built suspense for the announcement by making an impromptu visit to the White House briefing room.

The South Korean official, Chung Eui-yong, spoke with Trump on Thursday after meeting with national security adviser H.R. McMaster and others. Trump asked Chung about a recent meeting with the North Korean dictator. The South Korean official relayed that Kim wanted to meet with Trump — and the president immediately accepted, according to a White House official, who was not authorized to discuss the meeting and was speaking on condition of anonymity.

Trump then asked Chung to announce it to the White House press, but Chung wanted first to check in with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, the official said. Moon granted permission, prompting Trump to make his first known foray into the White House briefing room to inform reporters that the South Koreans would soon be making a major announcement.

“Great progress being made,” Trump later tweeted, adding: “Meeting being planned!”

This was not the only recent moment where Trump opted to trust his gut and go it alone.

Determined to keep what he viewed as a crucial campaign promise, Trump forged forward with a plan to order new tariffs this week. In the process, he saw his top economic adviser, Gary Cohn, head for the exit and faced his most public condemnation to date from Republican lawmakers.

Trump let advisers Cohn and Peter Navarro, who stood on opposite sides of the issue, debate tariffs for weeks, at times contentiously. At another point, during a meeting with steel and aluminum executives, Trump urged Cohn to engage in a debate with U.S. Steel CEO Dave Burritt, according to two people familiar with the exchange and not authorized to discuss it publicly.

Cohn announced his departure as it became clear Trump would move ahead with the tariffs.

In recent days, Trump told advisers that his experience in business gave him an edge in deciding what to do on tariffs. He told aides that he been proclaiming for 30 years that the United States needed a more protectionist approach, according to two White House officials not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

The president also boasted to outside advisers that he knew the tariffs issue better than his advisers and suggested that the move could help him lock up Rust Belt states like Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan again, according to a person familiar with the president’s thinking but not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

The president has previously shown his preference for working alone — with mixed results.

Trump surprised the Pentagon last year with a series of tweets announcing he would reverse Obama-era policies allowing transgender individuals to serve in the armed forces. He made a surprise spending deal with Democrats “Chuck and Nancy” that boxed out his own party. And he sent out a series of puzzling tweets about a key spying law that threw Congress into disarray ahead of votes to reauthorize the program.

Advisers and supporters were caught off guard recently when Trump appeared to embrace gun control measures at a freewheeling roundtable with lawmakers in the wake of a Florida school shooting. He later met with the National Rifle Association and appeared to soften his stance, but his comment “take the guns first, go through due process second” drew strong criticism.

Still, Trump continues to hold that — as he said at the 2016 Republican Convention — he “alone” can fix things. He made that clear when he ran into an ABC reporter in the moments before the North Korea announcement.

Trump wouldn’t say exactly what was coming, but he stressed: “Hopefully, you will give me credit.”

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Ken Thomas contributed from Washington.

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

Justice Department proposes banning rapid-fire bump stocks

By SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration said Saturday it has taken the first step in the regulatory process to ban bump stocks, likely setting the stage for long legal battles with gun manufacturers while the trigger devices remain on the market.

The move was expected after President Donald Trump ordered the Justice Department to work toward a ban following the shooting deaths of 17 people at a Florida high school in February. Bump stocks, which enable guns to fire like automatic weapons, were not used in that attack — they were used in last year's Las Vegas massacre — but have since become a focal point in the gun control debate.

The Justice Department's regulation would classify the hardware as a machine gun banned under federal law. That would reverse a 2010 decision by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives that found bump stocks did not amount to machine guns and could not be regulated unless Congress amended existing firearms law or passed a new one.

A reversal of the department's earlier evaluation could be seen as an admission that it was legally flawed, which manufacturers could seize on in court. Even as the Trump administration moves toward banning the devices, some ATF officials believe it lacks the authority to do so.

But any congressional effort to create new gun control laws would need support from the pro-gun Republican majority. A bid to ban the accessory fizzled last year, even as lawmakers expressed openness to the idea after nearly 60 people were gunned down in Las Vegas.

Calls mounted for a bump stock ban after that massacre, and the Justice Department said it would again review whether they can be prohibited under federal law. Trump told officials to expedite the review, which yielded more than 100,000 comments from the public and the firearms industry. Many of the comments came from gun owners angry over any attempt to regulate the accessory, a move they view as a slippery slope toward outlawing guns altogether.

The proposal still needs the approval of the Office of Management and Budget.

Michigan seeks changes to abuse reporting law after Nassar

By DAVID EGGERT, Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan is looking to shore up its law that requires certain people to report suspected child sexual abuse to authorities to address gaps that were exposed after disgraced former sports doctor Larry Nassar admitted to sexually assaulting female athletes.

Nassar's victims are spearheading the initiative, saying he could have been stopped decades ago if coaches, athletic trainers or others at Michigan State University had listened to them. More than 250 women and girls have said the now-imprisoned Nassar molested them with his ungloved hands under the guise of medical treatment.

No one has faced charges yet for not reporting the abuse, but multiple investigations are underway into Michigan State's handling of complaints.

Like all other states, Michigan requires health providers, psychologists, teachers, police, clergy and others to report suspected child abuse or neglect to authorities. A bill up for approval by the state Senate would add college employees and youth sports coaches, trainers and volunteers.

Additional legislation would increase potential punishments. Paid professionals who willfully do not report suspected abuse or neglect could face a felony charge and up to two years in prison, up from what is now a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum 93 days in jail.

"It puts stronger incentives in place to properly motivate adults to respond to disclosures of sexual assaults," said Rachael Denhollander, who was 15 when Nassar assaulted her in his campus office in 2000. "As much as it is difficult and as much as we don't want to recognize this fact, there are adults who will not be motivated by an ethical, moral code to report sexual assault of children."

Eleven other states already require college employees to report abuse. Eighteen more require anyone aware of suspected abuse or neglect to report it, according to the Child Welfare Information Gateway,

a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In five states, all youth coaches — not just those who are school employees — are mandatory reporters.

Michigan isn't the only state to explore changes. Illinois is looking to increase the punishment for not reporting abuse and may require coaches and other athletic workers to undergo training. Legislation in Georgia would give victims of childhood sexual abuse more time to sue for damages — something Michigan is also considering .

Michigan's legislation would address ambiguity surrounding who must report abuse. Nassar's accusers contend in a lawsuit that four current or former Michigan employees they told — including ex-gymnastics head coach Kathie Klages, Nassar's physician supervisors and a psychology professor who saw one victim through his separate private practice — were mandated reporters already.

The bill would cover college workers along with coaches, assistant coaches and trainers involved in youth sports that are both affiliated and unaffiliated with schools and universities, such as Twistars, a Lansing-area gymnastics club where Nassar molested athletes.

"Enablers need to be held accountable," said Larissa Boyce, who said she was 16 when she complained about Nassar to Klages in 1997, while she was training with the Spartan youth gymnastics team.

Boyce said Klages dissuaded her from taking it further despite confirming that a 14-year-old girl had received similar "treatments." Klages has denied that anyone reported Nassar to her.

While the legislation has bipartisan support, it has some opponents.

The American Civil Liberties Association of Michigan says volunteer coaches, who can include high school students and young adults, do not get training they would need to recognize signs of abuse or neglect. Kimberly Buddin, the group's policy council, also said harsher criminal penalties could lead to unintended consequences in instances where no abuse has occurred.

"We don't want to create a culture where people are just reporting things that don't need to be reported because they're afraid of going to jail," Buddin said.

But Republican Sen. Margaret O'Brien, the main bill sponsor, said not much is asked of mandatory reporters.

"This is not a difficult thing to do. All you have to state is the people involved and what information you were given," she said. "You don't have to investigate. Mandated reporters are not judge and jury."

Online:

Senate Bill 873: <http://bit.ly/2HjKXex>

SB 874: <http://bit.ly/2Fw8zMD>

Follow David Eggert on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/DavidEggert00> . His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/David%20Eggert>

California gunman in veteran center killings was ex-patient

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and JANIE HAR, Associated Press

YOUNTVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Three women who devoted their lives to helping traumatized veterans were killed by a patient who had been kicked out of their Northern California treatment program, authorities and a relative of a victim said.

A daylong siege at The Pathway Home ended Friday evening with the discovery of four bodies, including the gunman. He was identified as Albert Wong, 36, a former Army rifleman who served a year in Afghanistan in 2011-2012.

Investigators were still trying to determine when and why Wong killed two executives and a psychologist at The Pathway Home, a nonprofit post-traumatic stress disorder program at the Veterans Home of California-Yountville in the Napa Valley wine country region.

It was "far too early to say if they were chosen at random" because investigators had not yet determined a motive, California Highway Patrol Assistant Chief Chris Childs said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 33 of 71

Gov. Jerry Brown ordered flags flown at half-staff at the capitol in memory of the victims. They were identified as The Pathway Home Executive Director Christine Loeber, 48; Clinical Director Jennifer Golick, 42; and Jennifer Gonzales, 29, a clinical psychologist with the San Francisco Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System.

"These brave women were accomplished professionals who dedicated their careers to serving our nation's veterans, working closely with those in the greatest need of attention after deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan," The Pathway Home said in a statement.

Golick's father-in-law, Bob Golick, said in an interview she had recently expelled Wong from the program. The Pathway Home is located on the sprawling campus of the veterans center, which cares for about 1,000 elderly and disabled vets.

It is the largest veterans home in the nation, according to the state Department of Veterans Affairs.

Wong went to the campus about 53 miles (85 kilometers) north of San Francisco on Friday morning, slipping into a going-away party for some employees of The Pathway Home.

Larry Kamer told The Associated Press that his wife, Devereaux Smith, called him to say that the gunman had entered the room quietly, letting some people leave while taking others hostage.

Golick called her husband, Mark, to say that she had been taken hostage by the former soldier, her father-in-law said.

Mark Golick didn't hear from her again.

A Napa Valley sheriff's deputy exchanged gunshots with the hostage-taker at about 10:30 a.m. but after that nothing was heard from Wong or his hostages despite daylong efforts to contact him, authorities said.

Army veteran and resident Bob Sloan, 73, was working at the home's TV station when a co-worker came in and said he had heard four gunshots coming from The Pathway Home. Sloan sent alerts for residents to stay put.

A group of about 80 students who were on the home's grounds were safely evacuated after being locked down, Napa County Sheriff John Robertson said. The teens from Justin-Siena High School were at a theater rehearsing a play.

"They were a distance away from the shooting situation," Robertson said.

President Donald Trump tweeted Saturday morning: "We are deeply saddened by the tragic situation in Yountville and mourn the loss of three incredible women who cared for our Veterans."

The bodies of Wong and the women were found at about 6 p.m. While authorities had the building under siege for about eight hours, they didn't enter it.

Wong's rental car was later found nearby. A bomb-sniffing dog alerted authorities to something on the car but the only thing found was a cellphone, authorities said.

Yvette Bennett, a wound-care supply worker who supplies the veterans center, was turned back when she tried to deliver what she called urgently needed medical supplies for two patients inside.

Of all the medical institutions she has worked with, "this is the most placid, calm, serene place," she said.

Earlier this week, when she last visited, she asked a doctor, "What's your magic here?"

"And then 48 hours later this happens," Bennett said.

Debate stirs over 'America's Harvest Box,' food benefit plan

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hawaii's food stamp administrator says he was stunned when he first heard that the U.S. Agriculture Department wanted to replace some cash benefits with a pre-assembled package of shelf-stable goods. That changed quickly to frustration, befuddlement and serious concern.

"This will wreak havoc on the states," said Pankaj Bhanot, who serves as director of Hawaii's Department of Human Services and is in charge of administering the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to roughly 165,000 residents scattered across a series of islands.

SNAP administrators across the country shared Bhanot's reservations about "America's Harvest Box," pitched by USDA officials as a way to cut costs and improve efficiency. Administrators say their programs

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 34 of 71

already are efficient, allowing recipients to purchase whatever foods they want directly from retailers, which benefits families, retailers and local economies.

The proposal, unveiled last month in the Trump administration's 2019 budget, is part of an effort to reduce the cost of the SNAP program by roughly \$213 billion over a 10-year period.

Brandon Lipps, administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service at USDA, said the idea was partially inspired by rapidly changing models for how people get their groceries. The USDA last year launched a pilot program that allows SNAP recipients to order provisions online using their EBT, or Electronic Benefit Transfer, cards, which function like debit cards but can only be used to purchase groceries.

He said in an interview that it was designed to streamline the process of getting healthy food into the hands of those who need it most. State administrators, he said, would be responsible for figuring out how to package and distribute the boxes themselves.

But SNAP administrators say the proposal is riddled with holes.

Bhanot had a broad list of questions, ranging from delivery of the boxes, especially during hurricanes, to ensuring that recipients were getting the right type of nutrition. "We'd have to ramp up staff. Where will the money come from?" he asked.

In Minnesota, Chuck Johnson, acting commissioner of the Department of Human Services, called the proposal "a significant step backward in our nation's effort to ensure all Americans have access to nutritious food." He said it would be a major burden on states, which would have to figure out how to deliver the food boxes.

Tom Hedderman, director of food and nutrition policy at the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, said there are about 1.25 million SNAP recipients in his state who get more than \$90 in benefits each month — the threshold that would trigger a food box. He criticized the proposal for its lack of detail and direction.

"It's clear in the proposal that they would dump the problem of logistics and cost back on to the states," he said.

Babs Roberts, who directs the community services division of the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, said a uniform system for distributing boxes simply wouldn't work in her state, where there are roughly 900,000 SNAP recipients. The cities are too dense for a delivery system to work, she said, while residents living in rural communities would likely have trouble traveling to a centralized location to pick up their box.

"I think it's going to be administratively burdensome," she said. "I don't know if it's any better than what we're doing now."

Sammy Guillory, deputy assistant secretary for the division of family support for the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, said he worries that if the proposal were approved, it would take years to iron out the kinks. In particular, Guillory said he is concerned that making such a drastic change from the current SNAP system would force employees to spend significant time and energy adjusting.

"Somehow our staff that determines eligibility would have to learn all these rules, our system would have to be reprogrammed. And that's not even taking into consideration the logistics of getting these boxes to families," he said, adding that more than 400,000 households receive SNAP, or about a quarter of Louisiana's population.

Rus Sykes, director of the American Public Human Services Association, an umbrella organization that includes the American Association of SNAP Directors, said administrators across the country were shocked by the proposal and are concerned that if it moves forward states will be forced into an impossible situation.

"They will not have the ability to administer this program this way," Sykes said, "and the states will be on the line for everything that goes wrong."

Critics silenced ahead of China's move to end Xi term limits

By GERRY SHIH and YANAN WANG, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The day China's ruling Communist Party unveiled a proposal to allow President Xi Jinping to rule indefinitely as Mao Zedong did a generation ago, Ma Bo was so shaken he couldn't sleep.

So Ma, a renowned writer, wrote a social media post urging the party to remember the history of unchecked one-man rule that ended in catastrophe.

"History is regressing badly," Ma thundered in his post. "As a Chinese of conscience, I cannot stay silent!"

Censors silenced him anyway, swiftly wiping his post from the internet.

As China's rubber-stamp legislature prepares to approve constitutional changes abolishing term limits for the president on Sunday, signs of dissent and biting satire have been all but snuffed out. The stifling censorship leaves intellectuals, young white-collar workers and retired veterans of past political campaigns using roundabout ways to voice their concerns. For many, it's a foreshadowing of greater political repression ahead.

The result has been a surreal political atmosphere laced with fear, confusion, and even moments of dark comedy that undermines the picture of swelling popular support for the measure being peddled relentlessly by state media.

"There's a lot of fear," said Ma, who writes under the pen name Old Ghost. "People know that Xi's about to become the emperor, so they don't dare cross his path. Most people are just watching, observing."

Once passed, the constitutional amendment would upend a system enacted by former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1982 to prevent a return to the bloody excesses of a lifelong dictatorship typified by Mao Zedong's chaotic 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution.

Party media say the proposed amendment is only aimed at bringing the office of the president in line with Xi's other positions atop the party and the Central Military Commission, which do not impose term limits.

Its passage by the National People's Congress' nearly 3,000 hand-picked delegates is all but certain. But observers will be looking to see how many delegates abstain from voting as an indication of the reservations the move has encountered even within the political establishment.

