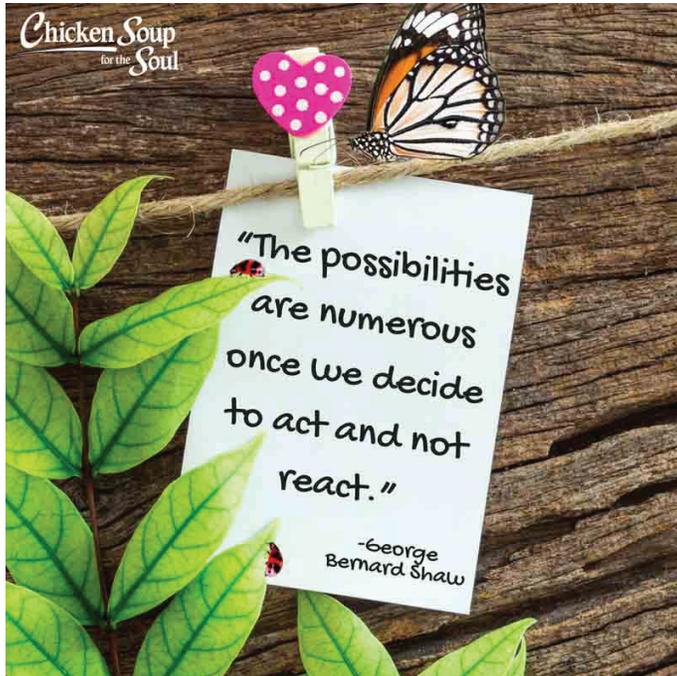


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Due to the weather forecast for next week, the Sisseton CDP Junior High relays will be postponed.

- 1- Johnson Agency Ad
- 1- Track Meet Cancelled
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 2- Northern State Football Announces 2018 Fall Schedule
- 2- Wheatcrest Hills Help Wanted
- 3- Jency Agency Ad
- 3- Vold Auctioneers Ad
- 4- Service Notice: Dave Krueger
- 4-School Board Agenda
- 5- Governor praises Tulson
- 5- Vold Auctioneers Ad
- 6- Rounds Statement on China Tariff Proposal
- 7- NorthWestern Announces Advanced Metering Project in South Dakota and Nebraska; \$34.7 Million Upgrade Will Improve Service Reliability
- 8- Editorial on Suicide in South Dakota
- 9- Veteran's Affairs Secretary Column
- 10- SunDial Manor Ad
- 10- Farmers Union PSA ad
- 10- Groton Care & Rehab Ad
- 11- Houghton/Hecla Area Land for Sale
- 12- Today in Weather History
- 13- Today's Forecast
- 14- Yesterday's Weather
- 14- National Weather map
- 14- Today's Weather Almanac
- 15- Daily Devotional
- 16- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 17- News from the Associated Press

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



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

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

Northern State Football Announces 2018 Fall Schedule

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State University Athletics and Wolves football are excited to announce the 2018 season schedule. NSU is slated to appear in five games from Swisher Field and six games on the road.

The Wolves open the season at Bemidji State on Thursday, August 30, and return to Aberdeen for the home opener the following Thursday, September 6 against Minot State. The contest against the MSU Beavers will be the fourth Annual InsuraCrop Ag Bowl. The game will also be aired on MidcoSN as the NSIC Game of the Week.

Northern will then return to Saturday contests, beginning with a road match-up against MSU Moorhead on September 15. September 22 and 29 bring back-to-back home weekends against St. Cloud State and Winona State. Northern State University is set for the 103rd Annual Gypsy Days sponsored by Dacotah Bank on the 29th with kick-off scheduled for 2:30 p.m. against Winona State in the cross-divisional opener.

NSU opens up October on the road at Concordia-St. Paul on Saturday the 6, and returns to the Swish on the 13 versus in-state rival Augustana University. The game against the Vikings will be the third annual Blackout Cancer game sponsored by Sanford Health. Cross-divisional play wraps up on October 20 at Southwest Minnesota State. The Wolves will remain on the road the following weekend versus the University of Mary.

The 2018 home season caps off on November 3, as the Wolves welcome to town Minnesota Crookston for senior day. The regular season concludes the



Wheatcrest Hills

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following weekend with a road trip to Minnesota Duluth on November 10.

2018 Northern State Football Schedule

Aug. 30 at Bemidji State 6 p.m.
Sept. 6 Minot State [Ag Bowl] 7 p.m.
Sept. 15 at MSU Moorhead TBD
Sept. 22 St. Cloud State 1 p.m.
Sept. 29 Winona State [Gypsy Days] 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 6 at Concordia-St. Paul 12 p.m.
Oct. 13 Augustana [Blackout Cancer] 1 p.m.
Oct. 20 at Southwest Minnesota State TBD
Oct. 27 at U-Mary 2 p.m.
Nov. 3 Minnesota Crookston [Senior Day] 1 p.m.
Nov. 10 at Minnesota Duluth 1 p.m.

Groton Home for Sale



\$299,900

304 N State Street, Groton

Enjoy this summers sunsets overlooking your large fenced backyard. This beautiful home sits on just under 1 Acre of land. 5 bedrooms, office, Media room , large rec room, surround sound, built-ins & plenty of storage. Not to mention 3 stall garage + new shed. All kitchen appliances to stay + washer & dryer.

www.flexmls.com/share/1NpDJ/304NSTATESTGrotonSD57445

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◆ Real Estate ◆ Property Management ◆

614 South Main Street, Aberdeen ~ 605-725-3130

Brittany Smart: 605/290-1487

CONSIGNMENT AUCTION

Sat. April 28, 2018 10:00 am
Trucks-N-Tractors
14069 434th Ave.
Webster, SD 57274

Now taking Consignments
Tractors, Combines, all types of
Farm & Haying Equipment, Vehicle,
Recreational, Sporting,
& Construction Equipment
To consign you equipment, call our
office at 605-448-0048 or

Bill Jensen 605-848-0943
Don Wolter 605-881-6789
Larry Lekness 605-880-5933
Jan Vold 605-228-4250

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Service Notice: Dave Krueger

Services for David "Dave" Krueger, 67, of Conde, will be 11:00 a.m., Monday, April 9th at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ferney. Rev. Lloyd Redhage will officiate. Burial with military honors will follow in Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the chapel on Sunday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Dave passed away April 4, 2018 at his home.

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

April 9, 2018 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.
POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of March 12, 2018 and March 26, 2018 school board meetings as drafted or amended.

2. Approval of North Central Special Education Co-Op (NCSEC) agenda items...as fiscal agent.

3. Approval of March District bills for payment.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Approval of March 2018 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments

2. Approval of March 2018 School Transportation Report

3. Approval of March 2018 School Lunch Report

4. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.

5. School Board Committee Reports:

a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder

b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Kara Pharis

c. Negotiations: Steve Smith, Grant Rix, Marty Weismantel

6. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion on potential summer 2019 school trip [Mrs. Mary Johnson].

2. Approve Change Order CCO#001: CE#056 – Roofing Changes/FWO's.

3. Review Food Service Inspection of Groton Area Elementary and of Groton Area MS/HS from March 27, 2018.

4. Review 2017-2018 School Calendar approve adjustments for the end of the school year as a result of snow days.

5. Review district health insurance plan options with possible motion to adopt new plan offerings for 2018-2019.

6. Executive Session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(1) personnel and SDCL 1-25-2(4) negotiations.

ADJOURN

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Governor praises Tulson

To the editor:

This week marked the official end of the 2018 legislative session. It was also the last session for Rep. Burt Tulson of Lake Norden.

Rep. Tulson has been a state representative for eight years – his years of service coincide with my eight years as governor. During that time, Rep. Tulson has become one of the most well-liked members of the legislature. He was known for interjecting common sense into legislative debates, he brought a positive and friendly outlook to the halls of the Capitol, and he always demonstrated sincere concern for others.

If you see Rep. Tulson in the coming days, please thank him for his outstanding service to your district and to our state. He will be missed.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard
Pierre

FARM RETIREMENT AUCTION

Saturday, April 14, 2018 10:00 AM

LOCATION:

11701 403rd Ave. SE, Houghton, SD 57449

From Groton, SD: 14 miles north on SD Hwy. 37, 3 west on 119th St., 2 north on 403rd Ave.

From Britton, SD: 17 miles west on SD-10, 9 South on SD Hwy 37, 3 West on 119th St., 2 North on 403rd Ave.

From Houghton, SD: 5 miles South on 401st Ave., 2 miles east on 117th St.

From Columbia SD: 2.5 miles north on Hwy. 16, 5 east on 120th St., 1 north on 401st Ave, 2 east on 119th St., 2 miles north on 403rd Ave.

AUCTIONEER'S NOTE:

Terry and Marcia have retired from farming and will be offering this well maintained line of farm equipment at auction. Farm equipment was used in 2017 and is field ready. Very few small items, please be on time.

OWNERS

Terry & Marcia Haaland

For information call 605-885-7188

Live Auction with internet bidding through Bidcaller, a part of Auctiontime.

Register for internet bidding at Auctiontime.com or Ag4Bid.com

TRACTORS

1980 JD 4440, 8,745 hrs, quad range, 3 hyd., 3 pt., 540 & 1000 PTO, Firestone 480/80R38 tires@80% Versatile 875, 4 hyd., 20.8x38 dual, main tires@65%



Case IH 9150 4wd, 300 hp., 5000 hrs., 3 hyd. PS 12 fwd, 2 rv., Cummins

eng., new tires – CONSIGNED: Will@605-290-2324

TILLAGE EQUIPMENT

Summers 30" Super Coulter, Summers 3 bar harrow, weight package, smooth blade front, 13 wave blades back



JD E0400 rotary hoe 20' w/transport IHC 496 30' disk, Summers 4

bar harrow, hyd. wings, tandems all around, 22" blade, 9" spacing IHC 496 24' disk, hyd. wings, 9" spacing, tandems IHC 24' disk, Summers 3 bar harrow, tandems, 9" spacing JD 1350-1450, 6-16" trip beam plow, w/ Melroe 8' packer IHC #45 Field Cult. 21', 3 pt., gauge wheels

PLANTING EQUIPMENT

JD 7000 12R30" front fold 1.5 & 3 bushel poly boxes, trash whippers, markers, JD 200 monitor, 2 pt. JD 7000 8R36" poly boxes, herbicide boxes, markers, monitor



3 JD 8' 9350 drills, w/fert., grass seeder 3 JD 8' LL166 drill w/fert., grass seeder

SN#005798

COMBINE, HEADS & TRAILERS

1999 JD 9610, rebuilt engine at 1,900 hrs, 2,335 sep. hrs., 3,539 eng. hrs., buddy seat, Maurer hopper ext., 20.8 x 42 straddle duals, new

unloading auger tube & auger, twin chaff spreader, 16.9x26 rear tires, SN#09610X681947 JD 930 platform flex, good poly, F & A, #H00930F677831



2- JD 634 GRN corn heads Elmers manufacturing 30' header trailer, 2 wheel 2-homemade 20' 4 wheel trailers

GRAIN CART

Kilbros 490 grain cart, roll tarp, 100 small PTO, lights, 23.1x26 tires

TRUCKS

2004 International Eagle 9400i, Cummins ISX, 10 sp. 759,164 mi., air ride suspension & cab, new bags, new batteries, 205"WB, 3 stage eng brake, 275/80R22.5 matching drivers & steering tires@90%, air slide 5th wheel, 27541, VIN#SCNAPR44C 027541



1973 GMC, gas 427, 13 sp., tandem 66" x 19' box, alum., air brakes,

air shift, twin screw, roll tarp, air brakes, air shift, 10:00 R20 tires diff. lock

1977 Chevy gas, 5 sp. 2 sp., 366 v8, 60"x15' metal box, single axle w/cheater, roll tarp 1965 Ford F600 14' box & stock rack, hoist, 4 sp. 2 sp., 6 cyl., 61,618 actual miles, parade ready SN# F60BR708576

TRAILERS

1991 Cornhusker grain trailer, alum, ag hopper, Shur-Co electric trap openers, RRS electric roll tarp, brakes @90%, 275/80R24.5 tires, 1 new hopper, SNT19204227M0007434



1986 Kiefer built 5th wheel 7x16 goose-neck stock trailer,

#1DVSM1628GK0101509

1967 43"x9' Homemade Stock Trailer, 2 wheel for 1 animal, lights #248084 Dakon 200 bushel gravity box w/HD running gear

CATTLE EQUIPMENT

20-Various sizes metal gates Calf pullers Wood posts New & used steel posts Stockade panels

SHOP

Reznor 85,000 BTU propane hanging heater 2-225 Amp Arc Welders Drill press 1-manual tire machine

HAYING EQUIPMENT

Vicon 6 Wheel Rake NH 56B 10' side delivery rake NH 55 10' side delivery rake Hitch to pull 2 side delivery rakes New Vicon rake wheel 3-IHC 100 sickle mowers: 1-9' pull type, 1-9' 3 pt., 1-7' pull type

AUGERS

Farm King 8" x 51 PTO auger 3-6" take out augers w/hyd. & electric motors

FARM EQUIPMENT

Flare box w/hoist 2-track wackers Farmhand loader w/bucket & grapple 7' 3 pt. snowblower, hyd. spout, 1000 PTO, like new 2-Farmhand pushoffs Farmhand manure & snow buckets F-11 Farmhand Loader

DOZER & SCRAPER

Custom built 8' dozer, rear axle monitors 12' hyd. scraper, like new

MISCELLANEOUS

RR tires 18.4x38 Axle duals Electric drill fill for truck 18.4 x 38 band duals 3 pt. heavy duty hyd. drive, 12" post hole auger Category 1 & 2 quick tachs Straw chopper for Gleaner L2 More items may be listed by sale time!