After Ma's post on Chinese social media went viral two weeks ago, the 70-year-old writer decided to switch to Twitter, which can only be accessed inside China using a virtual private network, to continue issuing warnings about China moving dangerously backward.

"The police have not visited me yet," he told The Associated Press on Friday from his Beijing home. "But I'm preparing for it."

Ma remains in the capital, but some well-known dissidents and potential troublemakers have already been "holidayed" — bundled off to faraway cities, their travel expenses paid by state security. Retired elders from the Communist Party's liberal wing have been warned to stay quiet.

The government's censorship apparatus had to spring into action after the term limit proposal was unveiled, suppressing keywords on social media ranging from "I disagree" to "shameless" to "Xi Zedong." Even the letter "N" was blocked after it was used as part of an equation for the number of terms Xi might serve.

Yet, occasionally, dissent has surfaced through the cracks.

On Wednesday, International Women's Day, law students at the prestigious Tsinghua University in Beijing — Xi's alma mater — hung red banners that ostensibly celebrated the school's female classmates but also satirized national politics.

"I love you without any term limits, but if there are, we can just remove them," read one, while another banner declared that "A country can't survive without a constitution, we can't go on without you."

University administrators weren't amused. A student witness said the banners were quickly removed and notices posted requiring campus shops to register students who use printers to make large banners.

Chinese studying overseas have been more blunt. Posts in recent days popped up at the University of California, San Diego, with Xi's picture and the text "Never My President" and spread to more than eight overseas universities, said Lebao Wu, a student at Australian National University in Canberra.

To be sure, Xi's confident, populist leadership style and tough attitude toward official corruption has won

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 36 of 71

him a significant degree of popular support.

Sipping on a Starbucks drink in Beijing's business district on Friday, a 56-year-old surnamed Zhang who works in insurance said citizens desired freedom, but wanted a powerful leader who could deliver stability and wealth even more.

Letting Xi rule indefinitely "will strengthen the party's leadership and offer the quickest path toward development," Zhang said. "We need a powerful leader. People need an emperor in their hearts. The Western idea that you are not alive unless you are free has not taken root in people's hearts."

However, a 35-year old IT industry worker surnamed Huang said her friends were concerned about China returning to the Mao era.

"I saw on (state broadcaster) CCTV's evening news that they were saying everyone fully supports the constitutional amendments, but no one asked us for our opinion. Our opinion is quickly censored," she said. "This is China. What can we do about it?"

Neither would give their full names as is common among Chinese when commenting on politics.

Even some of the government's most outspoken critics have been reluctant to loudly criticize the constitutional amendment.

He Weifang, a well-known blogger and law professor at Peking University, limited his remarks this week to the observance that the constitutional amendment proposal contained 21 articles, and if a delegate supported some articles but opposed others, he or she was entitled to vote against it.

He, who lost his job once for supporting the late dissident writer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, declined to discuss the term limit amendment, saying the subject was "a bit sensitive."

Others haven't held back, driven by an urgent sense that their country is at a crucial point in its history.

Li Datong, a former editor of the China Youth Daily state newspaper and one of the few voices of open opposition, said delegates know the amendment is wrong but no one has the courage to speak out. He compared Chinese citizens to Germans who allowed Adolf Hitler to seize power in the 1930s.

"I know that just a few ordinary Chinese citizens coming out and expressing their opinion will not change anything, but I'm doing this so I can face future generations," Li said.

"When they look back at this time, I don't want them to say, 'Not a single person in China stood up and opposed this.' When people talk about Nazi Germany, they always ask why the people living during that time didn't do anything about it," Li said. "I want to be able to face my past."

In the run-up to the vote, congress delegates have lavished extra praise on Xi. The party boss of a north-western province that contains a significant Tibetan population compared him to a living Buddhist deity.

"If you do good things for the people, bring good lives to the people, you should be able to keep serving forever," said Zhou Shuying, an artist and delegate representing a rural county about 130 kilometers (80 miles) west of Beijing.

"I'm speaking from the bottom of my heart," she said, then paused to make sure reporters heard her clearly. "I'm really speaking from the heart."

GOP candidate in Pennsylvania struggles with campaign basics

By STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

GREENSBURG, Pa. (AP) — There is no sign of Republican congressional candidate Rick Saccone on Sherwood Drive.

Just days before western Pennsylvania's special election, his campaign informed some residents that he may knock on doors that morning in this critical GOP stronghold. It's almost 11 a.m., and they're still waiting.

"He was supposed to stop by today," 68-year-old Republican John Debich says, scanning the empty streets of suburban Greensburg from his front porch. "It's the second time we've been avoided."

Debich's disappointment underscores a dangerous truth for the GOP as the nation braces for the next special election of the Trump era on Tuesday.

Saccone may be President Donald Trump's strong favorite in a conservative region, but he is struggling with the basics of modern-day politics. In a race that will hinge on voter turnout, the 60-year-old state lawmaker has little organization of his own — at least compared with Democrat Conor Lamb, a 33-year-old

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 37 of 71

former Marine and federal prosecutor who has never before run for office.

Most of Saccone's appearances over the last week have been closed to the public, and those that weren't, attracted only a handful of supporters.

Drawing little energy from within, Saccone has been forced to outsource the lifeblood of many successful campaigns — the so-called get-out-the-vote operation — to paid contractors and the national GOP, which has scrambled to pick up the slack. Fearing another special election embarrassment, the White House is sending Trump to the region for the second time to help energize local Republicans on Saturday night.

"We're doing everything that we need to do to get out the vote and inspire people," Saccone told reporters this week, before he walked into a closed-door event with representatives from the local oil and gas industry. He added, "All the traditional things, we're doing."

Later that day, Lamb marched up and down the hilly streets of Carnegie, Pennsylvania, in the snow to encourage Democrats to vote. Some residents of the working-class Pittsburgh suburb were surprised to see the Democratic candidate at their doorstep.

Josh Jaros and his partner Kim Zouko, both 36, invited the fresh-faced Lamb into their living room, where he played with their 3-year-old daughter for a few minutes before asking them who they were voting for.

"You've got our vote. And if you didn't before, you do now," Jaros told him.

Lamb shuttled back to a nearby campaign office after knocking on 27 doors to speak to nearly 40 young volunteers, many of them in high school. They munched on macaroni and cheese and pulled pork as Lamb emphasized the importance of preserving Medicare and Social Security — programs that help people maintain "basic dignity," he said.

In a brief interview as volunteers buzzed through the two-story office, the first-time candidate insisted that winning elections isn't "rocket science."

"We've been working really hard to identify who our people are through door knocking and calls. That's what all these people are doing," Lamb said. "Election day is going to be like Dunkirk — everybody in their car is going to go out and make sure everybody gets there."

Some Washington Republicans concede that Lamb is the superior candidate in the race, which would have been an easy win for Republicans if not for Saccone's struggle to raise money and build an aggressive campaign.

The Republican posted only two public events on his Facebook page for the seven-day period before the election. He was not running any TV ads earlier in the week. His message, if voters hear it, is focused on his support for Trump, his experience in the public and private sector, his opposition to abortion rights, and efforts to link his opponent to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

Saccone does enjoy a base of devoted supporters from the area he represented in the state house, but Pennsylvania's 18th congressional district includes 10 times more people.

And while Trump won the region by nearly 20 points little more than a year ago, polls now suggest that the Republican and Democrat are essentially tied. The seat has been in Republican hands for the last 15 years.

"Candidates and campaigns matter, and when one candidate outraises the other 6-to-1 and runs circles around the other, it creates real challenges for outside groups trying to win a race," said Corry Bliss, executive director for the Congressional Leadership Fund, a group aligned with House Speaker Paul Ryan, which has invested \$3.5 million to boost Saccone's candidacy.

The organization has been active on the ground since early January to help execute an aggressive get-out-the-vote operation of its own. Over the last week, 50 full-time door knockers, hired through a private contractor, canvassed the district targeting Republican voters most likely to turn out on Tuesday.

They handed out fliers that cast Lamb, a moderate Democrat who has downplayed his connection to his party, as a "rubber stamp for Nancy Pelosi."

At the same time, teams from the Koch brothers-backed Americans For Prosperity arrived in the region this weekend to broaden the conservative outreach. And the Republican National Committee has spent more than \$1 million on its own operation that was expected to reach 250,000 targeted voters — either by phone or in person — by election day, said RNC spokesman Rick Gorka.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 38 of 71

Overall, national groups allied with the GOP have spent nearly \$8 million on advertising in the race, a figure that doesn't include logistical support on the ground and is more than seven times the amount invested by national Democratic allies unaffiliated with the Lamb campaign.

The president and his party are eager to avoid another special election loss in what should be a safe Republican district.

Energized by their opposition to the president, Democrats have over-performed in virtually every contest across America since Trump took the White House. And the sting of the GOP's embarrassing December defeat in Alabama's special Senate race is still fresh.

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway campaigned for Saccone on Thursday, the first of three high-profile visits from Trump or his senior team. In addition to Trump's Saturday appearance, Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to rally local voters on Monday.

Conway's first appearance with Saccone at a Pittsburgh "meet and greet" with campaign volunteers attracted less than 20 people.

Back on Sherwood Drive, Debich is disappointed that Saccone didn't show, but he says it won't affect his vote. He notes that he stapled a Saccone campaign sign to his front lawn so the wind wouldn't blow it away.

"I'd like to meet him," Debich says. "I know he's a busy man. I'll see him at the Trump rally."

AP writers Kelly Daschle and Bill Barrow contributed to this report.

Soon after governor signs gun bill, NRA sues to block it

By **BRENDAN FARRINGTON** and **GARY FINEOUT**, Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Weeks after their children were gunned down in the worst high school shooting since Columbine, parents of the victims stood in the Florida Capitol and watched Gov. Rick Scott sign a far-reaching bill that places new restrictions on guns.

Hours later, the National Rifle Association filed a federal lawsuit to block it.

The new law capped an extraordinary three weeks of lobbying after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, with student survivors and grieving families working to persuade a Republican-run state government that had shunned gun control measures.

Surrounded by family members of the 17 people killed in the Valentine's Day shooting, the GOP governor said the bill balances "our individual rights with need for public safety."

"It's an example to the entire country that government can and has moved fast," said Scott, whose state has been ruled for 20 years by gun-friendly Republican lawmakers.

Tony Montalto, whose daughter Gina was killed in the shooting, read a statement from victims' families: "When it comes to preventing future acts of horrific school violence, this is the beginning of the journey. We have paid a terrible price for this progress."

The bill fell short of achieving the ban on assault-style weapons sought by survivors. The gunman who opened fire at the school used such a weapon, an AR-15 rifle.

Nevertheless, the bill raises the minimum age to buy rifles from 18 to 21, extends a three-day waiting period for handgun purchases to include long guns and bans bump stocks, which allow guns to mimic fully automatic fire. It also creates a so-called guardian program enabling some teachers and other school employees to carry guns.

The NRA insisted that the measure "punishes law-abiding gun owners for the criminal acts of a deranged individual."

The Parkland gunman "gave repeated warning signs that were ignored by federal and state officials. If we want to prevent future atrocities, we must look for solutions that keep guns out of the hands of those who are a danger to themselves or others, while protecting the rights of law-abiding Americans," Chris W. Cox, executive director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, said in a statement.

The signing marked a major victory for the teens who lived through the attack and swiftly became the public faces of a renewed gun-control movement. Just days after the shooting, they began holding rallies,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 39 of 71

lobbying lawmakers and harnessing the power of social media in support of reform.

The governor told the students: "You helped change our state. You made a difference. You should be proud."

Scott, who said he's an NRA member and will continue to be one, said he is still "not persuaded" about the guardian program that will let districts authorize staff members to carry handguns if they complete law enforcement training. It's not mandatory.

"If counties don't want to do this, they can simply say no," he said.

The governor singled out two fathers whose children were killed, saying that they walked the halls of the Legislature since the shooting seeking change.

"I know the debate on all these issues will continue. And that's healthy in our democracy," he said. "This is a time for all of us to come together, roll up our sleeves and get it done."

Student activists from the school called it "a baby step."

"Obviously, this is what we've been fighting for. It's nowhere near the long-term solution," said Chris Grady, a senior at Stoneman Douglas High. "It's a baby step but a huge step at the same time. Florida hasn't passed any legislation like this in God knows how long."

In schools, the measure creates new mental health programs and establishes an anonymous tip line for reporting threats. It also seeks to improve communication between schools, law enforcement and state agencies.

Broward County teachers union President Anna Fusco said teachers supported the bill but not the provision allowing them to carry guns.

She said she wants Scott to veto the money for the guardian program when he receives the budget. The governor cannot veto individual items in the bill itself, but he does have line-item veto power with the budget.

The Broward County school superintendent has already said he doesn't want to participate in the program.

Meanwhile, the 19-year-old former student accused of assaulting the school went before a judge. Nikolas Cruz faces 17 counts of murder and attempted murder. In a brief hearing Friday, he stood with his head bowed as he appeared via video conference.

Cruz's public defender has said he will plead guilty if prosecutors take the death penalty off the table and sentence him to life in prison instead. Prosecutors have not announced a decision.

Associated Press writers Jason Dearen in Gainesville, Tamara Lush in St. Petersburg, and Curt Anderson, Terry Spencer, Jennifer Kay and Adriana Gomez Licon in Miami contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's complete coverage of the Florida school shooting here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Floridaschoolshooting>.

Slow recovery from latest nor'easter; 3rd storm on tap?

BOSTON (AP) — The sun came out across much of the Northeast on Friday as utilities tackled the arduous task of restoring power to hundreds of thousands of customers who lost electricity during the storm that hit the region this week, all with the possibility of a third nor'easter in the offing.

Utilities asked for patience, warning that because of the damage caused by the storm that dropped 2 feet of snow in some areas, pulling down trees, branches and power lines and blocking roads, it could be days before power is back on.

"We are making steady progress but realize if your power is out, those milestones don't mean anything to you. We completely get that," said Christine Milligan, a spokesman for utility National Grid in Massachusetts.

Power crews were working to restore electricity to more than 200,000 customers in Northeast on Friday night. New Jersey and Massachusetts had the most outages, according to the poweroutage.us website, which compiles statistics from utilities across the nation.

Utility PSE&G in New Jersey said it had workers from as far away as Indiana helping local crews repair damaged lines and reset utility poles. Nearly 600 additional tree trimmers also were clearing branches

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 40 of 71

and debris. It expected most customers to have their power restored by Saturday.

National Grid tried to assure its Massachusetts customers it had hundreds of crews working on restorations and that power would return to the hardest hit areas, including the Merrimack Valley, by midnight Sunday. The company used helicopters on Friday to assess the damage of sub-transmission lines, which were located deep in the woods. Milligan said the wet, heavy snow caused a lot of damage. Wednesday's storm came on the heels of an earlier nor'easter that brought damaging high winds.

"We know that customers want their power. We're working as quickly as we can," she said. "We've had to prioritize because we've had so much widespread damage."

But there still were complaints about the pace of the restorations.

"It is completely unacceptable that our citizens have to bear another night without heat or power," Mayor Jim Fiorentini of Haverhill, Massachusetts, posted Friday on Facebook. He said he contacted National Grid and demanded more crews.

"Please plan to be without power for multiple days as we work through this significant restoration," Ever-source posted on Twitter. The utility serves customers in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

That was little consolation to some residents.

"It's colder in the house than it is outside," Salem, Massachusetts, resident Cindy Peters told The Eagle-Tribune newspaper.

Robert Nixon, 83, sat in his running car to keep warm on Thursday after the senior housing complex where he lives in Norton, Massachusetts lost power.

He also had to throw out all the food in his fridge.

"When you're on Social Security, that stuff hurts," he told The Boston Globe.

People without power piled into relatives' homes, hung out at the local coffee shop or went to "warming centers" that some towns opened in libraries or senior centers.

Karl Carlo Green went to Billerica Town Hall when he lost power to enjoy a warm beverage and a snack, but told The Sun of Lowell that he was worried about his cat.

"He's like my child because I don't have kids," Green said.

The storm was being blamed for at least two deaths in New York and New Jersey.

In Maine, excessive speed on icy roads is being blamed for a 14-vehicle pileup on Interstate 95; no injuries have been reported.

The heavy wet snow was also the apparent cause of a roof collapse in a vacant building in Bridgeport, Connecticut. No one was hurt.