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Rounds Statement on China Tariff Proposal

PIERRE—U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) today issued the following statement on China's proposed tariffs on U.S. products, including corn, soybeans and beef products:

"While I support the administration's desire to negotiate better trade deals, I've continuously expressed my concern about retaliation from other countries. The new tariffs China is proposing on soybeans and other U.S. goods is a prime example. With planting season about to start and the farm economy still lagging, South Dakota farmers are rightly concerned about this announcement. As trade negotiations continue between the U.S. and China, I will continue to look at all avenues to prevent these proposed tariffs from becoming a reality.

"I understand there is some time before these tariffs are imposed to allow for negotiations; however China's tariff proposal is already having a real market effect. As the administration continues to negotiate trade, I encourage them to take both short and long-term implications into consideration. The best way to strengthen our negotiating position with China is to re-engage with trading partners in that region, specifically those in the TPP. This will give us a tremendous advantage as we seek the best deal for South Dakota producers.

"Free and fair trade drives down prices for American consumers and creates jobs here at home. We need more trade deals with our allies to both expand our opportunities and lessen our dependence on China for trade. Over the past year, we've been able to substantially grow our economy through tax relief and reg reduction. As we continue to build on that success, we must open up new markets to U.S. products without hurting existing trade partnerships. Actions impacting our existing trade partnerships will negatively impact our economic growth."

Yesterday, China introduced a proposal to impose an additional 25 percent tariff on more than 100 U.S. goods, including soybeans, wheat, corn, beef and automobiles. China is currently the world's largest importer of soybeans, with roughly one-third of their soybean imports coming from U.S. farmers. China accounts for 25 percent of all U.S. soybean sales and 60 percent of all soybean exports.

In February, Rounds joined 25 of his colleagues in a letter to President Trump urging him to re-engage in Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations. In a recent weekly column, Rounds wrote:

"Increased economic engagement with the eleven countries currently in the TPP has the potential to substantially improve the competitiveness of U.S. businesses, including farms and ranches. It would also support millions of U.S. jobs, boost U.S. exports, increase wages and benefit consumers. Increasing access to a region and market that has a population of nearly 500 million—and is continuing to grow—is a smart move for our country. Additionally, U.S. participation in TPP could counter the influence of China in the Pacific Rim region."

NorthWestern Announces Advanced Metering Project in South Dakota and Nebraska; \$34.7 Million Upgrade Will Improve Service Reliability

Butte, Mont. – April 4, 2018 – NorthWestern Energy today announced a broad initiative that will bring advanced metering technology to its electric and natural gas customers in South Dakota and Nebraska.

The Advanced Metering Infrastructure project (AMI) represents a \$34.7 million investment in modern energy technology on the part of NorthWestern Energy. The project will include the installation of nearly 65,000 updated electric meters and upgrades to about 48,000 gas meters in South Dakota and close to 44,000 gas meters in Nebraska.

“This is an exciting project for NorthWestern Energy,” said Curt Pohl, vice president, Distribution. “We have been making significant investments in technology across the company and I’m very confident that our investment in advanced metering will help us provide even better service reliability to our customers in South Dakota and Nebraska.”

The upgraded meters will provide improved communication between NorthWestern and its natural gas and electric metering infrastructure that serves homes and businesses in South Dakota and Nebraska. This technology will help us to better manage a customer’s overall energy needs, more quickly respond to customer inquiries and act more quickly to restore power during outages.

The upgraded meters will allow NorthWestern employees to automatically read meters, resulting in more up-to-date information when responding to customer questions about usage and billing. The state-of-the-art equipment will eliminate the need for NorthWestern employees to access customer property to read meters.

“At NorthWestern, we take pride in providing excellent customer service,” said Bobbi Schroepfel, vice president, Customer Care, Communication and Human Resources. “These advanced meters will provide near real-time information about customers’ energy usage, allowing us to be more helpful when customers contact us. I am confident that our customer service will be even better with this upgrade.”

The meters will also pinpoint electric outage locations, allowing for faster response and power restoration. Improving service reliability and power quality is a prime goal of the AMI project.

Planning and design work on the AMI project has been under way for several years. Actual meter installation will begin later this year, with completion expected in 2019. Groton will be affected with the change as the Natural Gas meters will be converted to the new metering reading system.

NorthWestern Energy is working with Itron, a world-leading technology and services company dedicated to the resourceful use of energy and water, on this extensive project. Based in Liberty Lake, WA, Itron’s product portfolio includes electricity, natural gas, water and thermal energy measurement devices and control technology, communication systems and software, as well as consulting services. Itron has nearly 8,000 customers in more than 100 countries.

<https://d.adroll.com/cm/aol/out>

To keep abreast of outages and other NorthWestern Energy events, follow us on Facebook or on Twitter (@NWEinfo).

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The Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Rapid City

Editorial on Suicide in South Dakota

April 5, 2018

Imagine coming home to discover that your child, perhaps a 12-year-old daughter or a 16-year-old son, has taken their own life. I can't imagine such an experience. But too many parents in communities across South Dakota have experienced this tragedy. Many priests and ministers serving in our communities agonize over the number of funerals resulting from suicide.

While it is true that Native American suicide rates in South Dakota are twice as high as the suicide rate for white South Dakotans, it is important to remember that almost 80 percent of all suicide deaths in South Dakota are white. The reality is that South Dakota's children and young adults (under age 24) of all races end their lives at double the rate of youth nationwide.

Over the past 25 years, annual suicide numbers have doubled in this state and in the past five years, suicide has reached epidemic levels in South Dakota. Final numbers for 2017 have not been released, but the South Dakota Department of Health says it will exceed 173 suicides, a record high set in 2015. Rural areas suffer significantly higher suicide rates than urban areas, both nationwide and in South Dakota. Research indicates our farmers and ranchers have the highest rate of suicide of any profession.

While the loss of life at any age is tragic, it is especially so for youth. The losses caused by suicide go beyond actual deaths. For every suicide death, approximately six people will be severely impacted. These "survivors" often experience complicated grief and recovery which impact their productivity in school or the workplace. Statistically, for every successful suicide, there are approximately 25 attempts. Many attempts result in permanent loss of health, medical costs and lost productivity in school or employment. While these economic factors may seem insignificant compared to the loss of life and grief borne by survivors, they do suggest that investing in prevention and treatment programs will relieve significant social costs.

We know that addiction and mental illness are contributing factors to suicide among all races and in all communities. For too long, we have relied upon the criminal justice system to deal with the behavioral challenges caused by addiction and mental illness. Ultimately, jails and courts are not equipped to handle the underlying issues associated with mental illness and addiction. This type of intervention is not a "treatment" program and is the most expensive response and the least effective.

Wouldn't a more effective solution be to redirect some of our criminal justice and law enforcement resources into alternative treatment services, instead of prosecuting those with mental illness? Too often, access to basic mental health services is lacking in places most impacted by this suicide epidemic, our rural areas.

More funding for prevention efforts is needed to combat the root cause and help deter this problem among our youth. Prevention programs that target reservation schools and communities should be given funding priority over lower risk communities.

As parents, pastors, educators, service providers and political leaders, we all have roles to play in addressing this epidemic and finding solutions. In the words of Sitting Bull of the Oglala Sioux, "Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children."

We must engage our elected officials, asking, "What is the State's suicide prevention plan?" Fighting epidemics should be a priority and behavior health losses are no exception. This epidemic that has our children taking their own lives is unacceptable.

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**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**



**Larry Zimmerman
Secretary**

Working Together, South Dakota May Gain a State Veterans Cemetery

The 2018 Legislative Session is one that will go down in history. Veterans Service Organizations, legislators, Sioux Falls community leaders, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA), and the Governor came together to secure passage of legislation to authorize SDDVA to establish and maintain a state veteran's cemetery in Sioux Falls. A dignified final-resting place to honor veterans and eligible dependents which will express the State's gratitude for their service to this country.

Senate Bill 91 (SB91), when introduced, had 104 sponsors and when approved in its final format in the House and the Senate Chambers passed on votes of 64-0 and 34-0 respectively.

SDDVA will be working with the National Cemetery Administration to seek a grant to fund the design and construction of the cemetery. SB91 authorizes SDDVA to submit the grant pre-application prior to July 1, 2018.

State veteran's cemeteries established under the VA grant program must conform to various standards and guidelines. SDDVA will be working close with State Engineers and the VA to ensure South Dakota's design conforms with these standards.

A great partner in this project is the city of Sioux Falls. The city has agreed to donate the land for the development of the state cemetery.

Perhaps President Lincoln gave us all the boost we needed, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

To all that supported the first-step in this endeavor, a big heartfelt "thank you."

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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Sun Dial Manor in Bristol is accepting applications for **full time and part time CNA's**. 12 hr. shifts- days and nights (SIGN ON BONUS OFFERED)

DIETARY OPENINGS

Full time cook, 8 hr. shifts (WITH SIGN ON BONUS)

Part time Dietary Tech

For more information, call 605-492-3615

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.

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



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Save \$2-\$4 /tank

& grow your local economy by choosing low carbon

Super Premium E30's

94 octane, more power,

same mileage, fewer

carbon deposits, lower

maintenance costs,

slashed benzene & related

genotoxic, carcinogenic

tailpipe emissions;

*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for

info, E30 prices\locations.

***Farmers Union's**

PSA: Courtesy Merle

Anderson (Merle is 94

year old founder of Ace

and legendary ethanol

supporter... "because it is

the right thing to do")

HOUGHTON/HECLA AREA LAND FOR SALE

Houghton/Hecla area real estate located 4 miles South and 2 miles East of Hecla, owned by the Estate of Florence Evelyn Peterson, will be sold at auction, cash sale only, the following described real estate:

- Southwest Quarter of Section 18, Township 127 North, Range 60 West of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota. Approximately 162.46 acres of land (19.63 cropland, 142.83 pasture)

Seller makes no representation as to the actual number of acres contained in this description.

Bid opening and auction will take place at 2 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, April 10, 2018, in the Hecla Community Room located at 202 Main Street, Hecla, South Dakota.

Terms of Sale: Sealed bids can be mailed to the office of Gellhaus & Gellhaus, P.C., ATTN: Lonald L. Gellhaus, PO Box 73, Aberdeen, SD 57402-0073 or brought to the auction. Please contact Teresa at 605-225-6522 to request a bid packet. Each sealed bid must include a Bid Sheet.

Earnest money of 10% upon acceptance of bid made payable to "Gellhaus & Gellhaus, P.C. Trust Account". Title insurance and closing fees shall be split equally between Buyer and Seller. Balance due upon closing and delivery of good title. 2017 real estate taxes due in 2018 will be paid by the Seller. 2018 real estate taxes due in 2019 will be the responsibility of the Buyer.

Seller reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

Lonald L. Gellhaus, of Gellhaus & Gellhaus, P.C., represents the Seller. For additional information, please contact Lonald L. Gellhaus at 605-225-6522.

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Today in Weather History

April 6, 1959: Dust storms impacted much of the state of South Dakota beginning on the 6th and on into the 7th. The preceding drought period had left a little moisture in the soil, so the fall-plowed fields in exposed locations eroded severely. Strong winds on the 6th and 7th lifted the loose soil, creating areas of blowing dust. In the localities, visibility was less than a quarter mile for short periods. Some observers stated that it was the worst dust event since the 1930s.

April 6, 2006: Severe thunderstorms the morning of the 6th produced large hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter near Miller in Hand County. Later on, heavy rains of 3 to 6 inches fell causing flash flooding across parts of Spink, Clark, and Day counties. Many county and township roads were flooded with several of the roads damaged or thoroughly washed out. Areas around Frankfort, Doland, Turton, Conde, Crandall, Raymond, Butler and Bristol were most affected. Many roads were closed. Also, several basements were flooded, and sewers were backed up.