The rush is on to restore power as forecasters monitor another system that could move up the coast Monday. Some weather models, however, have the storm missing the mark.

Browns make 3 major trades, acquire QB Taylor, WR Landry

By TOM WITHERS, AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Maybe the losing and laughing will finally stop. The Browns aren't fooling around. With three stunning trades on the eve of free agency, Cleveland landed a proven starting quarterback, a game-breaking, three-time Pro Bowl wide receiver and a shut-down cornerback.

After 16 straight losses on the field, victory.

Two months after a winless season mercifully ended, new general manager John Dorsey addressed major roster needs Friday by acquiring mobile quarterback Tyrod Taylor in a deal with Buffalo, wide receiver Jarvis Landry from Miami and cornerback Damarious Randall from Green Bay, a person with direct knowledge of the overhaul told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Teams are not permitted to announce any trades until next week.

In exchange, the Browns shipped quarterback DeShone Kizer and swapped late-round picks with the Packers, gave the Dolphins a fourth-round pick this season and a seventh rounder in 2019 and sent the Bills the No. 65 overall pick in this year's draft.

All in a day's work for Dorsey, who brought in major talent without giving up any of the team's five picks

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 41 of 71

in the first two rounds this year.

And the makeover came as the team awaits word from Pro Bowl left tackle Joe Thomas on his future. Thomas, who played more than 10,000 straight snaps before tearing his left triceps last season, is mulling retirement.

The Browns gave him more to think about.

Not long after Dorsey's trifecta, Thomas tweeted: "@Browns are en fuego!! Here's to John Dorsey tonight!!

The acquisition of Taylor would seem to change Cleveland's plans to pursue a veteran quarterback in free agency, which begins Monday when teams are permitted to contact agents. It was assumed the Browns would target Cincinnati's AJ McCarron, whom they tried to land in a trade last season before the deal was squelched when the teams failed to properly file paperwork to the league.

McCarron wants to start and it's unlikely he would want to compete with Taylor, who led the Bills to their first postseason appearance since 1999. The dynamic Taylor, who finished with a 23-21 record in three seasons with Buffalo, can affect the game as a passer or runner and he's the type of quarterback Browns coach Hue Jackson has sought since coming to Cleveland.

However, even with Taylor around, the Browns are still expected to select a quarterback with the No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft and Dorsey and his staff are in the process of deciding if that's Southern Cal's Sam Darnold, UCLA's Josh Rosen, Wyoming's Josh Allen or Oklahoma's Baker Mayfield, the Heisman Trophy winner who scares some Cleveland fans because of his Johnny Manziel-like showmanship.

Cleveland's next starting quarterback will be the team's 29th since 1999.

But unlike Kizer, who led the NFL with 22 interceptions, went 0-15 and went through numerous growing pains as a rookie starter, Taylor will have offensive weapons around him.

Landry is as good as they get.

The 25-year-old, who caught a league-best 112 passes last season, immediately upgrades a Cleveland offense that finished last in scoring and didn't have any player who threatened a defense until wide receiver Josh Gordon made his late return from an indefinite NFL suspension. With Gordon on the outside, Landry in the slot and Taylor behind center, the Browns have the makings of a potent attack.

Landry signed a \$16 million, one-year franchise tag Thursday with Miami, clearing the path for his trade. The Dolphins began shopping him when the parties were unable to reach an agreement on a long-term contract, which he's likely to get from the Browns.

A big contract could help calm the sometimes volatile Landry, whose 400 receptions are the most by any player in his first four seasons.

"Y'all better understand (stuff) about to get SERIOUS... ON MY MAMA," Landry posted on Twitter shortly after news that he was Cleveland bound broke.

The additions of Taylor and Landry certainly must have thrilled new Browns offensive coordinator Todd Haley, who was fired in Pittsburgh following the Steelers' divisional-round playoff loss. Haley spent the past six seasons working with Ben Roethlisberger, Antonio Brown and Le'Veon Bell. All Cleveland needs is a breakaway running back and the Browns could get one with the No. 4 overall pick if Penn State's Saquon Barkley is still around.

Dorsey also took care of defensive coordinator Gregg Williams by acquiring Randall, a former first-round pick who was inactive for the Packers' final two games last season with a knee injury.

Randall started 30 games in three years for the Packers, who drafted him with the No. 30 overall pick in 2015. He had some injuries issues — and a visible spat with the team — in 2017, but finished the year as Green Bay's best cover cornerback. He was benched in the second half of a Sept. 28 game against Chicago by coach Mike McCarthy, who sent him to the locker room.

Cleveland's secondary was a mess last season after the club decided to waive veteran cornerback Joe Haden.

Dorsey's remodeling of the Browns is far from finished. Before the trades, Cleveland was \$113 million under the salary cap and the team figures to remain busy next week.

But after an historic losing season, the wins don't feel as far away.

___ More AP NFL: <http://pro32.ap.org> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Summit plan too easy on North Korea? US rejects criticism

By **MATTHEW PENNINGTON** and **FOSTER KLUG**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House tried to swat away criticism Friday that the U.S. is getting nothing in exchange for agreeing to a historic face-to-face summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said North Korea has made promises to denuclearize, stop its nuclear and missile testing and allow joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises. But questions remained over exactly what North Korea means by "denuclearize" and what the U.S. might be risking with a highly publicized summit that will build up Kim's stature among world leaders.

"Let's not forget that the North Koreans did promise something," Sanders said, responding to a reporter's question about why Trump agreed to a meeting — unprecedented between leaders of the two nations — without preconditions.

She added: "We are not going to have this meeting take place until we see concrete actions that match the words and the rhetoric of North Korea."

Still, the White House indicated that planning for the meeting was fully on track.

"The deal with North Korea is very much in the making and will be, if completed, a very good one for the World. Time and place to be determined," Trump tweeted late Friday.

The previous night's announcement of the summit marked a dramatic turnaround after a year of escalating tensions and rude insults between the two leaders. A personal meeting would have been all but unthinkable when Trump was being dismissed as a "senile dotard" and the Korean "rocket man" was snapping off weapons tests in his quest for a nuclear arsenal that could threaten the U.S. mainland.

North Korea's capabilities are indeed close to posing a direct atomic threat to the U.S. And the wider world has grown fearful of a resumption of the Korean War that ended in 1953 without a peace treaty.

The prospect of the first U.S.-North Korea summit has allayed those fears somewhat. The European Union, Russia and China — whose leader spoke by phone with Trump on Friday — have all welcomed the move.

North Korea's government has yet to formally comment on its invitation to Trump. South Korea said the president agreed to meet Kim by May, but Sanders said Friday that no time and place had been set.

The "promises" on denuclearization and desisting from weapons tests were relayed to Trump by South Korean officials who had met with Kim Monday and brought his summit invitation to the White House. Trump discussed the offer with top aides on Thursday. Some expressed their reservations but ultimately supported the president's decision to accept it, according to U.S. officials who were briefed on the talks and requested anonymity to discuss them.

Still, some lawmakers and foreign policy experts voiced skepticism about the wisdom of agreeing to a summit without preparations by lower-level officials, particularly given the lack of trust between the two sides. North Korea is also holding three American citizens for what Washington views as political reasons.

"A presidential visit is really the highest coin in the realm in diplomacy circles," said Bruce Klingner, a Korea expert at the conservative-leaning Heritage Foundation, adding that Trump "seemed to spend it without getting anything in return, not even the release of the three U.S. captives."

Some say Trump could be setting himself up for failure amid doubts over whether Kim has any intention to relinquish a formidable atomic arsenal that he has made central to his personal stature and North Korea's standing in the world. Kim would also boost his own standing by becoming the first of the three hereditary leaders of North Korea to sit down with an American president.

Evans Revere, a former senior State Department official experienced in negotiating with North Korea, warned there is a disconnect between how the North and the U.S. describes "denuclearization" of the divided Korean Peninsula. For the U.S. it refers to North Korea giving up its nukes; for North Korea it also means removing the threat of American forces in South Korea and the nuclear deterrent with which the U.S. protects its allies in the region.

"The fundamental definition of denuclearization is quite different between Washington and Pyongyang," Revere said, noting that as recently as Jan. 1, Kim had vigorously reaffirmed the importance of nukes

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 43 of 71

for North Korea's security. He said that misunderstandings at a summit could lead to "recrimination and anger" and even military action if Trump were embarrassed by failure.

"There is good reason to talk, but only if we are talking about something that is worth doing and that could be reasonably verified," said former Defense Secretary William Perry, who dealt with North Korea during President Bill Clinton's administration. "Otherwise we are setting ourselves up for a major diplomatic failure."

The White House maintains that Kim has been compelled to reach out for presidential-level talks because of Trump's policy of "maximum pressure."

"North Korea's desire to meet to discuss denuclearization — while suspending all ballistic missile and nuclear testing — is evidence that President Trump's strategy to isolate the Kim regime is working," Vice President Mike Pence, who has visited the region, said Friday in a written statement.

However, other presidents have lodged economic sanctions against North Korea, as Trump has. And the North has made a habit of reaching out after raising fears during previous crises, with offers of dialogue meant to win aid and concessions. Some speculate that the North is trying to peel Washington away from its ally Seoul, weaken crippling sanctions and buy time for nuclear development. It has also, from the U.S. point of view, repeatedly cheated on past nuclear deals.

Without question, the North wants a peace treaty to end the technically still-active Korean War and drive all U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula, removing what it says is a hostile encirclement of its territory by Washington and Seoul.

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville, Matthew Lee, Zeke Miller, Jill Colvin and Tracy Brown in Washington, and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul contributed to this report.

Trump getting Washington military parade _ but no tanks

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It looks like President Donald Trump is getting the military parade he wants in Washington — though he may get no tanks for the effort.

A Pentagon planning memo issued Thursday and released Friday says the parade being planned for Nov. 11, Veterans Day, will "include wheeled vehicles only, no tanks — consideration must be given to minimize damage to local infrastructure." Big, heavy tanks could tear up District of Columbia streets.

But the event will "include a heavy air component at the end of the parade," meaning lots of airplane flyovers. Older aircraft will be included as available.

The memo from the office of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis offers initial planning guidance to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose staff will plan the parade along a route from the White House to the Capitol, and integrate it with the city's annual veterans' parade. Northern Command, which oversees U.S. troops in North America, will execute the parade.

Trump decided he wanted a military parade in Washington after he attended France's Bastille Day celebration in the center of Paris last July. As the invited guest of French President Emmanuel Macron, Trump watched enthusiastically from a reviewing stand as the French military showcased its tanks and fighter jets, including many U.S.-made planes, along the famed Champs-Élysées.

Trump praised the French display months later when he and Macron met in New York, saying, "We're going to have to try and top it."

But outdoing the French may be difficult without any tanks.

Trump thinks the parade, which some lawmakers in both political parties have criticized, would boost the spirit of America.

"We have a great country and we should be celebrating our country," he told Fox News Channel in a recent interview.

The Pentagon memo did not include a cost estimate for the parade. The White House budget director recently told Congress the cost to taxpayers could be between \$10 million and \$30 million.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 44 of 71

The parade will focus on the contributions of American veterans throughout the history of the U.S. military, starting with the Revolutionary War, and highlight the evolution of women veterans from World War II to the present, according to the memo.

Trump should be surrounded in the reviewing area at the Capitol by veterans and Medal of Honor recipients, the memo said.

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

Woods takes another big step, trails by 2 at Innisbrook

By DOUG FERGUSON, AP Golf Writer

PALM HARBOR, Fla. (AP) — Corey Connors knew Tiger Woods had finished his second round at Innisbrook because he couldn't see him. He was only about 50 yards from the ninth green, but there were too many fans covering every inch of grass, packed in a dozen deep because of Woods.

Woods brought the Valspar Championship to life Friday with his best round of a comeback that is building momentum toward the Masters.

Connors was happy to play a quiet round in the afternoon and wind up with the lead.

The Canadian rookie ran off three birdies before a careless error set him back, and he finished with a 2-under 69 for a two-shot lead going into the weekend. Right on his heels was Woods, who kept a clean card until his final hole and shot 68.

Connors was on the putting green when Woods and his entourage — officials, security, media and stragglers — walked along the edge of the green, in front of another group waiting to tee off on No. 1 and toward the scoring area.

"I definitely saw that," Connors said. "I've seen that the last few days as well. Pretty cool. Hopefully, I can be in a position where I get some followers Sunday."

Until that moment, the closest Connors ever got to Woods was at the Masters three years ago when he watched him on the range. Connors played at Augusta National that year as the U.S. Amateur runner-up.

Being close to him on the leaderboard is an entirely different dynamic.

Connors was at 6-under 136 and will play in the final group with Paul Casey, who had a 68. Woods and Brandt Snedeker (68) will be in the group in front of them, with thousands of fans lining the fairways and surrounding the greens.

"I don't think this will be leading, but at least I'm there with a chance going into the weekend," Woods said when he finished. "Today was a good day."

Woods has been slowed by mistakes, some leading to big numbers. The second round at Innisbrook was all about control of his shots that rarely put him out of position off the tee and especially on the green, where he could attack putts from below the hole.

He took the lead with a drive that was heading left, struck a cart path and caromed back into the fairway on his 14th hole, the par-5 fifth. That set up a long iron into the front right bunker and a delicate shot from the sand to about 5 feet for his fourth birdie of the round.

He saved par with a 12-foot putt on No. 7 and was heading toward a bogey-free round until his wedge on the par-5 ninth rode the shifting wind to the right and into the gallery, his ball on a woman's bag. After getting a drop, his chip came out too strong and hit the flag, leaving it only 6 feet away.

He missed the putt and didn't seem all that bothered.

Just over five months ago, Woods still didn't have clearance to begin hitting full shots, much less to play without restrictions. In his fourth PGA Tour event in seven weeks, he looks like a contender.

"I've come a long way in that span of time," Woods said.

The energy in the gallery was enormous, especially for this sleepy tournament, and toward the end of the round the fans were looking for any reason to cheer.

"The roars are a little louder, and there's certainly an energy about the gallery that you don't have anywhere else," Jordan Spieth said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 45 of 71

Spieth missed the cut for the second time this year. He is still trying to rediscover his putting touch, and his iron game left him in an opening round of 76. He didn't fare much better on Friday with two birdies, two bogeys, a 71 and a phone call to get back to Dallas sooner than he wanted.

"I've played with Tiger many times. It's nothing new," Spieth said. "It kind of feels like you're playing in a major championship in a normal round, which if anything should bring out better golf for me. I just got way off on my iron play, with putting not improving either. That's how you shoot over par."

Henrik Stenson, the other major champion in the group, had another 74 and missed the cut. Also headed home was Rory McIlroy, who shot 73 and missed the cut for the second time in four starts on the PGA Tour this year.

McIlroy played with Woods in December before his return and was alarmed at how good he looked. He said Woods never missed a shot when they played.

"I'd seen this three months ago," McIlroy said. "So yeah, he's playing great. I'd love to be here for the weekend to be in contention, but I'll be an interested observer watching TV over the weekend, see how it unfolds."

Casey holed a 15-foot birdie putt on the 18th for his 68, putting him in good shape going into the weekend. Casey has gone nearly four years since his last victory.

He was on the opposite side of the course as Woods, though he could hear him.

"Feels like the old days," Casey said.

Woods never really saw his name on the board. Whenever he glanced at the video board, it was showing Spieth or Stenson putting and their statistics. But he could sense from the crowd that everything was going his way.

"To play myself into contention this early into it was nice, and on top of that, to build on what I did a week ago," he said, referring to the Honda Classic when he was on the fringe of contention going to the final nine holes. "I feel comfortable out there."

A look at what's ahead in a landmark Trump-Kim summit

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — After a year of threats and diatribes, U.S. President Donald Trump and third-generation North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un have agreed to meet face-to-face for talks about the North's nuclear program.

It remains to be seen whether a summit, if it takes place, could lead to any meaningful breakthrough after an unusually provocative year. North Korea tested its most powerful nuclear weapon to date and test-launched three intercontinental ballistic missiles theoretically capable of striking the U.S. mainland.

Will there be a breakthrough? Failure? Or merely the start of another long and difficult process meant to remove the North's nuclear capabilities?

Here's a look at what may lie ahead and the challenges that remain:

WHY NOW?

Analysts say Trump's decision to accept Kim's invitation for a summit and to do it by May could be linked in part to a desire to claim a significant achievement in his most difficult foreign policy challenge before the U.S. midterm elections in November.