April 6, 2008: An area of low pressure moving across South Dakota spread heavy snow of 6 to 15 inches across much of central, north central, and northeast South Dakota. Also, strong winds gusting to 25 to 40 mph caused some blowing and drifting snow. Many activities were canceled and roads became treacherous. Many vehicles went into the ditch, and several accidents also occurred. Snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Mission Ridge, Isabel, Mellette, and Britton, 7 inches at Faulkton, Andover, Columbia, Timber Lake, and Eureka, 8 inches at Bath, Selby, Mobridge, and Leola, 9 inches at Hosmer, 10 inches at Ipswich, 11 inches at Mound City, and 6 miles east of Hayes. Locations with a foot or more of snow included 12 inches at Roscoe and Elm Lake, 13 inches at Eagle Butte, Onaka, and 23 miles north of Highmore, and 15 inches at Bowdle.

1909: American explorer Robert Peary and five others reached what they determined to be the North Pole on this day. Historical analysis suggests he fell a few miles short of achieving his goal. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History.com.

1973: On this date through the 8th, a major spring snowstorm dumped 11.6 inches of snow across Denver, Colorado. Most of the heavy wet snow of 10.1 inches fell on the 7th when temperatures remained in the 20s. The low temperature of 5 degrees on the 8th was a new record low for the date and the lowest for so late in the season.

2007: In Cleveland, Ohio on the 6th to the 9th: The opening-season series between the Indians and Minnesota Twins is wiped out by a snowstorm and a cold snap. The Indians led 4-0 when their home opener Friday on the 6th was called off by umpires because of heavy snow. The grounds crew who tried to make the field playable with backpack blowers and brooms spent more time on the field than the players during nearly three hours of stoppages. About a foot of snow remained on the ground Monday afternoon the 9th.

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Fri Apr 6	Sat Apr 7	Sun Apr 8	Mon Apr 9	Tue Apr 10	Wed Apr 11	Thu Apr 12
		 Cloudy with Heavy Snow				
18°F	29°F	31°F	31°F	42°F	48°F	45°F
1°F	19°F	18°F	15°F	30°F	30°F	37°F
NNW 21 MPH Precip 10%	NW 5 MPH	ESE 17 MPH Precip 90%	N 9 MPH	S 9 MPH	SSE 19 MPH Precip 20%	W 15 MPH



Very Cold Today

Highs in the teens to mid 20s

Breezy this morning

Highs 25 to 35 degrees below normal

Make sure the kids have the right cold weather gear:
hats, gloves, and possibly snow pants



www.weather.gov/abr

weather.gov/winter
NWS Aberdeen, SD

Published on: 04/06/2018 at 2:57AM

Cold! High pressure is slowly settling in from the northwest today, resulting in a breezy morning with wind chill values in the 0 to -15 degree range, and highs only in the teens to mid 20s. These temperatures are 25 to 35 degrees below normal for this time of year.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 35.6 F at 1:01 PM

Low Outside Temp: 13.3 F at 5:03 AM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 30.0 Mph at 2:02 PM

Precip: Moisture in Snow: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 85° in 1991

Record Low: 6° in 2007

Average High: 52°F

Average Low: 28°F

Average Precip in April: 0.27

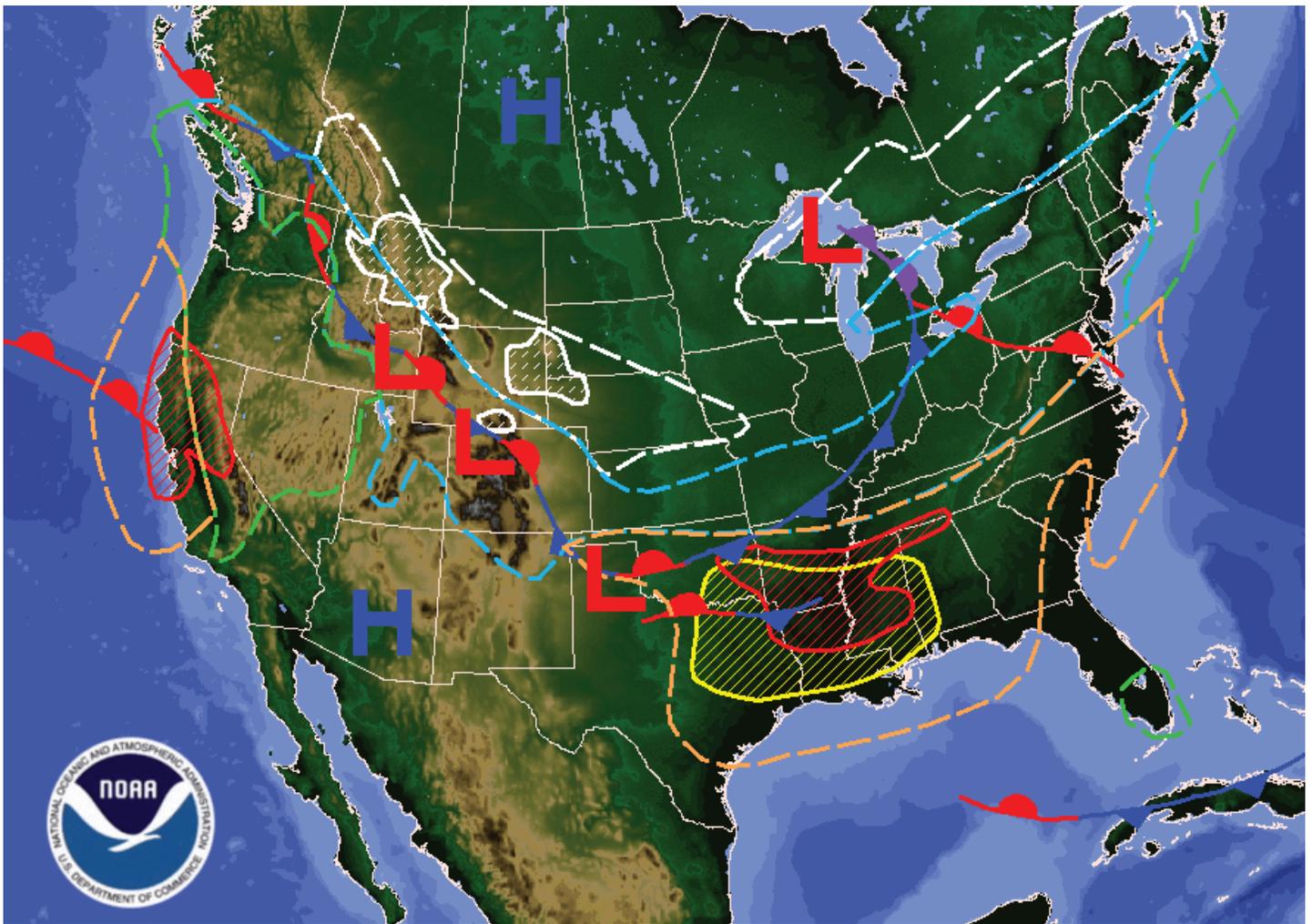
Precip to date in April: 0.28

Average Precip to date: 2.45

Precip Year to Date: 2.35

Sunset Tonight: 8:08 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:02 Excerpts from recent South Dakota



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Apr 06, 2018, issued 4:50 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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

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WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT GOD?

"Wow!" said an associate as a group of us left a restaurant after a dinner meeting. "That was a really good meal!"

"Good?" questioned another. "What do you mean good? That's one of the worst meals I've ever paid for. It was horrible!"

"Not so fast," said another. "Part of it was really bad and part was fairly good. At least, that's my opinion."

"Good" is in the eye of the beholder. You and I might experience the same event together - as the meal mentioned above - but have entirely different opinions about it. But when the author of Psalm 100 was ending his thoughts about God, he said, "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever." He was convinced that "God was good." In fact, this entire Psalm is written as a Psalm that expresses his reasons to give thanks to God.

Years ago when the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christ they searched for a word in their language that they could all agree upon that expressed the character of the divine Being of the Bible.

They described stories of His faithfulness, His grace, His holiness, His mercy, His power, His love, His salvation and asked, "What one word will express all of these words?" After a discussion they all agreed: "The good!" And "good" is the old English word for "God."

When we look at the "big picture" of all that God has done for us, to us and in us, it is certainly appropriate for us to describe Him, as they did, as "The Good."

Prayer: Father, when we consider all of Your ways and the wonder of Your works we too agree, our Lord is Good! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 100:5 For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 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)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

News from the Associated Press

Tribe: Ruling could reform US agency for Native education

By **FELICIA FONSECA**, Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Stephen C. has been taught only math and English at a U.S.-run elementary school for Native American children deep in a gorge off the Grand Canyon. Teachers have left midyear, and he repeatedly faces suspension and arrest for behavior his attorneys say is linked to a disability stemming from traumatic experiences.

The 12-year-old is among children from Arizona's remote and impoverished Havasupai reservation who are a step closer to their push for systematic reform of the U.S. agency that oversees tribal education, alleging in a lawsuit it ignored complaints about an understaffed school, a lack of special education and a deficient curriculum.

The students' attorneys say they won a major legal victory recently when a federal court agreed that childhood adversity and trauma can be learning disabilities, a tactic the same law firm used in crime-ridden Compton, California. They say the case could have widespread effects for Native children in more than 180 schools nationwide overseen by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education and in schools with large Native populations.

"Education is our lifeline and our future for our kids — and all students, not just down here, but nationally," Havasupai Chairwoman Muriel Coochwytewa said. The Bureau of Indian Education has "an obligation to teach our children. And if that's not going on, then our children will become failures, and we don't want that."

Havasupai students face adversity and generational trauma from repeated broken promises from the U.S. government, efforts to eradicate Native culture and tradition, discrimination and the school's tendency to call police to deal with behavioral problems, attorneys say.

U.S. District Judge Steven Logan wrote in a late March ruling that the students' lawyers adequately alleged "complex trauma" and adversity can result in physiological effects leading to a physical impairment. He moved the case forward, denying Justice Department requests to dismiss some of the allegations but agreeing to drop plaintiffs from the lawsuit who no longer attend Havasupai Elementary School.

Noshene Ranjbar, an assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Arizona, said medical literature has expanded in the past 20 years to include trauma that isn't linked only to singular events.

In Native communities she's worked with in the Dakotas and Arizona, "they agree the root of everything they suffer with is this unresolved grief, loss, trauma, anger, decades of disappointment on a huge scale," she said.

When students act out, schools too often turn to suspension, expulsion or arrest instead of finding what's driving the bad behavior, she said. Usually, it's "a hurt human being that is using the wrong means to cope," Ranjbar said.

The Public Counsel law firm pressing the Havasupai case also sued the Compton Unified School District — which is majority black and Latino — in 2015 over disability services for students with complex trauma. A judge said students with violent and traumatic pasts could be eligible for such services but didn't apply the ruling to all who experience trauma.

The U.S. Justice Department did not respond to a request for comment on the Havasupai ruling.

Government attorney Cesar Lopez-Morales said at a hearing last year that while trauma could result in a disability, federal agencies cannot assume every Native student with shared experiences is disabled. They would need specifics of individuals' impairments and how those affect their lives.

He said attorneys also failed to show the students were denied benefits solely because of disabilities.

Havasupai Elementary School has three teachers for kindergarten through eighth grade on a remote reservation home to about 650 people and world-renowned for its blue-green waterfalls.

The village of Supai can be reached only by mule, foot or helicopter, making it the most isolated of the

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Bureau of Indian Education's schools in the Lower 48 states. The reservation doesn't have a high school.

The students' attorneys say the area is beset with high levels of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, family violence and low literacy levels. All 70 elementary school students qualify for free or reduced lunch and most are limited in English and math proficiency, and have special education needs.

"What we know from the science is that, particularly unaddressed, the impact of trauma can impact the ability to learn, read, think, concentrate and communicate," Public Counsel attorney Kathryn Eidmann said.

The lawsuit seeks to force the government to provide services for special needs, a thorough curriculum, culturally relevant education and staff training to respond to trauma.

Stephen C., whose full name is not listed in court documents, enrolled as a kindergartner but can hardly read or write now that he's in seventh grade. His attorneys say he has an attention deficit disorder and experiences trauma from witnessing alcohol abuse at school and from his relatives being forced into boarding schools.

At one point, he pulled a plug out of a computer monitor and faced a federal indictment, the lawsuit says.

Some Havasupai parents have sent their children to boarding schools off the reservation rather than deal with inadequate educational services.

Stephen's guardian has considered it, too. But he said in a statement that tribal members want children with them in the canyon, to watch them grow and be a part of the community.

Tyson Foods expanding safety programs to 12 poultry plants

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Tyson Foods is expanding the safety programs it has been testing in its beef plants to 12 poultry plants, allowing workers there to stop the line if they have safety concerns.

The Springdale, Arkansas-based company said Thursday it developed the measures in cooperation with the United Food and Commercial Workers International union.

The policies allow workers to stop the production line if they see a safety issue, and workers are involved in plant safety committees. They are part of Tyson's ongoing effort to reduce injuries related to the dangerous work in a meatpacking plant.

Tyson Fresh Meats President Steve Stouffer said there has been a decrease in injuries and turnover at plants using the measures over the past three-to-five years.

The number of injuries and illnesses that Tyson reported per 100 employees declined from 8.16 in the company's 2015 fiscal year to 6.58 in 2016 and 5.08 last year.

"We're proud of the progress we've made," Stouffer said

Mark Lauritsen with the union said it's clear Tyson values worker input.

"We have workers who know they can speak up" Lauritsen said. "It's beyond the lip service you might see at some companies about having workers involved."

The new policies will be added to other safety efforts Tyson has made in its poultry plants in recent years, including adding more than 300 trainers and improving safety communications.

Tyson officials say the company has been working closely with the union for three decades since it began developing ergonomics programs. They discussed that partnership during a visit to the company's plant in Dakota Dunes, S.D., on Thursday.

South Dakota voters to decide 24 legislative primaries

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Some former South Dakota lawmakers are trying to mount comebacks. One Republican is running for both state Senate and attorney general, and four Democrats are competing in a crowded primary likely to guarantee the two winners seats at the Statehouse.

Voters are set to decide two-dozen legislative primary races in the June 5 election. Officials this week drew numbers out of a South Dakota mug with a bison on it to set the candidates' order on the ballot.

Here's a look at some of this year's most interesting primary races:

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BIG PICTURE

Voters across South Dakota are set to decide 24 legislative primary races. Democrats will have two Senate and five House primaries, and Republicans will have nine Senate and eight House primaries. The South Dakota Democratic Party said Thursday that 110 Democratic candidates are running for 101 out of the 105 seats in the Legislature. Democratic Party Chair Ann Tornberg says it's another sign of the momentum her party has in South Dakota and around the nation.

State GOP Chairman Dan Lederman says Republicans plan to run a vigorous campaign this season with 115 candidates running for 97 legislative seats. He said the party applauds South Dakota Democrats for their "biennial pantomime of pretending they're a viable political party," but that "quantity should not be equated with quality."

DISTRICT 30

It's a Republican rematch. Former Sen. Bruce Rampelberg is taking on hard-right incumbent Sen. Lance Russell, who bucked his House term limit in 2016 by casting Rampelberg as a moderate and easily ousting him from the southwest South Dakota Senate seat. But this year, Russell will have to explain to voters why he's double dipping: the Hot Springs lawmaker is running for Senate and state attorney general.

Former Rep. Patricia Shiery is also competing in the Republican primary.

DISTRICT 35

Republican Rep. Lynne DiSanto will try to switch chambers this year after four years in the House. DiSanto is a high-profile conservative known for supporting permitless concealed carry legislation.

DiSanto earlier this year urged Republican legislative leaders to take Capitol misconduct allegations more seriously after a colleague made her fear for her safety on the House floor.

DiSanto is seeking the west river Senate seat being vacated by Republican Terri Haverly, who has endorsed GOP candidate Ryan Smith in the primary race.

DISTRICT 15

Former Rep. Patrick Kirschman, incumbent Rep. Jamie Smith, nonprofit program coordinator Linda Duba and Josh Reinfeld will compete in a four-way Democratic primary race for two spots in the Sioux Falls district. Kirschman, who previously represented the area, is eyeing a return to the Legislature after getting defeated in a 2016 Democratic Senate primary.

No Republicans have filed to run for House in the district.

DISTRICT 9

For ex-Republican governor candidate Lora Hubbel, it's try, try again to get back into elected office. Hubbel, who unsuccessfully ran a hard-right challenge against GOP Gov. Dennis Daugaard in 2014 and this year fell short of the primary ballot as a governor hopeful, is instead mounting a surprise bid for a Minnehaha County Senate seat that she couldn't clinch in 2016.

Hubbel, a onetime representative, will face Republican Rep. Wayne Steinhauer, who is looking to move to the Senate with the departure of Sen. Deb Peters.

Daugaard appointed Steinhauer to the House in 2015. Steinhauer won election with the highest vote share of the four House candidates in that district in the 2016 general election.

DISTRICT 1

Democratic Rep. Susan Wismer, who lost to Daugaard in the 2014 governor's race, will run for outgoing-Sen. Jason Frerichs' seat. Wismer will face Allison Renville, a convention delegate for former Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, and Thomas Bisek of New Effington, in the Democratic primary race.

No Republicans have filed to run for the northeastern South Dakota Senate seat.

DISTRICT 32

A Rapid City-area Republican House primary includes incumbent Rep. Sean McPherson, who has been fighting cancer. He is up against Ed Randazzo, director of political operations at conservative group Family Heritage Alliance Action, and South Dakota School of Mines and Technology doctoral candidate Scyller Borglum, an engineer and entrepreneur.

The two primary winners are set to face a pair of Democrats in the fall.

South Dakota ranchers say drought aid data is inaccurate

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Some ranchers in western South Dakota say data that determines their eligibility for federal drought aid is inaccurate.

Local ranchers raised the issue with Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune of South Dakota during a Wednesday discussion over a federal farm bill draft, the Rapid City Journal reported .

Rancher Linda Gilbert said her insurance benefits during a drought year depend partly on conditions more than 50 miles away at weather stations operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The U.S. Agriculture Department's Pasture, Rangeland, Forage insurance program doesn't accept data from other weather stations closer to her ranch near Buffalo, she said.

"It's completely knot-headed," said Mark Tubbs, who ranches near Edgemont. Some data determining drought severity in the area comes from 40 miles away in Custer, he said.

The South Dakota Stockgrowers Association encouraged members to collect data for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network. The network sends data to a variety of entities, including certain federal agencies.

But only some USDA programs accept data from the network, said Silvia Christen, the association's executive director.

Thune said the situation is an example of federal bureaucracies operating "multiple, duplicative and redundant systems."

"There's got to be a better way to be more comprehensive and more consistent," he said. "So we'll take a look at it."

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

South Dakota 4-H rodeo must comply with Title IX

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota youth rodeo program could change its separate boys and girls events to comply with federal law prohibiting sex discrimination.

Rodeo supporters and some state lawmakers have long opposed the U.S. Agriculture Department's ruling since the 1970s that the 4-H rodeo violates the law known as Title IX.

"Rodeo is a diverse sport, and inherent differences between the sexes can create unfair advantages," Republican U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem of South Dakota told the Capital Journal Wednesday. "The USDA needs to rethink this and give youth rodeo an exemption from Title IX requirements."

The 4-H national headquarters notified South Dakota's 4-H rodeo that it must follow federal regulations by fall or it will be removed from the federally funded 4-H program. The USDA is in charge of 4-H in the state, where the 4-H rodeo program is only one of two in the country.

The rodeo has a long-held practice of hosting "boys" events, which include riding bulls and broncs, separate from "girls" events, such as goat-roping and ribbon-roping.

4-H officials suggested changing the names of events to "Division I" and "Division II" instead of "boys" and "girls."

"There will be unintended consequences," said Casey Cowan, who has long been involved in the rodeo. "You will be hurting the young people you are trying to help."

He noted that an issue could arise for pick-up men and bullfighters, who are responsible for helping bronc and bull riders dismount. It could be viewed as inappropriate touching when involving female rid-

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ers, Cowan said.

4-H leaders will set up a teleconference with the program's headquarters for rodeo supporters like Cowan to express their concerns. But some have threatened to leave 4-H and form a new youth rodeo program, according to 4-H officials.

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

2 major projects beginning at Sioux Falls Regional Airport

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Delays and some inconveniences could soon be in store for travelers using the Sioux Falls Regional Airport.

Construction will start soon on the airport's baggage area and main runway. Airport executive director Dan Letellier says a \$5 million project will double the size of the baggage claim area and give it a new look. Bids on the baggage claim work open this week and construction begins next month.

The Argus Leader says work to replace 4,000 feet of 40-year-old concrete on the main runway begins in mid-April. That work is expected to take six months. The \$10 million project will be paid for by the Federal Aviation Administration, South Dakota Department of Transportation and the Air National Guard.

About a million passengers use the airport each year.

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

County planning board recommends rejecting wind project

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — The Davison County Planning Commission has recommended rejecting a wind project between Mitchell and Mount Vernon.

The Daily Republic reports the panel voted 4-3 Tuesday against giving conditional use permits for the nine-turbine wind project in Beulah Township. The vote was only a recommendation to Davison County commissioners, who will weigh the project April 10.

The project was first presented to the planning board in 2015, but county commissioners nixed it the next year. Con Edison Development plans to make the project part of three in the region.

The newspaper reports 10 people at the meeting spoke against the project, and seven people supported it.

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

Yankton authorities search river for Sioux Falls woman

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are searching the Missouri River in the Yankton area for a missing Sioux Falls woman.

Sixty-six-year-old Diane Bartling was last seen in Sioux Falls on Sunday afternoon. Her car and some personal items were later discovered near the Meridian Bridge in Yankton.

Yankton Police Chief Brian Paulsen says a four-hour search Wednesday yielded no clues. The effort was to continue Thursday.

Authorities did not immediately release details on the woman's disappearance.

Ex-S. Korean leader Park gets 24-year prison term

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Former South Korean President Park Geun-hye was formally convicted of an array of corruption charges and sentenced to 24 years in prison on Friday, a year after she was driven from office and arrested over a scandal that saw months of massive street rallies calling for her ouster.

The conviction, which she can appeal, is the latest indignity for South Korea's first female president, who grew up in the presidential palace as the daughter of a former dictator and even served as first lady after

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her mother's assassination. The harshness of the sentence is likely to deepen divisions in a country still wrestling with the aftermath of the most serious political turmoil in years.

Once seen as the darling of South Korean conservatives, Park earned the nickname "Queen of Elections" for her record leading her party to victory in tight races, culminating in her own election as president in 2012. Yet that was all undone by the scandal involving a close confidant and bribery, extortion and other allegations.

Park, 66, maintains she's a victim of "political revenge" and has been refusing to attend court sessions since October. She didn't attend Friday's verdict, citing a sickness that wasn't specified publicly.

In a nationally televised verdict, the Seoul Central District Court convicted Park of bribery, extortion, abuse of power and other charges.

"It's inevitable that the defendant should be held strictly responsible for her crimes, if only to prevent the unfortunate event of a president abusing the power granted by the people and throwing state affairs into chaos from happening again," chief judge Kim Se-yun said.

Kim said Park has shown no remorse for her wrongdoing and continued to pass responsibility to others with "unconvincing excuses."

Along with the prison sentence, Kim said Park was also fined 18 billion won (\$16.8 million).

Both Park and prosecutors — who had demanded a 30-year sentence — have one week to appeal.

Park's lawyer, Kang Cheol-gu, called the 24-year prison term "very bad" and said the legal team will decide whether to appeal after confirming her willingness.

The court convicted Park of colluding with longtime confidante Choi Soon-sil to pressure 18 business groups to donate a total of 77.4 billion won (\$72.3 million) for the launch of two foundations controlled by Choi.

The two women were also convicted of taking bribes from some of those companies, including more than 7 billion won (\$6.5 million) alone from Samsung. Prosecutors previously alleged that Samsung's bribe was aimed at getting government support for a smooth company leadership transition, but the court said there was not enough evidence to prove that Samsung sought such favor from the government.

The court said Park colluded with senior government officials to blacklist artists critical of her government to deny them state assistance programs. Park was also convicted of passing on presidential documents with sensitive information to Choi via one of her presidential aides.

The scandal has already led to the arrests, indictments and convictions of dozens of high-profile government officials and business leaders. Choi is serving a 20-year prison term; Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong was initially sentenced to five years in prison before his sentence was suspended on appeal; and Lotte chairman Shin Dong-bin was given 2½ years in prison.

Park has a small group of fierce supporters — most of them middle aged and older — who regularly stage rallies calling for her release and after the verdict was broadcast, thousands of them marched near the Seoul court to protest the ruling. They waved South Korean and U.S. flags and held signs that read, among other things, "Stop murderous political revenge!"

"Release (President Park) immediately!" the marchers chanted as they walked between thick lines of police officers. There were no immediate reports of major clashes or injuries.

The gatherings of Park's supporters have been much smaller than the earlier ones calling for her ouster, which began in October 2016, eventually drawing millions every Saturday to a Seoul plaza and elsewhere around the country. She was impeached by lawmakers that December and removed from office by a Constitutional Court ruling in March 2017.

The protests show how deeply South Koreans are split along ideological and generational lines, the result of decades-long tension with rival North Korea and the lingering fallout from the conservative military dictatorships that ran the country until the late 1980s.