Kim, on the other hand, seems desperate to save a sanctions-battered North Korean economy.

Both leaders have interests in striking a big deal, said Cheong Seong-Chang, a senior analyst at South Korea's Sejong Institute. Should it happen, the May summit between Trump and Kim will come shortly after a planned April meeting between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

It's likely that North Korea will also push for summits with China, Russia and Japan later in the year to further break out of its isolation, Cheong said.

Trump will likely try to achieve something dramatic in his meeting with Kim, said Hong Min, an analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification, including a possible exchange of verbal commitments

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 46 of 71

on the denuclearization of North Korea and a peace treaty between the two countries.

WHERE TO MEET?

The United States and North Korea will likely be talking quite a bit in coming months and maybe even exchanging high-level delegations to set up the logistics of the summit.

One of the biggest questions is where it will take place.

The United States would prefer Washington, while North Korea will want Trump to come to Pyongyang, its capital.

Unless the countries agree to a third-country location, which would likely be South Korea, experts see it as more likely that Trump will fly to Pyongyang.

While no incumbent U.S. president has ever set foot in North Korea, Trump might be willing to become the first because it would fit the strong-willed, in-your-face type of leadership he tries to project, Hong said.

It's hard to imagine Kim going to Washington because he is much less diplomatically experienced; the planned meeting with Moon in April will be his first with any state leader since he took power in 2011.

They could also meet in the truce village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone between the rival Koreas or, Hong said, the southern South Korean resort island of Jeju.

WHAT WILL NORTH KOREA WANT?

A big question will be whether Trump can accept a freeze of North Korea's nuclear weapons program rather than its elimination, said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University.

Kim will likely want to keep some nukes as a deterrent, but that might be hard for Trump to tolerate when he spent so much time harshly criticizing his predecessor, Barack Obama, for allegedly standing by and watching as North Korea became a nuclear threat.

Still, Kim might express a firmer commitment to denuclearization to Trump, including giving a full report on the North's current nuclear weapons arsenal and allowing thorough international verification once the denuclearization process takes hold, said Choi Kang, vice president of Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

While some experts speculate that North Korea might ask for a halt of annual military drills between the United States and South Korea or even the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula, Choi said it's meaningful that Kim, at least according to South Korean presidential official Chung Eui-yong, said he understands that the joint military exercises between the allies "must continue." This signals an important departure from the past when the North thoroughly rejected the U.S.-South Korea alliance.

Kim might even free several American citizens currently detained in the North to brighten the atmosphere of his summit with Trump, Choi said.

HAVE WE SEEN THIS BEFORE?

The whirlwind events of the past months might be compared to 1994, when former U.S. President Bill Clinton concluded a major nuclear agreement between Washington and Pyongyang.

Under the "Agreed Framework," North Korea halted construction of two reactors the United States believed were for nuclear weapons production in return for two alternative nuclear power reactors that could be used to provide electricity but not bomb fuel, and 500,000 annual metric tons of fuel oil for the North.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright traveled to Pyongyang in 2000, and there were talks of a summit between Clinton and then-North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, the father of Kim Jong Un. But there was no arrangement before George W. Bush's election. The Agreed Framework broke down after U.S. intelligence agencies said North Korea was pursuing a second way to make bombs, using enriched uranium.

North Korea is clearly a different country than it was two decades ago, holding a legitimate nuclear program as a bargaining chip. But Trump, in just his second year in office and facing a similarly strong-willed leader eager to directly break a diplomatic deadlock, could be in a better position to cut a meaningful deal with North Korea than Clinton was at the end of his presidency.

"Chemistry wise, Trump and Kim might get along; they both strive to be bold and could be eager to strike a deal," said Choi. "After years of diplomatic stalemate over the North's nuclear program, we could use an injection of top-down decision making."

Follow Kim Tong-hyung on Twitter at @KimTongHyung.

When the going gets tough, Trump goes it alone

By CATHERINE LUCEY and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — His staff hollowing out and his agenda languishing, President Donald Trump is increasingly flying solo.

Always improvisational, the president exercised his penchant for going it alone in a big way this week: first, by ordering sweeping tariffs opposed by foreign allies and by many in his own party, then hours later delivering the stunning news that he'll meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

An on-the-spot decision with global ramifications, Trump's agreement to sit down with Kim came after a meeting with a South Korean delegation and took some of his top aides by surprise.

The president has long considered himself his own best consultant, saying during the presidential campaign: "I'm speaking with myself, number one, because I have a very good brain and I've said a lot of things."

Trump has told confidants recently that he wants to be less reliant on his staff, believing they often give bad advice, and that he plans to follow his own instincts, which he credits with his stunning election, according to two people who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about private conversations.

Trump's latest unilateral moves come at a moment of vulnerability for the president. Top staffers are heading for the exits, the Russia investigation continues to loom and Trump is facing growing questions about a lawsuit filed by a porn actress who claims her affair with the president was hushed up.

The White House pushed back against the notion that Trump's decision to meet with Kim was made in haste, with spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders saying, "This has been part of an ongoing campaign that's been going for over a year."

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said Trump takes input from a "diverse set of viewpoints," but added that "he knows it was his name on the ballot and he controls timing, content and tone."

Advisers argue that tales of Trump's freelancing are exaggerated and that in many cases — as with tariffs — he is following through on long-stated promises. Still, the president's decisions, as well as his proclivity for off-the-cuff announcements, frequently leave aides and allies guessing.

News that the president would accept a meeting never taken by a sitting U.S. president came from an unlikely source Thursday evening: a last-minute press statement by a South Korean official standing in the dark on the White House driveway.

With reality-show flair, Trump built suspense for the announcement by making an impromptu visit to the White House briefing room.

The South Korean official, Chung Eui-yong, spoke with Trump on Thursday after meeting with national security adviser H.R. McMaster and others. Trump asked Chung about a recent meeting with the North Korean dictator. The South Korean official relayed that Kim wanted to meet with Trump — and the president immediately accepted, according to a White House official, who was not authorized to discuss the meeting and was speaking on condition of anonymity.

Trump then asked Chung to announce it to the White House press, but Chung wanted first to check in with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, the official said. Moon granted permission, prompting Trump to make his first known foray into the White House briefing room to inform reporters that the South Koreans would soon be making a major announcement.

"Great progress being made," Trump later tweeted, adding: "Meeting being planned!"

This was not the only recent moment where Trump opted to trust his gut and go it alone.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 48 of 71

Determined to keep what he viewed as a crucial campaign promise, Trump forged forward with a plan to order new tariffs this week. In the process, he saw his top economic adviser, Gary Cohn, head for the exit and faced his most public condemnation to date from Republican lawmakers.

Trump let advisers Cohn and Peter Navarro, who stood on opposite sides of the issue, debate tariffs for weeks, at times contentiously. At another point, during a meeting with steel and aluminum executives, Trump urged Cohn to engage in a debate with U.S. Steel CEO Dave Burritt, according to two people familiar with the exchange and not authorized to discuss it publicly.

Cohn announced his departure as it became clear Trump would move ahead with the tariffs.

In recent days, Trump told advisers that his experience in business gave him an edge in deciding what to do on tariffs. He told aides that he been proclaiming for 30 years that the United States needed a more protectionist approach, according to two White House officials not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

The president also boasted to outside advisers that he knew the tariffs issue better than his advisers and suggested that the move could help him lock up Rust Belt states like Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan again, according to a person familiar with the president's thinking but not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

The president has previously shown his preference for working alone — with mixed results.

Trump surprised the Pentagon last year with a series of tweets announcing he would reverse Obama-era policies allowing transgender individuals to serve in the armed forces. He made a surprise spending deal with Democrats "Chuck and Nancy" that boxed out his own party. And he sent out a series of puzzling tweets about a key spying law that threw Congress into disarray ahead of votes to reauthorize the program.

Advisers and supporters were caught off guard recently when Trump appeared to embrace gun control measures at a freewheeling roundtable with lawmakers in the wake of a Florida school shooting. He later met with the National Rifle Association and appeared to soften his stance, but his comment "take the guns first, go through due process second" drew strong criticism.

Still, Trump continues to hold that — as he said at the 2016 Republican Convention — he "alone" can fix things. He made that clear when he ran into an ABC reporter in the moments before the North Korea announcement.

Trump wouldn't say exactly what was coming, but he stressed: "Hopefully, you will give me credit."

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Ken Thomas contributed from Washington.

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

AP finds the NRA gave \$7 million to hundreds of schools

By COLLIN BINKLEY and MEGHAN HOYER, Associated Press

The National Rifle Association has dramatically increased its funding to schools in recent years amid a national debate over guns and school violence, an Associated Press analysis of tax records has found. But few say they plan to give up the money in the aftermath of the latest mass shooting.

The AP analysis of the NRA Foundation's public tax records finds that about 500 schools received more than \$7.3 million from 2010 through 2016, mostly through competitive grants meant to promote shooting sports. The grants have gone to an array of school programs, including the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, rifle teams, hunting safety courses and agriculture clubs.

In some ways, the grant distribution reflects the nation's deep political divide over guns. Nearly three-quarters of the schools that received grants are in counties that voted for President Donald Trump in the 2016 election, while a quarter are in counties that voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton, according to the AP analysis. Most are in medium-sized counties or rural areas, with few near major cities.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 49 of 71

California received the most in school grants, more than \$1 million, while Florida was a close second. Florida's Broward County school district is believed to be the first to stop accepting NRA money after a gunman killed 17 people at one of its schools Feb. 14. The teen charged in the shooting had been on a school rifle team that received NRA funding. School officials announced the change Tuesday but declined to comment further.

Denver Public Schools followed on Thursday, saying it won't pursue NRA grants in the future and will turn down several that were to be awarded this year. But officials in many other districts say they have no plans to back away.

"Whatever I think of the NRA, they're providing legitimate educational services," said Billy Townsend, a school board member in Florida's Polk County district, whose JROTC programs received \$33,000, primarily to buy air rifles. "If the NRA wanted to provide air rifles for our ROTC folks in the future, I wouldn't have a problem with that."

The grants awarded to schools are just a small share of the \$61 million the NRA Foundation has given to a variety of local groups since 2010. But it has grown rapidly, increasing nearly fourfold from 2010 to 2014 in what some opponents say is a thinly veiled attempt to recruit the next generation of NRA members.

The NRA Foundation did not return calls seeking comment.

Annual reports from the pro-gun group say its grant program was started in 1992 and raises money through local Friends of NRA chapters. It says half the proceeds from local fundraisers go to local grants and half goes to the national organization. Tax records show roughly \$19 million in grants going to the group's Virginia headquarters in 2015 and in 2016.

Besides schools, other typical recipients include 4-H groups, which have received \$12.2 million since 2010, Boy Scout troops and councils, which received \$4 million, and private gun clubs. Overall, about half the grants go to programs directed at youth.

Grant funding to schools rose sharply in the years after the 2012 shooting at Connecticut's Sandy Hook Elementary School, fueled in part by a new grant program the NRA unrolled to help schools make safety improvements. Three districts received safety grants totaling \$189,000 in 2014, tax records show, but none appears to have been awarded since then.

Nearly half of the 773 overall school grants have gone to JROTC programs, which put students through a basic military curriculum and offer an array of small competitive clubs, like the rifle team at Broward's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. But JROTC leaders say few students ultimately enlist in the military, and the primary goal is to teach students skills like discipline and leadership.

"The safety that we're teaching, the good citizenship that we're teaching here, those are the things you don't hear about," said Gunnery Sgt. Jim Flores, a JROTC instructor at Cibola High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "The majority of people walk out of here awesome young men and women, respectful of authority, things of that nature. Not so much little tin soldiers."

In some parts of the country, shooting clubs draw the same sort of following as any school sport. Bill Nolte, superintendent of the Haywood County district in North Carolina, says he still shows up at school sportsman's club tournaments even though his son graduated. Starting in sixth grade, students can join the clubs to compete in shooting events, archery and orienteering. For many families, Nolte said, it's just like any other weekend sports event.

"You take your lawn chair and your coffee in a thermos, and do much like you would do if you were going to a youth soccer or travel basketball or baseball event," Nolte said, adding that NRA grants have helped buy firearms and ammunition and cover other costs that otherwise would fall to the parents. "We are constantly seeking revenue for sportsman's club just like we do for cheerleading and track."

Districts that tallied the largest sums of NRA money typically used it for JROTC programs, including \$126,000 given to Albuquerque schools, \$126,000 to Broward County and \$125,000 to Anchorage, Alaska. The most awarded to a single district was \$291,000, given to Roseville schools near Sacramento, California, which say much of the funding went toward ammunition and gear for trap-shooting teams.

Grants are often provided as equipment rather than cash, with schools given rifles, ammunition, safety

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 50 of 71

gear and updates to shooting ranges. Nationally, about \$1.3 million was provided as cash, while \$6 million was provided through equipment, training and other costs.

The data does not include grants smaller than \$5,000 — those do not need to be individually tracked in tax filings.

Ron Severson, superintendent of the Roseville Joint Union High School District, says no parents have raised concerns over the funding, but administrators may reconsider it in the wake of the Florida shooting.

"After we get through this spring, we will probably take some time to assess how to move forward," he said.

School board members in some districts said they didn't know about the grants. Donna Corbett, a Democrat on the school board in southern Indiana's New Albany-Floyd County School Corporation, said she never heard about \$65,000 that went to a JROTC program at one of the high schools. Corbett said she plans to raise the issue with her board but feels conflicted about it.

"I am not a big NRA fan, but I also realize that ROTC is a good program," she said. "I'm not sure I would be willing to pull it to the detriment of the kids and their programs."

While some states received dozens of school grants, about 20 got only a few or none at all. In Massachusetts, for example, known for its strict gun laws, no schools have received NRA grants since 2010, tax records show. Terry Ryan, a school board member in the Westford district northwest of Boston, says a local teacher considered applying for a grant in 2014, but the district ultimately didn't pursue it.

"We were not interested in any way, shape or form endorsing the NRA or its philosophy," Ryan said in an interview.

By contrast, parent Jana Cox in Louisiana's Caddo Parish says few in the area would have a problem with the \$24,000 in NRA grants that have gone to school JROTC programs.

"Everybody here has guns," Cox said. "This is north Louisiana. You've got a lot of hunters and you've got a lot of guns."

Without NRA grants, some programs would struggle to stay afloat, officials say. For JROTC groups, which receive most of their money from their respective military branches, the grants have become more important as federal budgets have been cut. Programs at some high schools in Virginia, Missouri and other states have folded in recent years amid the pinch.

Lt. Colonel Ralph Ingles, head of the JROTC program at Albuquerque schools, says the Florida shooting has sparked a conversation about NRA grants, but he doesn't anticipate cutting ties anytime soon.

"I don't see anybody really backing down," he said. "I think it's just ingrained that we're going to continue to move forward in a positive direction."

Follow Binkley on Twitter at @cbinkley and Hoyer at @MeghanHoyer

This story has been corrected to show grants to the Roseville, California, school district totaled \$291,000.

Former Trump campaign aide Nunberg appears before grand jury

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former Trump campaign aide appeared for hours before a federal grand jury Friday, after he defiantly insisted in a series of news interviews just days earlier that he intended to defy a subpoena in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.

Sam Nunberg spent more than six hours inside the federal courthouse in Washington. He declined to speak with journalists on the way in or out of the building, and it was not immediately clear what testimony he offered to the grand jury or what documents he provided.

His appearance marked a turnabout from extraordinary public statements Monday when Nunberg, in multiple interviews, balked at complying with a subpoena that sought his appearance before the grand jury as well as correspondence with other campaign officials. In doing so, he became the first witness in the Mueller probe to openly threaten to defy a subpoena.

But later that night, Nunberg, who initially suggested that he considered Mueller's document demands unreasonable, told The Associated Press he had relented and predicted he'd wind up complying after all. "I'm going to end up cooperating with them," he said.

Nunberg said he worked for hours to produce the thousands of emails and other communications requested by Mueller, who is investigating whether Donald Trump's campaign improperly coordinated with Russia during the 2016 presidential election.

"I thought it was a teachable moment," he said of his 24 hours in the limelight.

So far, 19 people and three companies have been charged in Mueller's investigation. Among those charged are President Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn and 13 Russia nationals accused in a hidden but powerful social media campaign to meddle in the American election. Five people, including Flynn, have pleaded guilty.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing. His lawyers are currently negotiating the terms and scope of a possible interview with Mueller's office.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Despite arrest, police beating shows technology shortcomings

By JONATHAN DREW, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — A white police officer shown on video beating a black pedestrian has been charged with felony assault in a North Carolina case that sparked outrage over use of excessive force.

The case against former Asheville police officer Christopher Hickman stems from an August 2017 encounter but became public only last week after a leaked body camera video showed Hickman subduing and punching the pedestrian, who was accused of jaywalking.

The violent encounter happened shortly after Asheville implemented rules against excessive force, demonstrating how even a well-meaning policy can be limited by the officers carrying it out. The delay in making the footage public also shows that body camera technology being adopted across the country can't always guarantee the level of transparency many have hoped for.

"We need to be very cognizant of how difficult police supervision actually is. It's difficult enough that we can't just throw a piece of technology at it and expect to substantially change police supervision," said Seth Stoughton, who teaches law at the University of South Carolina.

Hickman, 31, was arrested late Thursday on a felony charge of assault by strangulation, as well as misdemeanor counts of assault and communicating threats, according to the prosecutor. A phone listing for Hickman, who resigned in January, had a full inbox that wouldn't take messages.

The Aug. 25 encounter came months after the city implemented the use-of-force policy that included training on de-escalating tense situations. The policy was drafted in the aftermath of a white officer killing an armed black man after a high speed chase.

Despite the policy, Hickman was shown on video published last week by The Citizen-Times subduing Johnnie Jermaine Rush, then punching and shocking him with a stun gun. Rush was stopped on a dark street because officers accused him of crossing outside a crosswalk near a minor league ballpark and cluster of breweries popular with tourists.

An arrest warrant for Hickman said Rush, 33, suffered head abrasions and swelling and that he lost consciousness when Hickman pressed his arm on his throat.

James Lee, a black minister and member of the Racial Justice Coalition, said the episode erodes trust in a community that hoped the use-of-force policy would bring change.

"What this has done is pause that level of trust," Lee said.

Still, Lee said Hickman is being held accountable, and he believes Police Chief Tammy Hooper should stay in her job.

"Hopefully she'll continue to learn from this," he said.

On Wednesday, Hooper was interrupted by an angry audience as she spoke about the case at a citizen's

police advisory board meeting. Hooper said she put Hickman on administrative duty immediately after the altercation, and started an administrative review. But people attending the meeting demanded to know why a criminal investigation wasn't sought for months.

Obstacles to resolving the case began after Hickman's supervisor arrived on scene. The supervisor didn't immediately review footage of the scene and did not give interview notes to superiors in a timely manner, according to city documents.

Weeks later, after reviewing nearly 60 hours of Hickman's body camera footage from numerous encounters, the department identified four other instances of rude behavior toward members of the public. Hickman resigned in January.

Asheville's body camera policy requires department technology officers only to review a sampling of body camera footage from officers around the department each month. Susanna Birdsong, an ACLU lawyer who studies body camera policy, said even when departments require footage review, the rules aren't always followed. She said the debate needs to go beyond technology to efforts to "stop racially biased policing before it starts."

The department's administrative review ended in December, and authorities didn't seek an outside criminal investigation until January. The State Bureau of Investigation declined to lead it, citing the time lapse. An Asheville investigator then began probing whether criminal charges were warranted. The FBI is also conducting a criminal investigation of Hickman.

Complicating transparency efforts, state law generally requires a judge to sign off on public release of body camera video. City officials are petitioning a judge to make more footage public.

Asheville's City Council released a statement saying that members were "furious" that they weren't told about the case until the video surfaced. The panel now wants a third-party audit for racial bias among the police serving a city of nearly 90,000 with a population that's about 82 percent white and 12 percent black.

At Wednesday's meeting, activist DeLores Venable questioned the city's image as welcoming, progressive and a tourist haven.

"Where's the progress when we tell tourists to come here," she asked, "but black tourists gotta face getting beat down on Biltmore Ave. because you're jaywalking?"

Follow Drew at www.twitter.com/JonathanLDrew

'Pharma Bro' gets 7 years in prison in securities fraud case

By COLLEEN LONG and TOM HAYS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The smirk wiped off his face, a crying Martin Shkreli was sentenced to seven years in prison for securities fraud Friday in a hard fall for the pharmaceutical-industry bad boy vilified for jacking up the price of a lifesaving drug.

Shkreli, the boyish-looking, 34-year-old entrepreneur dubbed the "Pharma Bro" for his loutish behavior, was handed his punishment after a hearing in which he and his attorney struggled with limited success to make him a sympathetic figure. His own lawyer confessed to wanting to punch him in the face sometimes.

The defendant hung his head and choked up as he admitted to many mistakes and apologized to the investors he was convicted of defrauding. At one point, a clerk handed him a box of tissues.

"I'm not the same person I was," Shkreli said. "I know right from wrong. I know what it means to tell the truth and what it means to lie."

He also said: "The only person to blame for me being here today is me. There is no conspiracy to take down Martin Shkreli. I took down Martin Shkreli."

In the end, U.S. District Judge Kiyoko Matsumoto gave him a sentence that fell well short of the 15 years prosecutors wanted but was a lot longer than the 18 months his lawyer asked for. He was also fined \$75,000.

Shkreli was found guilty in August of lying to investors in two failed hedge funds and cheating them out of millions. The case was unrelated to the 2015 furor in which he was accused of price-gouging, but his arrest was seen as rough justice by the many enemies he made with his smug and abrasive behavior

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 53 of 71

online and off.

The judge insisted that the punishment was not about Shkreli's online antics or his raising the cost of the drug. "This case is not about Mr. Shkreli's self-cultivated public persona ... nor his controversial statements about politics or culture," Matsumoto said.

But she did say his conduct after the verdict made her doubt the sincerity of his remorse. She cited his bragging after the verdict that he would be sentenced to time served. And she quoted one piece of correspondence in which he wrote: "F--- the feds."

The judge ruled earlier that Shkreli would have to forfeit more than \$7.3 million in a brokerage account and personal assets, including a one-of-a-kind Wu-Tang Clan album that he boasted of buying for \$2 million.

Defense attorney Benjamin Brafman described Shkreli as a misunderstood eccentric who used unconventional means to make his defrauded investors even wealthier. He told the court that he sometimes wants to hug Shkreli and sometimes wants to punch him, but that his outspokenness shouldn't be held against him.

"It's like the kids today who hit send before they really understand what they texted," Brafman said.

Prosecutors rejected that notion.

"Mr. Shkreli is not a child," federal prosecutor Jacquelyn Kasulis said. "He's not a teenager who just needs some mentoring. He is a man who needs to take responsibility for his actions."

Shkreli became the face of pharmaceutical industry evil in 2015 when he increased by 5,000 percent the price of Daraprim, a previously cheap drug used to treat toxoplasmosis, a parasitic infection that can be fatal to people with the AIDS virus or other immune system disorders.

Shkreli seemed to treat the case like a big joke. After his arrest in December 2015, he taunted prosecutors, got kicked off of Twitter for harassing a female journalist, heckled Hillary Clinton from the sidewalk outside her daughter's home, gave speeches with the conservative provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos and spent countless hours livestreaming himself from his apartment.

He also infuriated members of Congress at a Capitol Hill hearing on drug prices when he repeatedly cited his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Afterward, he tweeted that the lawmakers were "imbeciles."

Last fall, the judge revoked his bail and threw him in jail after he jokingly offered his online followers a \$5,000 bounty to anyone who could get a lock of Clinton's hair.

Before sentencing him, the judge said that it was up to Congress to fix the issue of the drug price hike. And she noted that Shkreli's family and friends "state, almost universally, that he is kind and misunderstood" and willing to help others in need. She said it was clear he is a "tremendously gifted individual who has the capacity for kindness."

Some of the letters sent to the court on his behalf were as quirky as the defendant himself. One woman described how she became an avid follower of Shkreli's social media commentary, which she described as being "on par with some form of performance art."

Another supporter said Shkreli's soft side was demonstrated when he adopted a cat from a shelter — named Trashy — that became a fixture on his livestreams.

China floods Africa with needed dollars, stoking US concern

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

DJIBOUTI (AP) — The new electrified rail line snakes through the African desert, charting a course from a port along the Djibouti coast to Addis Ababa, the capital of land-locked Ethiopia.

The Chinese built the railway, and part of the port, and the new military base next door. On the other end of the line, Chinese dollars financed Addis Ababa's new light rail, and the new ring road system, and the silver African Union headquarters that towers over the city.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, America has noticed.

From Djibouti to Ethiopia, Kenya to Egypt, the United States is sounding the alarm that the Chinese money flooding Africa comes with significant strings attached. The warnings carry distinct neocolonial

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 54 of 71

undertones: With Beijing's astonishing investments in ports, roads and railways, the U.S. says, come dependency, exploitation and intrusion on nations' basic sovereignty.

"We are not in any way attempting to keep Chinese investment dollars out of Africa. They are badly needed," U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said this week in the Ethiopian capital. "However, we think it's important that African countries carefully consider the terms."

Those terms lead to deals in which Chinese workers, not Africans, get the construction jobs, Tillerson and other U.S. officials warn. They say Chinese firms, unlike American ones, don't abide by anti-bribery laws, fueling Africa's pervasive problems with corruption. And if countries run into financial trouble, they often lose control over their own infrastructure by defaulting to a lender that historically has not always been forgiving.

Some African countries now owe sums double that of their annual economic output, the U.S. has said, with most debt owed to China. In Djibouti, the debt totals roughly 84 percent of its GDP, Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf acknowledged on Friday.

"We are not that worried," Youssouf said, standing next to Tillerson as the top U.S. diplomat visited the tiny coastal country. "No country can develop itself without having a strong infrastructure. And China is, from that perspective, a very good partner."

There are obvious reasons why the United States would want to cast itself and its companies as a more favorable alternative to China, the geopolitical rival and economic competitor whose influence is also on the rise in Latin America, Europe and the Middle East.

But there's a problem, African politicians and economists say: China, unlike the United States, is showing up on the continent with a generous checkbook in hand. Given the unpredictability involved in investing in poorer countries, China is often the only one willing to take the risk.

And African nations realize that China's investments don't come with the same nagging about human rights and good governance that often accompanies U.S. assistance.

"They're ready to basically do business," said Brahim Coulibaly, a former Federal Reserve economist and Africa scholar at the Brookings Institution. "They're ready to partner with any country that is also willing to partner with them in a way that it makes sense to them and furthers their agenda."

China vehemently disputes that its enterprises in Africa or elsewhere are exploitive, arguing instead that its generosity illustrates its commitment to the rest of the world's economic and social development.

"No one dominates, and all parties participate on an equal footing," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in his annual news conference Thursday. "There is no secret operation, but an open and transparent operation — no 'winner-take-all,' but all see mutual benefits and 'win-win' results."

The eye-popping investments through China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, believed to run into the trillions of dollars, form just one part of the Asian power's bid to promote a new global system that puts Beijing at the center. Equally alarming to the U.S. are China's military designs.

In Djibouti, China has built its first overseas base along the key shipping route that links Europe and Asia. Its "string of pearls" plan calls for building a network of ports stretching from China to the Persian Gulf. Beijing has also been busy building artificial islands and then taking steps toward militarizing them in a bid to expand its control over waters far from its coast.

China's new base in Djibouti, another country immensely indebted to Beijing, is just miles away from the only permanent U.S. military base in Africa. Though it's China's only African base so far, Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, head of U.S. Africa Command, predicted this week that "there will be more."

"We are not naive to think that some of the activities the Chinese are doing in terms of counterintelligence there — they are taking place," Waldhauser told the House Armed Services Committee. "But it just means that we have to be cautious, we have to be on guard."

For better or worse, U.S. suspicions about China's ambitions are playing out far beyond the confines of Africa. Chinese companies are building or financing power plants in Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, managing a port in Greece and launching railway projects in Thailand and Tajikistan, with aggressive plans to continue its expansion into Latin America.

Already, there are cautionary tales, critics say.

In Sri Lanka, the former president suffered a surprise election defeat in 2015 after his opponent criticized him for running up some \$5 billion in debt to China to fund construction. In December, Sri Lanka's government sold an 80 percent stake in the port in Hambantota to a Chinese state-owned company after falling behind in repaying \$1.5 billion borrowed to build it.

In Africa, some of the China-funded roads have started to crumble, the U.S. has said, due to shoddy construction. And in January, the French newspaper Le Monde reported that China planted listening devices in the \$200 million headquarters it built for the African Union in 2012. China denies that claim.

Associated Press writers Joe McDonald in Beijing and Lolita C. Baldor in Washington contributed to this report.

Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>

ACLU sues Trump administration to stop family separation

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The American Civil Liberties Union filed a class-action lawsuit Friday accusing the U.S. government of broadly separating immigrant families seeking asylum.

The lawsuit follows action the ACLU took in the case of a Congolese woman and her 7-year-old daughter, who the group said was taken from her mother "screaming and crying" and placed in a Chicago facility. While the woman was released Tuesday from a San Diego detention center, the girl remains in the facility 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) away.

Immigrant advocates say the mother and daughter's case is emblematic of the approach taken by President Donald Trump's administration. The lawsuit, filed in federal district court in San Diego, asks a judge to declare family separation unlawful and says hundreds of families have been split by immigration authorities.

The lawsuit also raises the case of a Brazilian woman who the ACLU says was separated from her 14-year-old son after they sought asylum in August. The ACLU says the woman was given a roughly 25-day sentence jail sentence for illegally entering the country and then placed in immigration detention facilities in West Texas, while her son was taken to a Chicago facility.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has not announced a formal policy to hold adult asylum seekers separately from their children. But administration officials have said they are considering separating parents and children to deter others from trying to enter the U.S.

The department declined to comment Friday on the lawsuit. DHS acting press secretary Tyler Houlton, in an earlier statement on the case of the Congolese woman and her daughter, said government officials have to verify that children entering the U.S. are not victims of traffickers and that the adult accompanying them is actually their parent.

In separate court papers filed Wednesday, the U.S. government said it is awaiting the results of DNA testing to confirm the woman is the girl's mother.

"We ask that members of the public and media view advocacy group claims that we are separating women and children for reasons other than to protect the child with the level of skepticism they deserve," Houlton said.

It's hard to determine how often parents and children are placed in separate facilities after they seek asylum, which is granted to people who have a credible fear of persecution if they are forced to return to their home country.

Different government agencies are responsible for holding adults and children. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detains adults accused of immigration violations, while the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services cares for unaccompanied immigrant children.

Immigration advocates criticized President Barack Obama's administration for opening new family detention facilities in Texas and called for parents and children to be released. The two Texas facilities that it

opened were found by a federal judge in 2015 to violate a long-standing 1997 settlement requiring children be released or otherwise held in the "least restrictive setting" available.

That settlement set other standards for the detention of children. The Trump administration has called for ending the settlement as part of its demands for changes to immigration laws.

Top administration officials have said they believe the asylum process is overwhelmed and challenged by people making frivolous claims. Advocates have also accused border agents of unlawfully turning away people who are seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Michelle Brané, director of the migrant rights and justice program for the Women's Refugee Commission, said that through attorneys and social service organizations, she had identified at least 426 immigrant adults and children who had been separated by authorities since President Donald Trump took office in January 2017. Brané said she did not have a comparable figure for Obama's administration.

But Brané said since the new administration began, her office has received far more reports of adults being held in ICE facilities without knowing where their children are.

"A lot of these kids are already afraid because they're fleeing something and they know they're fleeing something," Brané said. "And to have them pulled away, that can be devastating for a parent."

Follow Merchant on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/nomaanmerchant>.

US hiring surge last month pulls in flood of new workers

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers went on a hiring binge in February, adding 313,000 jobs, amid rising business confidence lifted by the Trump administration's tax cuts and a resilient global economy.

The surprisingly robust hiring, reported by the Labor Department on Friday, was the strongest in 1½ years.

It was accompanied by the biggest surge in 15 years in the number of people either working or looking for work. That kept the nation's unemployment rate unchanged for a fifth straight month at 4.1 percent.

At the same time, average wage growth slowed to 2.6 percent in February from a year earlier. That was down from January's revised pace of 2.8 percent, which had spooked investors because it raised fears of inflation.