Park is the daughter of deeply divisive dictator Park Chung-hee, who is revered by supporters as a hero who spearheaded South Korea's rapid economic rise in the 1960-70s. But he's also remembered for imprisoning and torturing dissidents.

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During her father's 18-year rule, Park Geun-hye served as first lady after her mother was killed in an assassination attempt targeting her father in 1974. She left the presidential mansion in 1979 after her father was gunned down by his own intelligence chief during a late-night drinking party.

After years of seclusion, Park returned to politics by winning a parliamentary seat in the late 1990s, during a burst of nostalgia for her father after South Korea's economy was devastated by a foreign exchange crisis.

In 2012, she won the presidential election by defeating her liberal rival and current President Moon Jae-in, riding a wave of support by conservatives who wanted to see her repeat her father's charismatic economic revival.

Park's friendships with Choi, 61, began in the mid-1970s when Choi's late father served as Park's mentor after her mother's assassination. Park once described Choi as someone who helped her when she had difficulties. But her relations with the Choi family have long haunted her political career.

Media reports say that Choi's father was a cult leader and allegedly used his ties with Park to take bribes from government officials and businessmen.

Park has previously insisted that she only got help from Choi on public relations and to edit some presidential speeches.

Park's four years in office were marred by rising animosity with rival North Korea over its advancing nuclear program, a 2014 ferry disaster that killed more than 300 people, mostly teenagers on a school trip, and criticism that she curbed free speech and didn't manage things transparently.

In a presidential by-election triggered by Park's early exit, Moon won an easy victory against wounded conservatives.

Park's saga is only the latest addition to a long line of scandals involving the country's leaders.

Her conservative predecessor, Lee Myung-bak, who governed from 2008-2013, was arrested and jailed last month over a separate corruption scandal. Lee's liberal successor Roh Moo-hyun jumped to his death in 2009 amid a corruption investigation of his family.

Park Chung-hee's successors, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, both ex-army generals, spent time in jail for bribery, treason, munition and other charges after leaving office. Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, both former opposition leaders who fought against the dictatorships of Park Chung-hee and Chun, left office in disgrace after their sons and close associates were arrested or embroiled in scandals.

Associated Press writer Youkyung Lee contributed to this report.

Studio Ghibli co-founder, director Isao Takahata dies at 82

By YURI KAGEYAMA, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Isao Takahata, co-founder of the prestigious Japanese animator Studio Ghibli that stuck to a hand-drawn "manga" look in the face of digital filmmaking, has died. He was 82.

Takahata started Ghibli with Oscar-winning animator Hayao Miyazaki in 1985, hoping to create Japan's Disney, and helped shape the style and voice of what became one of the world's most respected animation studios as well as this nation's prized cultural export.

He directed "Grave of the Fireflies," a tragic tale about wartime childhood, and produced some of the studio's films, including Miyazaki's 1984 "Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind," which tells the horror of environmental disaster through a story about a princess.

Takahata died Thursday of lung cancer at a Tokyo hospital, according to a studio statement Friday.

He was fully aware how the floating sumie-brush sketches of faint pastel in his works stood as a stylistic challenge to Hollywood's computer-graphics cartoons.

In a 2015 interview with The Associated Press, Takahata talked about how Edo-era woodblock-print artists like Hokusai had the understanding of Western-style perspective and the use of light, but they purposely chose to depict reality with lines, and in a flat way, with minimal shading.

That, he said, was at the heart of Japanese manga, or comics.

"It is about the essence that's behind the drawing," he said at Ghibli's picturesque office in suburban

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Tokyo. "We want to express reality without an overly realistic depiction, and that's about appealing to the human imagination."

His 1982 rendition of "Gauche the Cellist," a classic by early 20th century poet-writer Kenji Miyazawa, was inspired by oil paintings. When he spoke of computer graphics or other digital techniques like 3D, he practically said the terms with a scoff.

He said Ghibli strove to fuse Japanese and Western filmmaking styles.

In the interview, Takahata confessed to an almost love-hate relationship with Miyazaki because their works were so different. He said he tries not to talk about Miyazaki's works because he would have to be honest, and then he would end up getting critical, and he didn't want conflict with an artist he so respected.

His last film, "The Tale of The Princess Kaguya," based on a Japanese folktale, was nominated for a 2015 Oscar for best animation feature, although it did not win.

He is also known for the 1970s Japanese TV series "Heidi, Girl of the Alps," based on the book by Swiss author Johanna Spyri.

A native of Mie Prefecture, Takahata was a graduate of the University of Tokyo and initially worked at Toei, one of Japan's major film and animation studios.

Although he did not win an Oscar, Takahata won many other awards, including those from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and the Lorcano International Film Festival.

There was an outpouring of international mourning.

Pixar's Lee Unkrich, director of "Toy Story 3," said Takahata influenced Michael Arndt's script for "Little Miss Sunshine," a road trip comedy about a family of losers trying to survive.

"Grave of the Fireflies' is an amazing, emotional film. And 'My Neighbors the Yamadas' is incredibly charming," Unkrich said in a tweet from his verified account.

"My Neighbors the Yamadas" chronicled the daily vignettes of the Yamada family, in a humorous way, evoking a comic-strip style.

Strong female characters were a Takahata trademark.

Princess Kaguya, in his adaptation, is a lively free-spirited young woman who spurns the advances of boorish samurai men, choosing to hold her own.

The ending, which is part of the original fairy tale, has her taking off in an extraterrestrial canopy to the moon, still single, as the elderly couple, her doting earthling adoptive parents, watch in sorrow and horror.

Takahata was planning to do a film about exploited girls, forced to work as nannies with infants strapped on their backs. Most lullabies in Japan were not for parents singing babies to sleep, but for such young women, crying out about their suffering, Takahata had said.

Although his films were often fantasies, he was a realist, insisting, for instance, on genuine musical instruments being played that matched what was depicted on the screen. He was gentle but also a perfectionist, grilling his voice actors till the tone and character interpretations were just right.

All his stories, he said, held the message of urging everyone to live life to their fullest, to be all they can be, not bogged down by petty concerns like money and prestige.

"This earth is a good place, not because there is eternity," he said.

"All must come to an end in death. But in a cycle, repeated over and over, there will always be those who come after us."

Toshio Suzuki, a producer at Studio Ghibli, said Miyazaki and he were discussing a big farewell ceremony for Takahata for May 15, organized by the studio. Details were still undecided.

"There was so much more he wanted to do, it must be heartbreaking," Suzuki said.

Follow Yuri Kageyama on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

Her work can be found at <https://www.apnews.com/search/yuri%20kageyama>

China vows to fight US 'at any cost' as trade spat worsens

By JILL COLVIN and GILLIAN WONG, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — China vowed on Friday to fight the U.S. "at any cost" after President Donald Trump proposed slapping an additional \$100 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods in an escalating trade dispute between the world's two largest economies.

Trump's surprise move Thursday to instruct the U.S. trade representative to consider the additional tariffs came a day after Beijing announced plans to tax \$50 billion in American products, including soybeans and small aircraft, in response to a U.S. move this week to slap tariffs on \$50 billion in Chinese imports.

In Beijing, the Commerce Ministry said China doesn't want a trade war — but isn't afraid to fight one. "China will dedicate itself to the end and at any cost and will definitely fight back firmly" if the U.S. persists in its "protectionism," the ministry said in a statement.

Trump's proposal intensified what was already shaping up to be the biggest trade battle since World War II. Global financial markets had fallen sharply as the world's two biggest economies squared off over Beijing's aggressive trade tactics. They calmed down Wednesday and Thursday on hopes the U.S. and China would find a diplomatic solution but slid Friday after Beijing said it would fight the Trump administration's latest threats.

The White House announced after the markets closed Thursday that Trump had instructed the Office of the United States Trade Representative to consider whether \$100 billion of additional tariffs would be appropriate and, if so, to identify which products they should apply to. He's also instructed his secretary of agriculture "to implement a plan to protect our farmers and agricultural interests."

"China's illicit trade practices — ignored for years by Washington — have destroyed thousands of American factories and millions of American jobs," Trump said in a statement announcing the decision.

The latest escalation comes after the U.S. on Tuesday said it would impose 25 percent duties on \$50 billion of imports from China, and China quickly retaliated by listing \$50 billion of products that it could hit with its own 25 percent tariffs. The Chinese list Wednesday included soybeans, the biggest U.S. export to China, and aircraft up to 45 tons (41 metric tons) in weight. Also on the list were American beef, whiskey, passenger vehicles and industrial chemicals.

Earlier in the week, Beijing announced separate import duties on \$3 billion of U.S. goods in response to the Trump administration's duties on all steel and aluminum imports, including from China.

U.S. officials have sought to downplay the threat of a broader trade dispute, saying a negotiated outcome is still possible. But economists warn that the tit-for-tat moves bear the hallmarks of a classic trade rift that could escalate. And already, the tensions have rattled global stock markets.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer called China's move "unjustified" and said Trump's proposal was an "appropriate response to China's recent threat of new tariffs."

"Such measures would undoubtedly cause further harm to American workers, farmers, and businesses," he said in a statement. "Under these circumstances, the President is right to ask for additional appropriate action to obtain the elimination of the unfair acts, policies, and practices identified in USTR's report."

China's Commerce Ministry said it must "adopt new countermeasures" to protect the interests of the Chinese people — but it did not announce any specific measures.

The clash reflects the tension between Trump's promises to narrow a U.S. trade deficit with China that stood at \$375.2 billion in goods last year and China's ruling Communist Party's development ambitions. Trump says China's trade practices have caused American factories to close and lead to the loss of American jobs.

Trump's top economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, said earlier Thursday in an interview with Fox Business Network that negotiations were ongoing. But, he said, "at the end of the day, China's unfair and illegal trading actions are damaging to economic growth, for the U.S., for China and for the rest of the world."

He also called Trump "the first guy with a backbone in decades ... to actually go after it. Not just whisper it, but to go after it with at least preliminary actions."

One trade policy expert said he doubted that Trump's rhetoric would help forge any deal with China.

"Mr. Trump is upping the ante, but the lack of a clear game plan and an incoherent messaging strategy from the administration is setting this up for an all-out trade war rather than a fruitful negotiation," said Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University.

In China, some observers held out hope that the two countries were headed toward negotiations and noted that despite Beijing's tough talk, it likely does not want the country's export-driven economy to be hit by punishing tariffs.

"If the trade dispute escalates or lasts for a long time, it will have a big impact on China's manufacturing industry, and foreign investment in related projects will be affected too," said Zhang Lifan, a Beijing-based independent political commentator. "In the long-run, losses in manufacturing will lead to decrease in tax revenue and eventually affect China's economic growth."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., a frequent Trump critic, called the escalation "the dumbest possible way" to punish China.

"Hopefully the President is just blowing off steam again but, if he's even half-serious, this is nuts," Sasse said in a statement. "Let's absolutely take on Chinese bad behavior, but with a plan that punishes them instead of us."

Any additional tariffs would be subject to a public comment process and would not go into effect until that process is complete.

Wong reported from Beijing. Associated Press writers Paul Wiseman and Josh Boak contributed to this report.

Russia says Britain is 'playing with fire' in spy case

By EDITH M. LEDERER and DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The international furor over the poisoning of a former Russian spy and his daughter intensified, with Russia warning Britain that it was "playing with fire."

At a U.N. Security Council meeting on Thursday, Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia claimed that Russia was the victim of a hasty, sloppy and ill-intentioned defamation campaign by London and its allies.

Britain has blamed Russia for the March 4 poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter. In response, more than two dozen Western allies including Britain, the U.S. and NATO have ordered out over 150 Russian diplomats in a show of solidarity. Moscow has fiercely denied its involvement in the nerve agent attack and expelled an equal number of envoys. The diplomatic turmoil has hit lows unseen even at the height of the Cold War.

Moscow assumes "with a high degree of probability" that the intelligence services of other countries are likely responsible for the incident, Nebenzia said at the U.N.

"Everything confirms this is a coordinated, very well-planned campaign" intended "to discredit and even delegitimize Russia," he added.

Britain's U.N. ambassador, Karen Pierce, shot back that Russia has come up with 24 theories on who bears responsibility for the poisoning, but the United Kingdom has only one — that it's highly likely Russia was responsible.

Nebenzia refused to name the intelligence services that Russia suspects, but said their goal is to accuse Moscow of using "a horrible, inhumane weapon, of concealing the arsenal of this substance," of violating the Chemical Weapons Convention, and putting in question Russia's role "not only in finding a solution in Syria, but anywhere else."

He warned: "We have told our British colleagues that you are playing with fire and you will be sorry."

Britain's Pierce said Russia's 24 theories for the attack include blaming it on terrorists and saying Britain wanted to distract from Brexit, its departure from the European Union.