The hiring boom caught many economists off guard, because they expected a smaller — though still healthy — increase. Job gains typically slow as the unemployment rate falls, because companies run out of workers to hire.

The economy has expanded for 104 straight months, or nearly nine years, the third-largest expansion on record, and hiring often declines as recessions fade further into the past.

Yet job growth has accelerated in recent months. Companies have added an average of 242,000 jobs a month over the past three months, above 2017's pace of 182,000.

"The February employment report was unambiguously strong, confirming that the U.S. labor market is on fire," said Michelle Girard, chief U.S. economist at NatWest Markets. "The pace of job growth is gaining momentum — a very impressive development at this stage of the economic cycle."

The Trump administration's tax cuts appear to have lifted optimism among consumers and businesses. U.S. employers have also benefited from a strengthened global economy. And consumers are more confident than they have been since 2000.

Investors celebrated the news, sending the Dow Jones industrial average up 390 points in early afternoon trading. The bull market reached its ninth anniversary Friday, with market indexes nearly quadrupling since March 2009.

The muted wage growth is a relief to Wall Street, because faster raises could spur higher inflation and additional interest rate increases from the Federal Reserve.

The picture drawn by Friday's jobs report is a mixed one for the Fed, which seeks to raise short-term interest rates at just the right pace: enough to forestall inflation but not so fast as to slow economic growth.

The Fed is considered certain to raise rates when it next meets in two weeks. The question is whether

it will do so a total of three times this year — or, in light of the job market's strength and the prospect of a pickup in inflation, four times.

The economy has now gained jobs for 89 straight months, the longest streak on record. That has helped address many of the nation's long-term problems dating to the Great Recession.

For example, more Americans are coming off the sidelines and looking for work, reversing a trend from the first few years after the downturn when many of the unemployed gave up on the job hunt and stopped looking.

The proportion of adults working or looking for work jumped to 63 percent from 62.7 percent, still far below its pre-recession levels in 2007. But it has stabilized in the past three years, even as millions of baby boomers have retired. That suggests that enough younger people are stepping in to offset those retirements.

In fact, the proportion of adults in their prime working years — defined as ages 25 to 54 — with jobs rose sharply to 79.3 percent, just a few tenths of a point below its pre-recession level.

Economists have found that figure is closely related to wage growth: The higher it rises, the more employers have to offer higher pay to find the workers they need. That suggests that wage growth may accelerate soon.

Higher-paying, blue-collar industries reported some of the biggest increases. Construction firms added 61,000 jobs, a figure that may have been inflated by relatively warm weather last month. Still, that is the biggest gain for construction since 2007.

Manufacturing companies added a solid 31,000 jobs. Retailers added 50,000, the most in two years, though that figure was probably inflated by the fact that stores laid off fewer temporary workers after the holidays because they hired fewer than in previous years. Financial services gained 28,000, the biggest increase since 2005.

In the meantime, economists are calculating how the Trump administration's decision Friday to impose a 25 percent tariff on steel imports and a 10 percent tariff on aluminum might affect the job market.

The Trade Partnership, a consulting firm, estimates that the tariffs could eliminate 145,000 jobs. Still, the administration has opened the door to so many possible exemptions from the tariffs that an accurate estimate is all but impossible.

Gene Peters, chief executive of Rosnet, a restaurant software company, has had to offer higher pay to attract new workers. He is now offering software developers 20 percent more in salary than he did just two years ago.

The company is also paying 75 percent of employees' health care costs, up from 50 percent. The company, based in Parkville, Missouri, just outside Kansas City, makes data analysis software that helps restaurants track costs and work schedules.

"It's getting more competitive in this market," Peters said. "There are more IT jobs and not as many people."

Aid delivered to Syria's Ghouta amid renewed violence

By ZEINA KARAM and BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — An aid convoy crossed into the embattled rebel-held suburbs of Damascus Friday, delivering desperately needed aid despite heavy fighting that broke out "extremely close" to the convoy and renewed airstrikes by the Syrian government.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said the close-range fighting came despite security guarantees from the parties involved in the conflict that humanitarian aid could enter the town of Douma, in eastern Ghouta.

"We were taken aback by the fighting that broke out despite guarantees from the parties involved in this conflict that humanitarians could enter Douma, in Eastern Ghouta," said ICRC regional director Robert Mardini.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 58 of 71

"As more aid is needed in the coming days, it is absolutely critical that these assurances be renewed and respected in the future," Mardini said. "Aid workers should not have to risk their lives to deliver assistance."

Late Friday, Syrian state TV said a group of opposition fighters and their families managed to reach areas controlled by the government — the first to leave the rebel-held district since a new wave of violence broke out last month.

State TV showed 13 bearded men it said had earlier handed themselves over to authorities boarding a bus. It added that they were searched by troops before being taken to where journalists and paramedics were gathering near the bus.

In the report, Russian troops were seen aboard the bus.

Russia, a main backer of President Bashar Assad had offered a safe passage to opposition fighters who surrender in eastern Ghouta.

State TV on Friday also reported that "dozens of civilians" would likely get out of eastern Ghouta, in addition to 13 gunmen who had turned themselves in, via the Wafideen safe corridor designated by the government. The channel has been reporting since last week that rebels have prevented civilians from leaving. It added that insurgents targeted the Wafideen corridor on Friday afternoon with bullets and mortar shells.

The government and its Russian backers, determined to wrest eastern Ghouta from rebel control after seven years of war, recently intensified the shelling and bombardment to clear the way for its troops to advance on the ground. Around 900 people have been killed in the past three weeks of relentless bombardment.

Doctors Without Borders said Friday that between Feb. 18 and March 3 at least 1,005 people were killed and 4,829 wounded — or 71 killed and 344 wounded on average per day. The group known by its French acronym, MSF, said that the data was collected from 10 medical facilities that it fully supports and another 10 facilities it provides with emergency medical donations inside the eastern Ghouta enclave.

It added that 15 of the 20 hospitals and clinics that MSF supports have been hit by bombing or shelling, with varying degrees of damage.

"The numbers alone speak volumes. But even more telling are the words we hear from the medics we are supporting on the ground," said MSF Director General Meinie Nicolai. "Daily, we hear an increasing sense of hopelessness and despair, as our medical colleagues reach the limits of what a person can be expected to do."

A U.N. official who entered eastern Ghouta earlier this week said civilians stuck inside the enclave — mostly women and children — would like to leave have nowhere to go and feel they can't exit safely from the designated checkpoints.

"I've never seen such scared faces in my life that I've seen there," said Sajjad Malik, UNHCR's country representative in Syria, in comments posted on the UNHCR's website.

ICRC said it delivered along with the U.N. and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent 2,400 food parcels that can sustain 12,000 people for one month, as well as 3,248 wheat flour bags.

The delivery consists of supplies that were not offloaded during a mission to the enclave on Monday, which was cut short because of deteriorating security. The trucks had been stuck at the Wafideen crossing over the entire week, waiting to enter and deliver the remaining food parcels and flour bags.

The ICRC said the aid was delivered in Douma — the largest and most populated town in the rebel-held eastern Ghouta, on the edge of the Syrian capital — earlier in the day. The convoy entered during a brief lull but the bombardment and fighting resumed after the convoy entered eastern Ghouta.

Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said Douma was shelled before the convoy went in. Once the relief workers arrived, Syrian government forces shelled the outskirts of the town, he said.

Mohammed Alloush, the political chief of the Army of Islam rebel group, told The Associated Press that the Syrian government targeted the convoy while it was inside Douma despite a team of aid workers informing the Russian military of their location. His claim could not be independently verified. Alloush's group is the largest in eastern Ghouta and controls Douma.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 59 of 71

ICRC spokeswoman Ingy Sedky said aid workers went into eastern Ghouta "after getting security guarantees from all parties to make sure no incident will happen during the presence of our team" there.

The attempt followed what opposition activists and the Observatory said was one of the quietest nights in eastern Ghouta since Syrian government forces escalated their assault on the rebellious region on Feb. 18.

Government forces this week advanced from the east and were less than a mile away from linking with forces on the western side of eastern Ghouta and cutting the rebel-held district in half.

The military gains have caused wide-scale internal displacement as civilians flee government advances toward areas in the territory still held by the rebels.

Nearly 400,000 people are believed to be inside eastern Ghouta. The most built-up and densely populated areas still under rebel control include the towns of Douma, Harasta, Jisreen, Kfar Batna, Saqba and Hammouriyeh.

The Observatory reported airstrikes on Douma and Jisreen just before the 13-truck convoy arrived Friday, following an hourslong lull. It said the lull was result of local negotiations brokered by unnamed Damascus businessmen with the government to try and reach a solution that would secure the exit of fighters and civilians from eastern Ghouta.

The Observatory and the opposition's Syrian Civil Defense, also known as the White Helmets, reported that airstrikes and shelling resumed late Friday afternoon on eastern Ghouta. They said at least five people were killed in Friday's bombardment of the town of Jisreen.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, said the United Nations has "failed spectacularly" when it comes to Syria.

Speaking at a press conference in Beirut, he said people in eastern Ghouta are terrified.

"They do not know anymore. Some say I want to stay, some say I want to go but both options have become dangerous, this is what makes me so anguished," he said.

The Observatory, which monitors the Syria war through a network of activists on the ground, also reported that dozens of people from the town of Hammouriyeh in eastern Ghouta staged a demonstration, carrying Syrian government flags and calling for the end to the fighting in the area.

There was no confirmation by any of the rebel groups based in eastern Ghouta of negotiations to leave eastern Ghouta.

UK military chemical experts aid police in spy poison probe

By JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Dozens of khaki-clad troops trained in chemical warfare were deployed on the streets of the usually sleepy English city of Salisbury on Friday as part of the investigation into the nerve-agent poisoning of a former Russian spy and his daughter.

The sight of the soldiers, and forensic experts in bright yellow hazmat suits, added to the increasingly surreal scenes in a city best known for its towering medieval cathedral and its proximity to the ancient Stonehenge monument.

Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, 33, were found unconscious on a bench near the River Avon in the city on Sunday. They remained in critical condition in a local hospital Friday, poisoned with what authorities say is a rare nerve agent.

A police officer who helped investigate was in serious condition, and a total of 21 people have received medical treatment.

Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer, was convicted in 2006 of spying for Britain and released by Moscow in 2010 as part of a spy swap. The 66-year-old former agent had been living quietly in Salisbury, 90 miles (140 kilometers) southwest of London.

Counterterrorism detectives are leading a vast investigation. One line of inquiry is whether the pair were poisoned at Skripal's modest suburban house before going out for Sunday lunch and a visit to a pub.

On Friday, police called in about 180 marines, soldiers and air force personnel with expertise in chemical weapons, decontamination and logistics to help with the probe and to remove vehicles that might be

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 60 of 71

contaminated. Military vehicles arrived at Salisbury District Hospital, where the victims are being treated, to take away a police car.

Authorities say there is no risk to the general public from the attack. Unlike radioactive poisons, nerve agents dissipate quickly.

Detectives were retracing the Skripals' movements as they try to discover how the toxin was administered and where it was manufactured.

Authorities cordoned off Skripal's house, a car, a restaurant, a pub and the cemetery where Skripal's wife, Lyudmila, is buried and where there is also a memorial headstone for his son, Alexander.

Lyudmila Skripal died of cancer in 2012. Alexander died last year at the age of 43. The cause is unclear: some reports say he died in a car accident while on holiday in Russia, others that he died of liver failure.

At the graveyard, forensic officers in protective gear could be seen erecting a blue tent on Friday.

Former London police chief Ian Blair said Friday that the police officer who is seriously ill had visited Skripal's house — suggesting the nerve agent may have been delivered there.

Blair told BBC radio that Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey had "actually been to the house, whereas there is a doctor who looked after the patients in the open who hasn't been affected at all. There may be some clues floating around in here."

Highly toxic and banned in almost all countries, nerve agents require expertise to manufacture — leading some to suspect whoever poisoned Skripal had the backing of a state.

"A well-equipped lab and a very experienced analytical chemist can do it, but it's not the sort of thing a chancer doing kitchen-sink chemistry can get away with," chemical weapons expert Richard Guthrie said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Moscow might be willing to help with the investigation but expressed resentment at suggestions the Kremlin was behind the attack.

"We're accused not only of this, but we are accused of everything that goes wrong on this planet, according to our Western partners," Lavrov said.

"If anyone's interested in our assistance with the investigation, whether it be on the poisoning of some subjects of the United Kingdom, or rumors on the interference in the affairs of the United States during the election campaign, or anything else. . If you really need help from Russia, then we will be ready to consider such a possibility, if we do have relevant data," he said, speaking in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The U.K. has vowed to take strong action against whoever was responsible for the "brazen and reckless" attack. British authorities say it's too soon to lay blame, but suspicions have fallen on Russia.

Those branded enemies of the Russian state have sometimes died mysteriously abroad, and the Skripal case echoes the death of Alexander Litvinenko, a former Russian agent who was poisoned in London in 2006 with radioactive polonium-210.

A British inquiry found that Russia was responsible for Litvinenko's killing, and that Russian President Vladimir Putin probably approved it.

Blair, the former London police chief, called for a review of the deaths of 14 Russians in the U.K. amid suggestions they were targeted by the Russian state. A BuzzFeed News investigation claimed U.S. spy agencies have linked the 14 deaths to Russia, but U.K. police shut down the cases.

Russian media have mocked suggestions that Moscow was involved in the Skripal attack — but also noted that those who betray Russia seem to come to a bad end.

One anchorman on a state television news show began a report on Skripal's poisoning with a warning to anyone considering becoming a double agent.

"Alcoholism, drug addiction, stress and depression are inevitable professional illnesses of a traitor, resulting in heart attacks and even suicide," Channel One anchorman Kirill Kleimenov said in the Wednesday broadcast.

Associated Press writers Danica Kirka in London and Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed to this report.

Tens of thousands protest in Slovakia at journalist's death

By KAREL JANICEK, Associated Press

PRAGUE (AP) — Tens of thousands of Slovaks rallied in massive anti-government protests across the country on Friday to demand a thorough investigation of the slayings of an investigative reporter and his fiancée, and changes in government.

The protesters packed a central square in Bratislava and other rallies were taking place in dozens of other places in Slovakia as well as abroad, the biggest since the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

The organizers want foreign experts to join the team investigating the killings and the creation of "a new trustworthy government with no people who are suspected of corruption" or ties to organized crime.

Jan Kuciak's last, unfinished story was about the activities of Italian mafia in Slovakia and their ties to people close to Prime Minister Robert Fico, whose government is allegedly also linked to other corruption scandals.

"Slovakia is shaken as it has not been for a long time," organizer Karolina Farska said.

The peaceful protesters had a message for Fico: "Resign," they repeatedly chanted.

In the wake of the unprecedented slayings of Kuciak and Martina Kusnirova, Slovakia quickly turned from what seemed to be a stable European Union country into chaos.

In a speech last month, President Andrej Kiska talked about his country as "successful, proud and self-confident." On March 4, however, he said Slovakia faces a "serious political crisis" triggered by the shooting deaths. Police said Kuciak's killing was likely linked to his work.

The political storm has been intensifying daily since the bodies were found Feb. 25.

Amid heated exchanges between the ruling coalition and the opposition, claims by Fico of conspiracies against him, and his repeated verbal attacks on Kiska, a growing number of people have started to turn against the Fico government, threatening its very existence.

"Many have realized that the situation is becoming critical," said Michal Vasecka, an analyst from the Bratislava Policy Institute think tank. "A fight started to prevent Slovakia from becoming another Hungary, an autocracy controlled by a small group of oligarchs."

Reflecting the popular mood and growing protests, Kiska has called for substantial changes in the government or for an early election to resolve the crisis.

"There's a huge public distrust of the state," Kiska said. "And many don't trust law enforcement authorities ... This distrust is justified. We crossed the line, things went too far and there's no way back."

Fico fired back, accusing the president of destabilizing the country with help from Hungarian-American billionaire George Soros, whom Kiska met with privately in New York in September.

Soros dismissed Fico's suggestion he might have anything to do with the president's proposals and the anti-government protests.

Vasecka, the analyst, said Fico's conspiracy claims likely anger some people and contribute to their decision to join the protests because they hark back to the 1990s and the rule of authoritative Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar who led the country into international isolation. Meciar also targeted Soros.

"It reminds people of Meciar and also of communist rule. And a large part of society is very sensitive about it," Vasecka said.

U.S. Ambassador Adam Sterling said in a statement that "as Slovak society wrestles with the implications of this crime, we urge all parties to refrain from resorting to the use of conspiracy theories and disinformation."

A junior party in the ruling coalition is demanding the resignation of Interior Minister Robert Kalinak. Thousands already demanded Kalinak's resignation last year after he was linked to earlier corruption scandals.

Meanwhile, the opposition has requested a parliamentary no-confidence vote on the government, but a date has yet to be set.

Fico called the opposition request an "attempted coup."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 62 of 71

Projected Kim, Trump summit preceded by other landmark meets

By The Associated Press

By stunning the world after seven decades of war and enmity, the projected face-to-face rendezvous between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would immediately take its place in the historic pantheon of electrifying summits between sworn foes.

From World War Two's Yalta gathering through U.S.-Soviet summits in the Cold War, President Nixon's trip to Chairman Mao's China and various attempts to forge peace among Israeli, Egyptian and Palestinian leaders, the art of the summit has long been a rare and rarified moment where the world stops agape.

Sometimes a summit becomes notorious in history and not for the right reasons — as in British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's summit with Adolf Hitler in 1938 in Munich that has come to symbolize the very concept of appeasement.

Some are remarkable in that they bestow legitimacy, whether intended or not, on a foe that had been a pariah.

There are also those cases that are remarkable in having never happened: It is striking, but perhaps not surprising, to consider that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein never met either of the President Bushes, nor did President Franklin D. Roosevelt meet Hitler.

Although the moment, protagonists and locations become enshrined in history books, major summits hold no guarantee of further progress. In some cases, the summit is as good as it gets as relations remain stagnant or plummet further.

Here's a look at some of the key summits that have left an indelible mark on the collective global memory.

THE KOREAS - FALSE DAWNS

The announcement that Trump and Kim — two leaders who have traded threats of nuclear annihilation and personal insults — will sit down together completely eclipsed word that came out shortly before that South Korea's President Moon Jae-in will hold a summit with the North's leader in April.

That in and of itself was major news: The leaders of the two Koreas have only met twice before.

The first time came in 2000 between Kim Jong Il, the late father of the current leader of the North, and South Korea's then-president, liberal Kim Dae-jung. A broadly smiling Kim Jong Il tightly grabbed the hands of Kim Dae-jung at the Pyongyang airport, and the next three days led to an agreement to resume family reunions and a deal on joint economic projects, though those have since stalled.

The second inter-Korean summit came in October 2007 between Kim Jong Il and Roh Moo-hyun, Kim Dae-jung's successor and the current president's political mentor.

In a highly symbolic moment, Roh crossed the Demilitarized Zone and met with Kim in the North Korean capital Pyongyang. There, they agreed to pursue a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War and reached a set of cooperation projects.

But most of the accords were shelved after Roh's single 5-year term ended months later. He was replaced by a conservative who took a harder line over the North's nuclear ambitions.

YALTA CONFERENCE - ONE WAR ENDS AND ANOTHER BEGINS

The grandfather of them all. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Soviet Union's Josef Stalin came together to plan for a postwar future for a Europe in ruins and try to hasten an end to the conflict in the Pacific. Stalin agreed to enter the war to help defeat Imperial Japan. Roosevelt and Churchill allowed for Soviet influence over lands Russia lost to Japan decades earlier.

Initially hailed as a major success, the conference later came to be viewed by some as the moment that the United States ceded too much influence to the Soviets and the trigger for the Cold War.

U.S.-SOVIET UNION/RUSSIA - THE COLD WAR ERA AND BEYOND

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and President John F. Kennedy met in Vienna, Austria in 1961. There was plenty of fanfare, including a high-profile interaction between first ladies Nina Khrushchev and Jacqueline Kennedy. But U.S. government accounts of the summit suggest it was extremely tense. Kennedy was largely steamrolled by the Soviet leader, who demanded an immediate treaty to reunify Germany under terms unfavorable to the U.S. The collapse raised the specter of an actual war between the two nuclear-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 63 of 71

armed foes. Two months later, the Berlin Wall went up.

President Nixon flew to the Soviet capital in 1972, the first visit to Moscow by a sitting U.S. president, for a week of meetings with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. The two leaders clinched agreements limiting ballistic missiles and slowing the nuclear arms race and smaller deals on education, science, maritime coordination and public health. The gathering would later be viewed as an inflection point in the Cold War.

Another breakdown between leaders, this time in the Icelandic capital, came in 1986 between the U.S.' Ronald Reagan and the Soviets' Mikhail Gorbachev. Hastily arranged with low expectations, the summit grew in scope to the point it appeared a major arms reduction deal might be reached. The two leaders were pictured in iconic photos smiling together at Hofdi House in Reykjavik. But in the end, they failed to seal an accord or even agree on a date for a follow-up summit in the U.S.

A decade after the fall of the Soviet Union, President George W. Bush famously looked into Russian President Vladimir Putin's eyes. "I was able to get a sense of his soul — a man deeply committed to his country and the best interests of his country," Bush said afterward.

The lavish praise came to be seen as a sign of naiveté about the Russian leader and former KGB operative, who would go on to flummox successive American presidents.

NIXON TO MAO'S CHINA - PING PONG DIPLOMACY IS A GAME CHANGER

In 1972, President Nixon made the historic and unprecedented journey to meet Chairman Mao in part paved by an American ping pong delegation who traveled to Beijing the year before.

Their historic handshake was as much about countering the Soviet threat as building trade and cordial relations between the two countries. China felt directly threatened by the Soviets at the time, and Nixon was thought to have parlayed the nascent relationship as a counter to Moscow over arms control negotiations.

Over the decades, successive U.S. presidents have held summits with their Chinese counterparts at home and abroad. President Trump most recently hosted President Xi Jinping in 2017 at his Florida estate and was welcomed by Xi to China with fanfare later the same year. But threats of a trade war following Trump's decision to levy stiff new tariffs on aluminum and steel now loom.

ISRAEL, EGYPT AND THE PALESTINIANS - BREAKTHROUGHS BUT MANY MORE FALLDOWNS

When Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visited Israel in 1977, it signaled a new beginning for the battle-weary nations that would transform the region. After decades of animosity and just four years after a bitter war, Sadat came with a historic offer of peace.

Israelis watched in disbelief as Sadat descended from an Egyptian plane on Nov. 19 and set foot on Israeli soil. Images of the Egyptian leader shaking hands with his old enemies, including the legendary general Moshe Dayan and former Prime Minister Golda Meir, and speaking at Israel's parliament brought euphoria to Israelis and sent shockwaves throughout the region.

The visit set the tone for the Camp David peace summit which led to the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty Signing Ceremony in 1979 where Sadat famously declared: 'Let there be no more wars or bloodshed between Arabs and the Israelis.'

The peace treaty was the first between Israel and an Arab country and relations between the former enemies have remained intact.

It would also lay the groundwork for a series of later Mideast summits, most famously a 1993 White House meeting where Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat signed an initial peace agreement.

The two longtime adversaries had never met before and Rabin looked clearly uncomfortable as President Bill Clinton brought them together to shake hands. That awkward handshake remains an iconic image of Israeli-Palestinian history.

But the peace process has largely gone nowhere since the 1995 assassination of Rabin. A 2000 summit between Arafat and Israel's Ehud Barak broke up amid dashed expectations, followed by a years-long violent uprising. Palestinians have self-rule in Gaza and in enclaves of the West Bank but negotiations for a final deal to end the occupation and establish a Palestinian state have repeatedly fallen apart amid bouts of violence and recrimination.

Watchdog: Western tech used for hacking in Turkey, Syria

By RAPHAEL SATTER, AP Cybersecurity Writer

PARIS (AP) — A Canadian company's hardware is being used to hack internet users along Turkey's border with Syria, researchers said Friday, adding that there were signs that Kurdish forces aligned with the United States might have been targeted.

The revelation comes as Turkey presses its offensive against the Kurds dug in along the country's frontier with northwestern Syria — a conflict that threatens to disrupt the American-led effort to extinguish the Islamic State group. The apparent use of Canadian technology to target a U.S. ally was an irony underlined by Ron Deibert, the director of the internet watchdog group Citizen Lab, which published a report on the spying.

"These companies are not closely regulated — and that can lead to a lot of unintended consequences, including consequences that harm our foreign policy interests and human rights interest as well," said Deibert. "It's a strong argument for government control over this kind of technology."

Citizen Lab identified the hardware behind the hacking as PacketLogic devices produced by Procera — a Fremont, California-based company that was recently folded into Canada-based network management firm Sandvine, which is owned by American private equity group Francisco Partners.

In a statement issued before the report's release, Sandvine said it investigates all allegations of abuse, but said it had been unable to complete its inquiry because Citizen Lab refused to provide the company with its findings in full.

"Once we have the necessary data, we will conduct a full investigation and take appropriate action," Sandvine said.

The statement also said Citizen Lab's allegations were "technically inaccurate and intentionally misleading," but a representative for the company has yet to supply an example of a misleading or inaccurate claim.

Citizen Lab said it discovered the hacking after a European cybersecurity company reported that network service providers in two unidentified countries were trying to compromise their users using a powerful hacking technique known as network injection. Citizen Lab scoured the internet for signs of the spying and eventually traced the activity to the Turkish provinces of Adana, Hatay, Gaziantep, Diyarbakir and to the Turkish capital, Ankara, as well as parts of northern Syria and Egypt.

Network injection — so-called because malicious software is injected into everyday internet traffic by whoever controls the network — has long been feared as a particularly powerful form of government spying.

"This can potentially be used to target anyone in the country with the click of the button," said Bill Marczak, the lead author of the report.

Although the identities of those being spied on in Turkey and Egypt aren't clear, Marczak said that the devices appeared to be installed on the network belonging to Turk Telekom, a leading phone and internet provider in Turkey as well as parts of northern Syria. He said there were hints suggesting some of the targets are affiliated with the YPG, the Kurdish Marxist rebel group which is fighting Turkish forces for control of the northwestern Syrian province of Afrin. Although Turkey considers the YPG a terrorist organization, the group provides the backbone of the U.S.-backed operations against the Islamic State in eastern Syria.

American officials acknowledged Monday that ground operations against the jihadist group's remnants in eastern Syria were on hold because Kurdish fighters were being diverted to the battle against Turkey.

Turk Telekom said in a statement that it complies with Turkish law and doesn't interfere with internet users' access. It added that the company "does not redirect any internet user to receive malicious downloads of popular software applications." A representative for the company did not immediately respond to follow-up questions.

Sandvine's ties to the Turkey government have been the subject of previous reporting. In 2016, Forbes reported that engineers at Procera were so troubled at the prospect of supplying surveillance hardware for use by Turk Telekom that six of them quit in protest.

"I do not wish to spend the rest of my life with the regret of having been a part of (Turkish President Recep Tayyip) Erdogan's insanity, so I'm out," one of the engineers said in a letter of resignation quoted by Forbes.

LinkedIn shows at least 16 Procera-Sandvine employees listed as working in Egypt or Turkey. One Sandvine engineer based in Cairo listed "lawful interception" — a commonly used euphemism for state-sanctioned surveillance — as one of his interests.

Online:

Citizen Lab's report:

<https://citizenlab.ca/2018/03/bad-traffic-sandvines-packetlogic-devices-deploy-government-spyware-turkey-syria/>

Sandvine:

<https://www.sandvine.com/>

Raphael Satter can be reached at: <http://raphaelsatter.com>

Tillerson says 'talks,' but no 'negotiations' with NKorea

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

DJIBOUTI (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson drew a distinction Friday between "talks" with North Korea and "negotiations," arguing that President Donald Trump's willingness to chat with Kim Jong Un shouldn't be construed as anything more than that.

The stunning announcement that Trump had agreed to a meeting with the North Korean leader raised questions about what had changed after months of Tillerson and other Trump officials insisting the conditions weren't right for negotiations with Pyongyang. Tillerson said that Trump has been open to mere talks and a meeting with Kim "for some time," and had decided on Thursday that "the time was right."

"In the president's judgment, that time has arrived now," Tillerson told reporters in Djibouti during a trip to Africa.

Tillerson did not define the precise difference between talks and negotiations, and it was unclear what there was for the two countries — still technically at war — would have to discuss if not a deal to address concerns about the North's nuclear weapons program. Ostensibly, they could hold preliminary conversations to see if there's enough common ground and good will to proceed to formal negotiations.

Explaining Trump's decision-making about the meeting, Tillerson said that the U.S. had witnessed a shift from North Korea that became apparent when a South Korean delegation visited Pyongyang, then traveled to Washington to brief U.S. officials on the rare meeting. He said the dispatch from that meeting "was the most forward-leaning report that we've had, in terms of Kim Jong Un's not just willingness but his strong desire for talks.

"What changed was his posture in a fairly dramatic way," Tillerson said. "In all honesty, that came as a little bit of a surprise to us as well."

As Trump's administration ramped up its "maximum pressure campaign" on North Korea over the last year, Tillerson was one of the more enthusiastic advocates within the Cabinet for trying to talk to the North Koreans, even as other officials warned Trump of the risks of rewarding Kim too soon. For months the administration gave mixed messages about just what "preconditions" — if any — needed to be met to merit talks.

Ultimately, Trump decided that Kim's willingness to discuss denuclearization and commit to halt testing was enough. Tillerson said the decision to agree to the meeting was "a decision the president took himself."

"This is something he's had on his mind for quite some time," Tillerson said. "So now I think it's a question of agreeing on the timing of that first meeting between the two of them and a location and that will take some weeks before we get all that worked out."

Debate stirs over 'America's Harvest Box,' food benefit plan

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hawaii's food stamp administrator says he was stunned when he first heard that the U.S. Agriculture Department wanted to replace some cash benefits with a pre-assembled package of shelf-stable goods. That changed quickly to frustration, befuddlement and serious concern.

"This will wreak havoc on the states," said Pankaj Bhanot, who serves as director of Hawaii's Department of Human Services and is in charge of administering the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to roughly 165,000 residents scattered across a series of islands.

SNAP administrators across the country shared Bhanot's reservations about "America's Harvest Box," pitched by USDA officials as a way to cut costs and improve efficiency. Administrators say their programs already are efficient, allowing recipients to purchase whatever foods they want directly from retailers, which benefits families, retailers and local economies.

The proposal, unveiled last month in the Trump administration's 2019 budget, is part of an effort to reduce the cost of the SNAP program by roughly \$213 billion over a 10-year period.

Brandon Lipps, administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service at USDA, said the idea was partially inspired by rapidly changing models for how people get their groceries. The USDA last year launched a pilot program that allows SNAP recipients to order provisions online using their EBT, or Electronic Benefit Transfer, cards, which function like debit cards but can only be used to purchase groceries.

He said in an interview that it was designed to streamline the process of getting healthy food into the hands of those who need it most. State administrators, he said, would be responsible for figuring out how to package and distribute the boxes themselves.

But SNAP administrators say the proposal is riddled with holes.

Bhanot had a broad list of questions, ranging from delivery of the boxes, especially during hurricanes, to ensuring that recipients were getting the right type of nutrition. "We'd have to ramp up staff. Where will the money come from?" he asked.

In Minnesota, Chuck Johnson, acting commissioner of the Department of Human Services, called the proposal "a significant step backward in our nation's effort to ensure all Americans have access to nutritious food." He said it would be a major burden on states, which would have to figure out how to deliver the food boxes.

Tom Hedderman, director of food and nutrition policy at the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, said there are about 1.25 million SNAP recipients in his state who get more than \$90 in benefits each month — the threshold that would trigger a food box. He criticized the proposal for its lack of detail and direction.

"It's clear in the proposal that they would dump the problem of logistics and cost back on to the states," he said.

Babs Roberts, who directs the community services division of the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, said a uniform system for distributing boxes simply wouldn't work in her state, where there are roughly 900,000 SNAP recipients. The cities are too dense for a delivery system to work, she said, while residents living in rural communities would likely have trouble traveling to a centralized location to pick up their box.

"I think it's going to be administratively burdensome," she said. "I don't know if it's any better than what we're doing now."

Sammy Guillory, deputy assistant secretary for the division of family support for the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, said he worries that if the proposal were approved, it would take years to iron out the kinks. In particular, Guillory said he is concerned that making such a drastic change from the current SNAP system would force employees to spend significant time and energy adjusting.