Earlier Thursday, Skripal's 33-year-old daughter, Yulia, said in a statement released by British police that her "strength is growing daily" and she expressed gratitude to those who came to her aid when she and her father, Sergei, were found unconscious on a bench a month ago.

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"I am sure you appreciate that the entire episode is somewhat disorientating, and I hope that you'll respect my privacy and that of my family during the period of my convalescence," she said in her first public comment.

The hospital in the English city of Salisbury confirmed that Yulia's health has improved, while her 66-year-old father remains in critical condition.

Adding to the intrigue was a recording aired Thursday by Russian state Rossiya TV of a purported phone call between Yulia Skripal and her cousin in Russia. In the call, Yulia Skripal allegedly said she and her father were both recovering and in normal health, and that her father's health was not irreparably damaged.

Skripal's niece, Viktoria, confirmed the veracity of the recording in an interview with the BBC on Friday. "It was Yulia. I have no doubt it was Yulia," she told the BBC. "100 percent."

Asked what her reaction was, she said, "You heard it in the recording. I couldn't believe my ears."

Moscow has steadfastly hammered away at Britain's account of what befell the Skripals on March 4, especially the claim that their exposure to a Novichok nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union meant the attack was carried out by Russia.

During the Security Council meeting, Nebenzia questioned the British government's claims of Russian responsibility by posing a series of questions.

He asked why the British policeman was affected by the nerve agent immediately when it took four hours for Skripal and his daughter to be affected. He asked what antidotes for exposure to Novichok the Skripals were given, where the Skripals were for four hours without cellphones on the day of the attack, and what happened to two cats and two guinea pigs in the Skripals' house.

Russia has said it never produced Novichok and completed the destruction of its chemical arsenals under international control last year. Nebenzia insisted that Britain is required to allow Russia to cooperate in the investigation.

"Great Britain refuses to cooperate with us on the pretext that the victim does not cooperate with the criminal," he said. "A crime was committed on British territory, possibly a terrorist act, and it is our citizens who are the victims."

He said both Skripal and Yulia are Russian citizens, and Moscow must be granted access to them.

Pierce said the U.K. has left it to Yulia to decide whether to give Russia consular access to her.

The British government says it relied on a combination of scientific analysis and other intelligence to conclude that the nerve agent came from Russia. But the Foreign Office on Wednesday deleted a tweet from last month that said scientists at Britain's defense research facility, the Porton Down laboratory, had identified the substance as "made in Russia."

Lederer reported from the United Nations. Associated Press writers Vladimir Isachenkov, Jim Heintz and Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow also contributed. Kirka reported from London.

Jobs report for March: Another blowout month for hiring?

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Did March provide another month of blowout hiring? Was pay growth healthy?

When the government issues its monthly jobs report Friday, those two questions will be the most closely watched barometers.

Economists have forecast that employers added a solid 185,000 jobs in March and that the unemployment rate dipped from 4.1 percent to a fresh 17-year low of 4 percent, according to data provider FactSet.

The government will issue the jobs report at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time.

In February, employers added a blockbuster 313,000 jobs, the largest monthly gain in 18 months. Over the past six months, the average monthly gain has been 205,000, up from an average of 176,000 in the previous six months. Hiring at that pace could help nudge the unemployment rate below 4 percent in the coming months.

The surging pace of hiring has defied expectations that the low unemployment rate meant employers

would struggle to fill positions, which, in turn, would restrain job growth. Job gains had slowed for most of 2017. But hiring accelerated starting in October, an unusual boost for an economy already in its ninth year of recovery.

In fact, the recovery from the 2008-2009 Great Recession has become the second-longest expansion since the 1850s, when economists began tracking recessions and recoveries. Still, the expansion has been puzzlingly slow, with economic growth averaging just 2.2 percent a year — about a percentage point below the historical average. But its durability has been broadly beneficial.

For example, a rising number of working-age Americans have begun looking for a job and finding one, reversing a trend from the first few years after the recession when many of the unemployed grew discouraged and stopped looking for work.

The proportion of adults in their prime working years — defined as ages 25 to 54 — who are either working or looking for work jumped to 82.2 percent in February, up one-half a percentage point from a year earlier. That's still below the pre-recession level, which suggests that steady economic growth could continue to pull more job-seekers off the sidelines.

An increasing need to compete for workers may also finally be lifting wages in some sectors. Average hourly earnings rose 2.9 percent in January compared with 12 months earlier, the sharpest such increase in eight years. That unexpected surge triggered a plunge in financial markets, with investors fearing that accelerating wage growth might lead the Federal Reserve to step up its pace of interest rate hikes to control inflation.

But pay growth slipped in February to a year-over-year pace of 2.6 percent, suggesting that employers are still avoiding giving broad pay raises to their workers. The influx of new workers, which gives employers more hiring options than a 4.1 percent unemployment rate might otherwise suggest, may also be holding back wage growth.

Though the economy likely slowed in the first three months of this year, the healthy pace of hiring indicates that employers anticipate solid customer demand for the rest of the year. Macroeconomic Advisers, a consulting firm, forecasts that the economy grew at just a 1.4 percent annual rate in the January-March quarter — less than half the 2.9 percent annual pace of the October-December quarter.

But the firm expects growth to rebound to a decent 3.1 percent annual pace in the current April-June quarter.

Other reports indicate that growing optimism among businesses and consumers should help propel the economy in the months ahead.

Businesses have stepped up their spending on manufactured goods, helping lift factory output.

And last month, factories expanded at a healthy pace after having grown in February at the fastest rate since 2004, according to a private survey. Government data showed that orders for long-lasting factory goods — including industrial machinery, metals and autos — surged in February.

Americans have spent less at retail chains in the past two months, after shopping at a healthy pace during the winter holiday season. With consumer confidence near the highest point in two decades, however, consumer spending is likely to rebound in the coming months.

Teenagers in love found slain at bottom of old mine shaft

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — They were teenagers in love, bonding after overcoming personal struggles and dreaming of a family and future together. When they vanished days after Christmas, friends and family combed Utah's west desert for months in search of answers.

What police eventually discovered was more unspeakable than anyone had imagined: The teens' bound and stabbed bodies were 100 feet (31 meters) down an abandoned mine shaft.

"We had every scenario run through our heads, but for the events that truly took place, words can't even describe it," said Amanda Hunt, after learning the fates of her 17-year-old niece, Brelynne "Breezy" Otteson, and 18-year-old Riley Powell.

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A man enraged that his girlfriend had welcomed her friends into their home bound, beat and stabbed Powell to death as Otteson watched in horror before he cut her throat, prosecutors said this week.

"It's as bad as anything I've ever seen," said Utah County Sheriff's Sgt. Spencer Cannon. "They just seem like decent kids ... they never did anything to deserve this."

Otteson, an outspoken teenager with side-swept hair and bright hazel eyes, had been wrestling for years with her mother's death in a car crash. But she found something special in Powell, her aunt said. Over Thanksgiving the teen was telling her family she might be pregnant.

"She struggled with that affection, she struggled with feeling that people loved her, and the same with Riley," Hunt said. "I think they both wanted to be loved."

Powell had his own challenges. He'd been sent to a boys' home after bringing a gun to his high school, though Hunt said he only intended to take it rabbit hunting. He changed schools, graduated and found work as a plumber.

The couple was living with Powell's father in Eureka, a former silver mining town with a wind-swept main street surrounded by sandy-colored hills pockmarked with hundreds of abandoned mine shafts about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Salt Lake City.

Sturdily built with glasses and a goatee, Powell often played basketball or went riding off-road growing up. At one point, Hunt said he'd briefly dated a woman named Morgan Henderson.

The two remained friends, and made plans to meet at her house and smoke marijuana at around midnight on Dec. 30, police say, after Powell and Otteson wrapped up Christmas celebrations with her family.

Investigators pieced together a scenario of what happened next, according to court documents and statements Henderson gave to authorities:

The couple met Henderson, 34, at a home she was sharing with a 41-year-old boyfriend named Jarrod Baum near Eureka. He'd been in and out of jail since robbing a Burger King at age 15, said Cannon, who booked him into jail back then.

He had warned Henderson against having male friends over, and when he arrived home and found the teenagers there he exploded, she said. He tied them up, duct-taped their mouths and threw them in the back of Powell's Jeep. He told Henderson to get in.

They drove a few miles outside town and stopped in front of a mine shaft wide enough to swallow a car and nearly 2,000 feet (609 meters) deep.

Baum pulled the teenagers out of the Jeep and led them to the abandoned mine, at one point congratulating them on her pregnancy. While Otteson had hoped have a baby, investigators later found she wasn't pregnant. It's not clear why Baum mentioned it.

He made her kneel and watch as he beat and stabbed Riley Powell to death, police said, before Baum sliced her throat and tossed her down the mine after him.

The bodies stayed there for months as family and friends combed the desert, descending into several of the abandoned mines around Eureka. Searchers even stood over the pit known as the Tintic Standard Mine No. 2, but didn't go down because it was too deep for their team, Hunt said.

Henderson, meanwhile, told police she hadn't seen the couple. A break came March 25, when Henderson was pulled over with weapons in her car and arrested. She eventually told police the story of what happened and led them to the bodies.

Baum is facing aggravated murder, kidnapping and other charges that could bring the death penalty, while Henderson is charged with obstruction of justice. No attorneys were available to comment for Baum or Henderson, and there were no working publicly listed phone numbers for them.

At a hearing Tuesday, Baum turned and locked eyes with the teens' heartbroken families.

"He just looked empty," Hunt said. "Soulless."

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McIlroy off to solid start at Masters, keeps Slam in sight

By MARK LONG, AP Sports Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Rory McIlroy wanted to get off to a solid start at the Masters, his latest shot at a career Grand Slam.

Saving par on the final three holes in the opening round Thursday helped him keep it in sight.

McIlroy shot a 3-under 69, breaking 70 in the first round at Augusta National for the first time since 2011. He shot a 65 that year and looked like he would win a green jacket before a final-round meltdown.

McIlroy heads into the second round Friday three shots behind Jordan Spieth, who made five consecutive birdies on the back nine to build a two-stroke lead over Tony Finau and Matt Kuchar.

"You look at it and not anyone is really getting away," McIlroy said. "Jordan had a pretty strong finish there. But this is my best start in a few years. And, yeah, it's such a hard golf course to play catch-up on. If you start to chase it around here, that's when you start to make mistakes.

"But to be right up there and have the ability to stay patient because of the position I'm in, that's a nice luxury I have over the next few days."

He can thank a few timely shots down the stretch.

McIlroy sank an 8-footer for par at No. 16, holed a sweeping, downhill, 13-footer for par on the next green and then chipped to a couple feet to save another par on 18.

"It's not always the birdies that stick out in your mind," McIlroy said, calling those shots the highlights of his round. "Those three holes. Big for momentum. I don't feel like I'm going out trying to get those two shots or whatever back (Friday) morning. I can just be relaxed going on to the first tee, not being too concerned about trying to get those birdies back. So, yeah, they were huge."

The first time McIlroy had a chance for the Grand Slam at the Masters, he opened 71-71 and found himself 12 shots back because Spieth ran away with it.

"Obviously it was very benign for us coming in the last few holes," McIlroy said. "I'm not surprised about (Spieth) at all. He loves this golf course. He plays well around here. He always has. And he's going to be tough to beat this week."

Some other things to know heading into the second round of golf's first major:

TIGER TALES: Tiger Woods' first Masters appearance since 2015 was a bit of a letdown — he shot a 73, leaving him seven shots off the lead — but the four-time Augusta champion insisted that he's still in the game.

Woods was encouraged by two birdies coming down the stretch.

"I could have easily let the round slip away from me, but I got it back," he said. "And I'm right back in this tournament."

Well, not exactly.

Only two players have come back from seven shots behind after the opening round to capture the green jacket. But one of them is Woods, who rallied from that daunting deficit to beat Chris DiMarco in a playoff for his last Masters title in 2005.

"I fought hard to get back in there, and I'm back in this championship," Woods insisted. "There's a lot of holes to be played."

TOUGH TONY: Tony Finau may not win the green jacket, but there's no doubt he deserves some sort of award for being the toughest guy on the course.

One day after dislocating his left ankle while celebrating a hole-in-one during the Par 3 Contest — he literally popped it back into place right in the middle of the course — Finau was only two shots off the lead after shooting a 68 in his Masters debut.

"I look at myself as a mentally tough person, and I think I showed that today in my round, just able to put my head down and just play," he said.

Now, it will be interesting to see how the ankle reacts after walking 18 holes in a round that took more than five hours to complete.

"Hopefully I can get some better rest tonight and elevate, ice, have fluid and hopefully feel better,"

Finau said.

SERGIO'S DEBACLE: For the second straight year, it looks like the defending champion will have nothing to do this weekend except hand out the green jacket to someone else.

Sergio Garcia's hopes of a second straight title went up in smoke — really more like down the slope — at the 15th hole.