"Somehow our staff that determines eligibility would have to learn all these rules, our system would have to be reprogrammed. And that's not even taking into consideration the logistics of getting these boxes to families," he said, adding that more than 400,000 households receive SNAP, or about a quarter of Louisiana's population.

Rus Sykes, director of the American Public Human Services Association, an umbrella organization that includes the American Association of SNAP Directors, said administrators across the country were shocked by the proposal and are concerned that if it moves forward states will be forced into an impossible situation.

"They will not have the ability to administer this program this way," Sykes said, "and the states will be on the line for everything that goes wrong."

Trump uses page from 'smart policymaking 101' on health care

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A smartphone app that lets Medicare patients access their claims information. Giving consumers a share of drug company rebates for their prescriptions. Wider access to websites that reliably compare cost and quality of medical tests.

The Trump administration is taking a pragmatic new track on health care with officials promising consumer-friendly changes and savings in areas from computerized medical records to prescription drugs. New Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar has been rolling out the agenda, saying it has the full backing of President Donald Trump.

"They are taking a page out of smart policymaking 101 and hitting on themes that everybody cares about," said Kavita Patel, a health policy expert at the Brookings Institution and a veteran of the Obama administration. "But there is not a lot of detail on how they're going to do it."

The first year of the Trump administration was marked by Republicans' unsuccessful struggle to repeal the Affordable Care Act. With Azar installed as Trump's second health secretary, the administration is shifting to issues of broader concern for people with Medicare and employer-provided coverage. Many of the ideas have bipartisan support and can be advanced without legislation from Congress.

A look at new priorities outlined by Azar and Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services:

COMPUTERIZED MEDICAL RECORDS

Most hospitals and doctors now have electronic records, but the systems don't necessarily talk to each other and patients find that their medical information remains hard to access.

The administration wants to write new standards nudging industry to get the systems communicating. That would allow patients to easily transfer records from one provider to another.

"We're not interested in micromanaging how this process happens," Azar said. "Patients ought to have control of their records in a useful format, period."

Medicare is working with software developers on apps that can provide beneficiaries with access to their claims data, which offer important medical details but not a complete picture.

Dan Mendelson, CEO of the consulting firm Avalere Health, says the goal is within reach, perhaps over a three-year period. A lot of the groundwork has been laid by previous administrations, starting with Republican George W. Bush and advancing under Democrat Barack Obama.

"They are definitely taking a new tack on health care," Mendelson said of the Trump administration.

DRUG COSTS

As a candidate, Trump called for Medicare to negotiate drug prices and for allowing U.S. patients to import lower-cost prescriptions from overseas. His administration seems to have dropped those ideas.

But Azar, who spent 10 years as a pharmaceutical executive, has lots of other proposals. They include speeding generics to market, short-circuiting maneuvers that drug companies use to ward off competitors, and changing government policies that may encourage drugmakers to raise prices because federal programs will bear the cost.

Azar praised insurer UnitedHealthcare for its recent announcement that it will pass on drugmaker rebates to some of its customers. That mirrors a Trump budget proposal for Medicare, the government's premier health insurance program, covering about 60 million seniors and disabled people.

Advocacy group CEO John Rother of the National Health Care Coalition says action to lower drug costs

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 68 of 71

is the most nebulous part of the Trump agenda. "There is an open question as to whether the rhetoric is going to produce anything real," he said.

PULLING BACK THE VEIL

A routine test such as an echocardiogram, an ultrasound exam that can detect heart problems, can cost 10 times as much in a hospital as it does in a doctor's office. And that's just the list price. Real prices paid by different insurers and by Medicare also vary, and can be impossible for consumers to find.

Republicans have a longtime goal of getting true prices for health care goods and services in front of consumers, reasoning that could lead to a market revolution and help curb relentless spending.

Real competition has never been fully tried in our "bizarre" system, Azar told a hospital group. He's promising to use the weight of Medicare and Medicaid, a federal-state collaboration covering more than 70 million low-income people, to pull back the veil on medical pricing. That could help the increasing number of people with high-deductible health insurance who can face thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs.

But medical care is not like buying electronics off the shelf at Walmart. Patients rely on intermediaries such as doctors to make decisions.

PAYING FOR VALUE, NOT VOLUME

Changing Medicare's piecemeal payment system so it rewards quality and not just sheer volume of tests and procedures is a long-standing goal for lawmakers of both parties. The Obama administration tried multiple experiments and made some improvements. But results were not clear-cut.

Azar is promising to go further, faster. Spokesman Ryan Murphy said HHS is reviewing all its payment rules to see if in fact Medicare is paying for value.

Azar says he intends to use an agency created under Obama — the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation — to spur change.

WILD CARD

As the administration pledges to improve quality and lower costs, it's still pursuing repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which would result in millions of low- and moderate-income people losing coverage.

"Can you really pursue positive changes in health care delivery while at the same time you start losing coverage?" asked Rother. "It is an interesting dilemma."

US stocks soar on strong jobs report; inflation fears ease

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street got exactly what it wanted from Friday's jobs report: solid hiring, moderate wage growth and continued low unemployment. Investors sent stocks sharply higher, particularly their recent favorites, technology companies.

U.S. employers added 313,000 jobs in February, more than forecast, and wages didn't rise as much as investors had feared. The Labor Department also said January's spike in wages was a bit smaller than it originally thought. It made for a happy ninth anniversary for the current bull market.

A month earlier, a jump in wages got investors worried about inflation and set off a stock market swoon, giving the benchmark S&P 500 index its first 10 percent decline in two years.

"I think the fears of wages getting out of control in this point in the cycle ... were squashed," said Katie Nixon, chief investment officer for Northern Trust Wealth Management.

Bond yields also moved solidly higher as investors anticipated that the solid jobs survey portends more steady growth in the U.S. economy.

The Nasdaq composite regained the last of its February losses and closed at an all-time high. Banks also rose as interest rates increased, and industrial and health care and basic materials companies also climbed. Those sectors tend to do better when the economy is growing quickly.

The S&P 500 index climbed 47.60 points, or 1.7 percent, to 2,786.57. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 440.53 points, or 1.8 percent, to 25,335.74. The Nasdaq composite jumped 132.86 points, or 1.8

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 69 of 71

percent, to 7,560.81. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks picked up 25.18 points, or 1.6 percent, to 1,597.14.

Apple rose \$3.04, or 1.7 percent, to \$179.98 and Microsoft jumped \$2.11, or 2.2 percent, to \$96.54. Both finished at record highs. Technology companies have led the market's rally since early 2017, and they have led the recovery from its recent lows as well.

The S&P 500 is still 3 percent beneath its latest record high close, which came on Jan. 26. None of the other major S&P sectors have recovered all of their February losses, as technology has.

Bond prices dropped. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.90 percent from 2.85 percent. Banks advanced, but high-dividend stocks like utilities and phone companies fell. Those stocks are often compared to bonds and they tend to fall when yields move higher, as higher yields make them less appealing to investors seeking income.

Stocks initially declined last week after President Donald Trump said he would place tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. They've recovered their losses after he granted exemptions to Canada, Mexico, and potentially to other countries.

Nixon said the administration appears to be setting itself up to take a harder line in China. While China isn't a major exporter of steel to the U.S., trade disputes between the two countries aren't uncommon and the government is currently investigating China's treatment of intellectual property held by U.S. companies.

"Clearly the target here is China and how that unfolds will be important for markets," Nixon said. "The collateral damage could be relatively wide unless it's done carefully, and so far the process has not been very careful."

U.S. and South Korean officials said Trump might meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un by May to negotiate a potential end to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. The news helped send South Korea's Kospi up 1.1 percent. Other Asian indexes also rose. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 0.5 percent and Hong Kong's Hang Seng also rose 1.1 percent.

The White House later said the meeting won't happen unless North Korea takes "concrete steps" to match promises it has made.

Netflix rose \$14.44, or 4.6 percent, to \$331.44 after the New York Times reported that the streaming service is negotiating with Barack Obama to have the former president and his wife Michelle produce shows. The two sides haven't confirmed that they are in talks. GBH Insights analyst Daniel Ives said a deal with the Obamas would be "another major win for Netflix" as it tries to launch more and more original shows.

Toymakers fell following news reports that Toys R Us is getting ready to liquidate its U.S. operations. The chain, which filed for bankruptcy protection, has been unable to find a buyer or restructure its debt. Despite its struggles, it's still a major retailer of toys. Hasbro dropped \$1.92, or 2.1 percent, to \$91.46 while Mattel sank \$1.13, or 7.1 percent, to \$14.84.

Energy companies climbed as benchmark U.S. crude added \$1.92 or 3 percent, to \$62.04 a barrel in New York, while Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose \$1.88, or 3 percent, to \$65.49 a barrel in London.

Elsewhere, wholesale gasoline added 4 cents to \$1.90 a gallon. Heating oil rose 3 cents to \$1.89 a gallon. Natural gas lost 4 cents to \$2.73 per 1,000 cubic feet.

In Europe, France's CAC 40 rose 0.4 percent while Germany's DAX fell 0.1 percent. The FTSE 100 in Britain rose 0.3 percent.

Gold rose \$2.30 to \$1,324 an ounce. Silver added 11 cents to \$16.61 an ounce. Copper jumped 6 cents, or 1.9 percent, to \$3.14 a pound.

The dollar rose to 106.77 yen from 106.24 yen. The euro rose to \$1.2313 from \$1.2306.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP> . His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jay> .

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 70 of 71

US bull market, 2nd longest since WWII, turns 9

NEW YORK (AP) — The bull market turned nine Friday, extending a run that began in the depths of the Great Recession.

On March 9, 2009, the S&P 500 hit a cycle low of 676.53, and has more than quadrupled since that date, according to Howard Silverblatt at S&P Global, helped by historically low interest rates and improving corporate profits.

The stock market has had several corrections since March 2009, which is when an index like the S&P 500 falls 10 percent or more from a recent high, most recently in February. But the stock market has not fallen 20 percent or more from a recent high, which is when a bull market becomes a "bear" market. The S&P 500 would have to fall roughly 600 points from its current level in order to enter a bear market.

If the current bull market lasts until August 21, it will be the longest bull market since World War II, exceeding the bull market that started October 1990 and lasted until March 2000. During that time the S&P 500 rose more than 400 percent. The third-longest bull market came in the post-WWII boom years, between 1949 and 1956.

While there are several risks to this current bull market, including the possibility of higher inflation and a trade war caused by President Donald Trump's tariffs on aluminum and steel, most investors believe the current market isn't at risk of falling into a bear market any time soon. Companies are benefiting from the recent tax law passed by Congress and the overall U.S. economy is growing and unemployment is at record lows.

So far, it's a happy occasion for the bulls. Just before 11 a.m. Friday, the S&P 500 was up 30 points, or 1.1 percent, to 2,769, after the government said U.S. employers added 313,000 jobs in February, the most since July 2016.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, March 10, the 69th day of 2018. There are 296 days left in the year. Daylight saving time will begin Sunday at 2 a.m. local time.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell's assistant, Thomas Watson, heard Bell say over his experimental telephone: "Mr. Watson — come here — I want to see you" from the next room of Bell's Boston laboratory.

On this date:

In 1496, Christopher Columbus concluded his second visit to the Western Hemisphere as he left Hispaniola for Spain.

In 1785, Thomas Jefferson was appointed America's minister to France, succeeding Benjamin Franklin.

In 1848, the U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War.

In 1933, a magnitude 6.4 earthquake centered off Long Beach, California, resulted in 120 deaths.

In 1948, the body of the anti-Communist foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, Jan Masaryk (yahn mah-SAH'-reek), was found in the garden of Czernin (CHEHR'-neen) Palace in Prague.

In 1959, the Tennessee Williams play "Sweet Bird of Youth," starring Paul Newman and Geraldine Page, opened at Broadway's Martin Beck Theatre.

In 1969, James Earl Ray pleaded guilty in Memphis, Tennessee (on his 41st birthday) to assassinating civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. (Ray later repudiated that plea, maintaining his innocence until his death.)

In 1973, the Pink Floyd album "The Dark Side of the Moon" was first released in the U.S. by Capitol Records (the British release came nearly two weeks later).

In 1985, Konstantin U. Chernenko, who was the Soviet Union's leader for 13 months, died at age 73; he was succeeded by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 239 ~ 71 of 71

In 1988, pop singer Andy Gibb died in Oxford, England, at age 30 of heart inflammation.

In 1993, Dr. David Gunn was shot to death outside a Pensacola, Florida, abortion clinic. (Shooter Michael Griffin is serving a life sentence.)

In 2003, shortly before the start of the Iraq war, Natalie Maines, lead singer of the Dixie Chicks, told a London audience: "Just so you know... we're ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas." (Maines later apologized for the phrasing of her remark.)

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber killed five U.S. soldiers as they chatted with shop owners while on a foot patrol in central Baghdad. New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer apologized after allegations surfaced that he had paid thousands of dollars for a high-end call girl; he did not elaborate on the scandal, which drew calls for his resignation. Democrat Barack Obama ridiculed the idea of being Hillary Rodham Clinton's running mate, saying in Columbus, Mississippi, that voters had to choose between the two for the top spot on the fall ticket.

Five years ago: The president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai (HAH'-mihd KAHR'-ze-ye), accused the Taliban and the U.S. of working in concert to convince Afghans that violence would worsen if most foreign troops left — an allegation the top American commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Joseph Dunford, rejected as "categorically false."

One year ago: The Labor Department reported that U.S. employers added 235,000 jobs in February 2017 as the unemployment rate dipped to 4.7 percent from 4.8 percent. President Donald Trump chose Scott Gottlieb, a conservative doctor-turned-pundit with deep ties to Wall Street and the pharmaceutical industry, to lead the Food and Drug Administration. Two girls, ages 10 and 3, were killed in a fire in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, blamed on an exploding hoverboard; a firefighter died in a traffic accident en route to the blaze. South Korea's Constitutional Court formally removed impeached President Park Geun-hye from office over a corruption scandal. Death claimed "Bridges of Madison County" author Robert James Waller at age 77 and Joni Sledge, a member of the group Sister Sledge, at age 60.

Today's Birthdays: Talk show host Ralph Emery is 85. Bluegrass/country singer-musician Norman Blake is 80. Actor Chuck Norris is 78. Playwright David Rabe is 78. Singer Dean Torrence (Jan and Dean) is 78. Actress Katharine Houghton (Film: "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?") is 76. Actor Richard Gant is 74. Rock musician Tom Scholz (Boston) is 71. Former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell is 71. TV personality/businesswoman Barbara Corcoran (TV: "Shark Tank") is 69. Actress Aloma Wright is 68. Blues musician Ronnie Earl (Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters) is 65. Producer-director-writer Paul Haggis is 65. Alt-country/rock musician Gary Louris is 63. Actress Shannon Tweed is 61. Pop/jazz singer Jeanie Bryson is 60. Actress Sharon Stone is 60. Rock musician Gail Greenwood is 58. Magician Lance Burton is 58. Movie producer Scott Gardenhour is 57. Actress Jasmine Guy is 56. Rock musician Jeff Ament (Pearl Jam) is 55. Music producer Rick Rubin is 55. Britain's Prince Edward is 54. Rock singer Edie Brickell is 52. Actor Stephen Mailer is 52. Actor Philip Anthony-Rodriguez is 50. Actress Paget Brewster is 49. Actor Jon Hamm is 47. Rapper-producer Timbaland is 46. Actor Cristian (kris-tee-AHN') de la Fuente is 44. Rock musician Jerry Horton (Papa Roach) is 43. Actor Jeff Branson is 41. Singer Robin Thicke is 41. Actress Bree Turner is 41. Olympic gold medal gymnast Shannon Miller is 41. Contemporary Christian singer Michael Barnes (Red) is 39. Actor Edi Gathegi is 39. Rock musician Matt Asti (MGMT) is 38. Actor Thomas Middleditch is 36. Country singer Carrie Underwood is 35. Actress Olivia Wilde is 34. Rhythm-and-blues singer Emeli Sande (EH'-mihl-ee SAN'-day) is 31. Country singer Rachel Reinert is 29. Actress Emily Osment is 26.

Thought for Today: "Show me a man who claims he is objective and I'll show you a man with illusions." — Henry R. Luce, American magazine publisher (1898-1967).