The Spaniard had five shots roll into the water at the par-3 hole, leading to a 13 that matched the highest score in Masters history. He finished with an 81, which was the worst score ever for a defending champ at Augusta National.

"I felt like the ball was going to stop," Garcia said. "Unfortunately, for whatever reason, it didn't want to."

BIG NAMES: Phil Mickelson lamented a "terrible putt" on No. 18 that could have salvaged a better opening round. Lefty finished 2 under, the best score among a host of big names and pre-Masters favorites chasing Spieth.

World No. 1 Dustin Johnson was 1 over, one shot better than Justin Thomas and two ahead of Jason Day. Rickie Fowler was 2 under, and Justin Rose was at even-par.

"I didn't capitalize on some putts that I've been making," Mickelson said. "But what I did do well is I plotted my way around the golf course. I got in a reasonable score."

<https://apnews.com/tag/TheMasters>

Guard's last border deployments offer clues to the future

By **ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press**

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The U.S. National Guard faces a vastly different environment than it did on its last two deployments to the border with Mexico, with far fewer illegal crossings and more Central Americans than Mexicans coming.

Still, its role is shaping up much the same: moving more Border Patrol agents from behind-the-scenes jobs to the front lines.

From 2006 to 2008, the Guard fixed vehicles, maintained roads, repaired fences and performed ground surveillance. Its second mission in 2010 and 2011 involved more aerial surveillance and intelligence work. People involved in both operations say the Guard was the Border Patrol's "eyes and ears."

Federal law, notably the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, limits military involvement in civilian law enforcement, creating a supporting role for the Guard. The Trump administration and governors haven't said precisely what an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 troops will do, but Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen anticipates vehicle maintenance and aerial surveillance will be in the mix.

Operation Jump Start, from May 2006 to July 2008, sent 6,000 troops to the border in its first year and 3,000 the second year and was framed as a way to buy time amid an unprecedented Border Patrol hiring spree and heavy political pressure for immediate action. The Border Patrol ballooned by thousands of agents during the operation to about 20,000, roughly where it is today.

About 40 percent of troops went to Arizona, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings at the time, followed in order by Texas, California and New Mexico. The Border Patrol made about 1.1 million arrests the year Jump Start began, nearly four times what it did last year.

The Guard was assigned to observation posts some distance from the border for safety reasons, using binoculars and other gear to spot people crossing. Richard Barlow, then a top Border Patrol official in San Diego, said their success as lookouts varied because they were unarmed and needed protection in more dangerous areas.

"They aren't allowed to have contact (with people arrested), so they're basically eyes," Barlow said.

Arrests had fallen by about half and hundreds of miles of border barriers were added by May 2010, when Operation Phalanx sent 1,200 troops to the border amid backlash to the killing of an Arizona rancher. Crossers were still largely Mexican men entering the country through Arizona deserts.

The Guard flew planes at high altitudes to identify people crossing, said Barlow, then the Border Patrol's

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top agent in Tucson, Arizona. It also responded by helicopter to agents who asked for help when closing in on a group.

A bigger focus on intelligence work involved mining for trends and collaborating with investigators from other agencies, Barlow said.

Since then, crossings have shifted to Central American women and children crossing in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, many who turn themselves in to authorities and seek asylum or other protection. Mexicans accounted for only about 4 of every 10 arrests last year, down from about 9 of 10 during the Guard's previous deployments.

A shared border means Mexicans can often be quickly turned around, but the Border Patrol holds Central Americans until another agency takes custody, typically within three days.

"The numbers are the numbers, but the type of numbers is what's critically important today," said David Aguilar, Border Patrol chief during the Guard's first deployment and deputy commissioner of parent agency Customs and Border Protection during the second.

Then-Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan testified in 2016 that he never imagined his job would entail procuring baby powder and baby wipes. Agents' tasks include making sure burritos are served at the right temperature.

"It takes a tremendous amount of resources to do this," Morgan said.

Aguilar, who retired in 2013, said he expected the Guard to take on surveillance work again — this time by air, ground and water. It's unclear if federal law allows troops to run detention facilities, but Aguilar doesn't see that happening.

"Is (the Department of Defense) and National Guard equipped to do that, trained to do that?" he said. "Just like the Border Patrol, the answer is no, nor should they be encumbered with those responsibilities. That's not what our military does."

Brazil braces for looming arrest of ex-President 'Lula'

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and PETER PRENGAMAN, Associated Press

SAO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, Brazil (AP) — Latin America's largest nation prepared for what would have been unimaginable just a few years ago: the arrest of former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a once wildly popular leader whose administrations were credited with bringing millions out of poverty in one of the world's most unequal countries.

Federal judge Sergio Moro, seen by many in Brazil as a crusader against graft, gave da Silva until 5 p.m. local time Friday to turn himself in and begin serving a sentence of 12 years and one month for a corruption conviction.

Moro's warrant Thursday evening came after Brazil's top court, the Supreme Federal Tribunal, voted 6-5 to deny a request by the former president to stay out of prison while he appealed a conviction that he contends was simply a way to keep him off the ballot in October's election. He is the front-running presidential candidate despite his conviction.

In a statement, Moro said he was giving da Silva the opportunity to come in of his own accord because he had been Brazil's president.

Last year, Moro convicted da Silva of trading favors with a construction company in exchange for the promise of a beachfront apartment. That conviction was upheld by an appeals court in January.

The speed with which Moro issued the warrant surprised many, as legal observers said there were technicalities from da Silva's upheld appeal that would not be sorted out until next week.

Such technicalities "were simply a pathology that should be eliminated from the judicial world," Moro said in his statement.

Late Thursday, thousands gathered outside a metallurgical union in Sao Bernardo do Campo, a Sao Paulo suburb where the ex-president universally known as "Lula" got his start as a union organizer. While da Silva was present, he did not speak.

"Why are they in a rush to arrest him?" said former President Dilma Rousseff, who succeeded da Silva

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and in 2016 was impeached and removed from office. "They fear that Lula would get a favorable decision in (a higher) court. That is part of the coup that removed me from the presidency."

It's unclear whether da Silva will present himself in the city of Curitiba, as Moro has ordered, or perhaps instead force police to come and get him.

"I don't see why he should turn himself in just because judge Moro had an anxiety crisis," said Sen. Lindbergh Farias. "I think they should have to go through the embarrassment of coming here and taking him in front of all these people."

"That footage will be seen around the world and it will be historic," he added.

However it happens, the jailing of da Silva will mark a colossal fall from grace for the man who became a world celebrity and left office with approval ratings over 80 percent.

Former U.S. President Barack Obama once called da Silva the "most popular politician on Earth."

Since leaving office, things have steadily gotten worse for da Silva, who has been charged in several corruption cases. He has always maintained his innocence while continuing to campaign across the country the past year. Despite his legal troubles, he leads preference polls to return to office — if by some chance he is allowed to run.

Like so much in a nation that has become deeply polarized, that da Silva would soon be behind bars was being interpreted differently by supporters and detractors.

"Brazil scored a goal against impunity and corruption," said Congressman Jair Bolsonaro, a right-leaning former army captain who is second in the polls after da Silva.

"When the present becomes history, it will be clear how much persecution the president face," said Daniel Libanori, a computer programmer and da Silva supporter.

In a sign of possible friction on the horizon, within minutes after Moro's arrest warrant, a fight broke out in front of the Lula Institute in Sao Paulo between hecklers and supporters of da Silva. One heckler was punched in the face and subsequently got hit by a passing vehicle as he was falling. He was taken to nearby hospital and police arrived.

Earlier Thursday, the head of the Workers' Party insisted that da Silva, 72, would be the party's candidate in October. His lawyers put out several statements saying they were filing injunctions in hopes of keeping him out of jail.

Technically, beginning to serve his sentence would not keep da Silva off the ballot. In August, the country's top electoral court makes final decisions about candidacies. It was expected to deny da Silva's candidacy under Brazil's "clean slate" law, which disqualifies people who have had criminal convictions upheld. However, da Silva could appeal such a decision, though doing so from jail would be more complicated.

Da Silva is the latest of many high-profile people to be ensnared in possibly the largest corruption scandal in Latin American history. Over the last four years, Brazilians have experienced near weekly police operations and arrests of the elite, from top politicians to businessmen like former Odebrecht CEO Marcelo Odebrecht.

Investigators uncovered a major scheme in which construction companies essentially formed a cartel that doled out inflated contracts from state oil company Petrobras, paying billions in kickbacks to politicians and businessmen.

While Moro, who oversees many cases in the so-called "Operation Car Wash," is hailed as a hero by many, others see him as a partisan hit man out to get da Silva and the Workers' Party.

Still, the list of investigation targets include people across the spectrum, including President Michel Temer.

Da Silva was convicted in July of helping a construction company get sweetheart contracts in exchange for the promise of the apartment. He denies any wrongdoing in that case or in several other corruption cases that have yet to be tried. An appeals court upheld the conviction in January and even lengthened the sentence to 12 years and one month.

Workers' Party leaders promised demonstrations, including vigils that would be organized nationwide beginning Friday. Whether the party, weakened after the impeachment and scandals, can mobilize major demonstrations remains to be seen.

Peter Prengaman reported from Rio de Janeiro.

Mauricio Savarese on Twitter: twitter.com/MSavarese

Peter Prengaman on Twitter: twitter.com/peterprengaman

AP: Women file to run for US House seats in record numbers

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and MAUREEN LINKE, Associated Press

CHERRY HILL, N.J. (AP) — The number of women running for the U.S. House of Representatives set a record Thursday, most of them Democrats motivated by angst over President Donald Trump and policies of the Republican-controlled Congress.

Their ranks will continue to swell, with candidate filing periods remaining open in more than half the states. In many places, women are running for congressional seats that have never had female representation. "It's about time," said Kara Eastman of Nebraska, one of two Democrats trying to win a primary and the right to challenge a GOP incumbent in a district centered in Omaha.

A surge of women into this year's midterm elections had been expected since the Women's March demonstrations nationwide just after Trump's inauguration in January 2017. Numbers analyzed by The Associated Press show that momentum is continuing.

After Virginia released its candidate list Thursday, a total of 309 women from the two major parties have filed candidacy papers to run for the House. That tops the previous record of 298 in 2012.

The AP analyzed data going back to 1992 from the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University and did its own review of candidate information released by the states.

While just over half the nation's population is female, four out of every five members of the U.S. House are men. The women's candidacies won't necessarily change that. They still have to survive party primaries and win the general election, often against an incumbent with name recognition and a large reservoir of campaign cash.

Even with the record numbers, women are still outnumbered by male candidates. But experts say the sheer number of women running combined with so many House seats open due to retirements or resignations provides one of the best opportunities for women to make real gains in terms of representation and a change in priorities.

Many of the female candidates have focused their campaign messages on health care, education, early childhood development, family leave and workplace equality.

Eastman said she was motivated by Republican attempts to cut health coverage for low-income people and rollbacks of environmental protections.

She decided to run after her mother, who has since died, was diagnosed with cancer for the fifth time and saw her prescription drug prices soar even though she was covered by Medicare.

"It's a great thing for me to show my 16-year-old daughter," Eastman, who runs a children's health care nonprofit, said of her candidacy.

Mikie Sherrill spent years in the Navy flying helicopters before leaving the military for a career as a federal prosecutor. For her first foray into politics, she chose this year to challenge Republican Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, a powerful lawmaker who serves as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and was first elected in 1994.

Frelinghuysen has since announced his retirement, creating a bigger opening for Sherrill.

"After a lifetime of service and taking numerous oaths to support and defend the Constitution, when I saw that our democracy seemed to be under attack, I felt called upon to serve again and felt a responsibility to serve my country again," Sherrill said.

She is a leading contender in the Democratic primary and could be part of a wave of women running in Republican-leaning districts. In Indiana, for example, women are running in each of the state's nine congressional districts — only two of which are currently represented by Democrats.

Not all the women running are Democrats.

Tiffany Shedd, one of four Republicans in a primary for the chance to unseat Democratic Rep. Tom

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O'Halleran in a rural Arizona district, said she entered the race after she told her husband the district needed someone better. He responded that he knew an ideal candidate — a "coward" who wouldn't run. When she realized he meant her, she took up the challenge.

Shedd said she's glad to see so many women running, even if most of them are on the other side of the aisle.

"I hope that we eventually live in a world where there's no articles written about that because it's no longer a thing," she said.

A previous surge of women running for Congress came in 1992, in the wake of Anita Hill's testimony alleging sexual harassment by Clarence Thomas, who was then a nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Senate committee weighing his nomination was all-male. That year was labeled the "Year of the Woman" because women were elected to the U.S. House and Senate in record numbers.

In recent years, the number of women in Congress has held steady in large part because the number of women running hasn't increased substantially from year to year. Currently, there are 83 women in the U.S. House, out of 435 seats.

Campaigns for the House aren't the only ones drawing high interest from female candidates this year.

Forty women are running so far in governors' races, a total that already surpassed the previous record of 34 in 1994. And 29 women are on ballots for U.S. Senate races, a number that will grow as filing deadlines approach in more states. The record number of female Senate candidates is 40, set in 2016.

Linke is an Associated Press visual journalist who reported from Washington, D.C. Associated Press writer Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Follow the reporters on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill> , <https://twitter.com/maureenlinke> and https://twitter.com/AP_Christina

Facebook: Most users may have had public data 'scraped'

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook's acknowledgement that most of its 2.2 billion members have probably had their personal data scraped by "malicious actors" is the latest example of the social network's failure to protect its users' data.

Not to mention its apparent inability to even identify the problem until the company was already embroiled in scandal.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg told reporters Wednesday that Facebook is shutting down a feature that let people search for Facebook users by phone number or email address. Although that was useful for people who wanted to find others on Facebook, it turns out that unscrupulous types also figured out years ago that they could use it to identify individuals and collect data off their profiles.

The scrapers were at it long enough, Zuckerberg said, that "at some point during the last several years, someone has probably accessed your public information in this way."

The only way to be safe would have been for users to deliberately turn off that search feature several years ago. Facebook had it turned on by default.

"I think Facebook has not been clear enough with how to use its privacy settings," said Jamie Winterton, director of strategy for Arizona State University's Global Security Initiative. "That, to me, was the failure."

The breach was a stunning admission for a company already reeling from allegations that the political data-mining firm Cambridge Analytica inappropriately accessed data on as many as 87 million Facebook users to influence elections.

Over the past few weeks, the scandal has mushroomed into investigations across continents, including a probe by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. Zuckerberg himself will be questioned by Congress for the first time on Tuesday.

"The FTC looked the other way for years when consumer groups told them Facebook was violating its

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2011 deal to better protect its users. But now the Cambridge Analytica scandal has awoken the FTC from its long digital privacy slumber," said Jeffrey Chester, executive director for the Washington-based privacy nonprofit Center for Digital Democracy.

Neither Zuckerberg nor his company has identified those who carried out the data scraping. Outside experts believe they could have been identity thieves, scam artists or shady data brokers assembling marketing profiles.

Zuckerberg said the company detected the problem in a data-privacy audit started after the Cambridge Analytica disclosures, but didn't say why the company hadn't noticed it — or fixed it — earlier.

Facebook did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday on when it discovered the data scraping.

In his call with reporters Wednesday, Zuckerberg said the company had tried "rate limiting" the searches. This restricted how many searches someone can conduct at one time from a particular IP address, a numeric designation that identifies a device's location on the internet. But Zuckerberg said the scrapers circumvented that defense by cycling through multiple IP addresses.

The scraped information was limited to what a user had already chosen to make public — which, depending on a person's privacy settings, could be a lot — as well as what Facebook requires people to share. That includes full name, profile picture and listings of school or workplace networks.

But hackers and scam artists could then use that information — and combine it with other data in circulation — to pull hoaxes on people, plant malware on their computers or commit other mischief.

Having access to such a massive amount of data could also pose national security risks, Winterton said.

A foreign entity could conceivably use such information to influence elections or stir up discord — exactly what Russia is alleged to have done, using Facebook and other social media, in the 2016 presidential elections.

Privacy advocates have long been critical of Facebook's penchant for pushing people to share more and more information, often through pro-sharing default options.

While the company offers detailed privacy controls — users can turn off ad targeting, for example, or face recognition, and post updates that no one else sees — many people never change their settings, and often don't even know how to.

The company has tried to simplify its settings multiple times over the years, most recently this week.

Winterton said that for individual Facebook users, worrying about this data scraping won't do much good — after all, the data is already out there. But she said it might be a good time to "reflect on what we are sharing and how we are sharing it and whether we need to."

"Just because someone asks us information, it doesn't mean we have to give it to them if we are not comfortable," she said.

She added that while she no longer has a Facebook account, when she did she put her birth year as 1912 and her hometown as Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Neither is true.

AP Technology Writer Anick Jesdanun contributed to this story.

Trump proposes \$100 billion in new tariffs on Chinese goods

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump instructed the U.S. trade representative to consider slapping an additional \$100 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods on Thursday in a dramatic escalation of the trade dispute between the two countries.

Trump's surprise move came a day after Beijing announced plans to tax \$50 billion in American products, including soybeans and small aircraft, in response to a U.S. move this week to slap tariffs on \$50 billion in Chinese imports.

And it intensified what was already shaping up to be the biggest trade battle since World War II. Global

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financial markets had fallen sharply as the world's two biggest economies squared off over Beijing's aggressive trade tactics. But they had calmed down Wednesday and Thursday on hopes the U.S. and China would find a diplomatic solution.

Instead, the White House announced after the markets closed Thursday that Trump had instructed the Office of the United States Trade Representative to consider whether \$100 billion of additional tariffs would be appropriate and, if so, to identify which products they should apply to. He's also instructed his secretary of agriculture "to implement a plan to protect our farmers and agricultural interests."

"China's illicit trade practices — ignored for years by Washington — have destroyed thousands of American factories and millions of American jobs," Trump said in a statement announcing the decision.

The latest escalation comes after the U.S. on Tuesday said it would impose 25 percent duties on \$50 billion of imports from China, and China quickly retaliated by listing \$50 billion of products that it could hit with its own 25 percent tariffs. The Chinese list Wednesday included soybeans, the biggest U.S. export to China, and aircraft up to 45 tons (41 metric tons) in weight. Also on the list were American beef, whiskey, passenger vehicles and industrial chemicals.

Earlier in the week, Beijing announced separate import duties on \$3 billion of U.S. goods in response to the Trump administration's duties on all steel and aluminum imports, including from China.

U.S. officials have sought to downplay the threat of a broader trade dispute, saying a negotiated outcome is still possible. But economists warn that the tit-for-tat moves bear the hallmarks of a classic trade rift that could escalate. And already, tensions between the world's two biggest economies have rattled global stock markets.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer called China's move "unjustified" and said Trump's proposal was an "appropriate response to China's recent threat of new tariffs."

"Such measures would undoubtedly cause further harm to American workers, farmers, and businesses," he said in a statement. "Under these circumstances, the President is right to ask for additional appropriate action to obtain the elimination of the unfair acts, policies, and practices identified in USTR's report."

The clash reflects the tension between Trump's promises to narrow a U.S. trade deficit with China that stood at \$375.2 billion in goods last year and China's ruling Communist Party's development ambitions. Trump says China's trade practices have caused American factories to close and lead to the loss of American jobs.

Trump's top economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, said earlier Thursday in an interview with Fox Business Network that negotiations were ongoing. But, he said, "at the end of the day, China's unfair and illegal trading actions are damaging to economic growth, for the U.S., for China and for the rest of the world."

He also called Trump "the first guy with a backbone in decades ... to actually go after it. Not just whisper it, but to go after it with at least preliminary actions."

One trade policy expert said he doubted that Trump's rhetoric would help forge any deal with China.

"Mr. Trump is upping the ante, but the lack of a clear game plan and an incoherent messaging strategy from the administration is setting this up for an all-out trade war rather than a fruitful negotiation," said Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University.

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., a frequent Trump critic, called the escalation "the dumbest possible way" to punish China.

"Hopefully the President is just blowing off steam again but, if he's even half-serious, this is nuts," Sasse said in a statement. "Let's absolutely take on Chinese bad behavior, but with a plan that punishes them instead of us."

Any additional tariffs would be subject to a public comment process and would not go into effect until that process is complete.

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

Poisoned daughter better as UK-Russia dispute at UN worsens

By **DANICA KIRKA** and **EDITH M. LEDERER**, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The daughter of a former Russian spy poisoned by a nerve agent said Thursday in her first public comment that she's recovering even as the international furor over the attack intensified, with Russia warning Britain it is "playing with fire."

At the United Nations, Russia claimed that intelligence services of other countries were probably behind the attack. But Britain's U.N. Ambassador Karen Pierce shot back that Russia has come up with 24 theories on who bears responsibility for the poisoning, but the United Kingdom has only one — that it's highly likely Russia was responsible.

Yulia Skripal, 33, said in a statement released by British police that her "strength is growing daily" and she expressed gratitude to those who came to her aid when she and her father, Sergei, were found unconscious on a bench a month ago.

"I am sure you appreciate that the entire episode is somewhat disorientating, and I hope that you'll respect my privacy and that of my family during the period of my convalescence," she said.

The hospital in the English city of Salisbury confirmed that Yulia's health has improved, while her 66-year-old father, Sergei Skripal, remains in critical condition.

At the U.N., the confrontation between Russia and Britain and more than two dozen Western allies who have expelled over 150 Russian diplomats in a show of solidarity intensified.

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia claimed that Russia that was the victim of a hasty, sloppy and ill-intentioned defamation campaign by Britain and its allies.

Moscow assumes "with a high degree of probability" that the intelligence services of other countries are likely responsible for the incident, Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said.

"Since the British authorities dare to state that behind the incident in Salisbury is Russia's responsibility with a high degree of probability, well we also with a high degree of probability are assuming that the intelligence services of certain countries are behind the mega-provocation," he said.

Nebenzia said "everything confirms this is a coordinated, very well-planned campaign" intended "to discredit and even delegitimize Russia."

He refused to name the intelligence services that Russia suspects, but said their goal is to accuse Moscow of using "a horrible, inhumane weapon, of concealing the arsenal of this substance," of violating the Chemical Weapons Convention, and putting in question Russia's "role not only in finding a solution in Syria, but anywhere else."

He also warned: "We have told our British colleagues that you are playing with fire and you will be sorry."

Britain's Pierce said Russia's 24 theories for the attack include blaming it on terrorists and saying Britain wanted to distract from Brexit, its departure from the European Union.

After trading barbs about Sherlock Holmes, Nebenzia and Pierce resorted to nonsensical fantasy with the Russian ambassador reading a passage from Alice in Wonderland and the British ambassador responding with a witty passage from the book that says: "I believe in as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Adding to the intrigue was a recording aired Thursday by Russian state Rossiya TV of a purported phone call between Yulia Skripal and her cousin in Russia. In the call, Yulia Skripal allegedly said she and her father were both recovering and in normal health, and that her father's health was not irreparably damaged.

Rossiya TV said Skripal's niece, Viktoria, who lives in Moscow, gave it the purported recording, although the broadcaster said it could not verify its authenticity.

Moscow has steadfastly hammered away at Britain's account of what befell the Skripals on March 4, especially the claim that their exposure to a Novichok nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union meant the attack was carried out by Russia.

During the Security Council meeting, Nebenzia questioned the British government's claims of Russian responsibility by posing a series of questions.

He asked why the British policeman was affected by the nerve agent immediately when it took four

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hours for Skripal and his daughter to be affected. He asked what antidotes for exposure to Novichok the Skripals were given, where the Skripals were for four hours without cellphones on the day of the attack, and what happened to two cats and two guinea pigs in the Skripal's house.

Russia has said it never produced Novichok and completed the destruction of its chemical arsenals under international control last year. Nebenzia insisted that Britain is required to allow Russia to cooperate in the investigation.

"Great Britain refuses to cooperate with us on the pretext that the victim does not cooperate with the criminal," he said. "A crime was committed on British territory, possibly a terrorist act, and it is our citizens who are the victims."

He said both Skripal and Yulia are Russian citizens, and Moscow must be granted access to them.

Pierce said the U.K. has left it to Yulia to decide whether to give Russia consular access to her.

Moscow has sent home an equal number of envoys — more than 150 — in an all-out diplomatic war unseen even at the height of the Cold War.

As part of the diplomatic row, Russia last week ordered 60 U.S. diplomats to leave the country by Thursday in retaliation for Washington's expulsion of the same number of Russians.

Three buses believed to be carrying expelled American diplomats left the U.S. Embassy in Moscow early Thursday after loading their luggage on trucks. Some tooted pet carriers.

Ahead of the U.N. meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov described the British accusations against Moscow as a mockery of international law. He sarcastically likened the British accusations to the queen from Alice in Wonderland urging "sentence first — verdict afterward."

"The so-called Skripal case has been used as a fictitious, orchestrated pretext for the unfounded massive expulsions of Russian diplomats not only from the U.S. and Britain, but also from a number of other countries who simply had their arms twisted," Lavrov said in Moscow.

The British government says it relied on a combination of scientific analysis and other intelligence to conclude that the nerve agent came from Russia. But the Foreign Office on Wednesday deleted a tweet from last month that said scientists at Britain's defense research facility, the Porton Down laboratory, had identified the substance as "made in Russia."

President Vladimir Putin's envoy for cybersecurity, Alexander Krutskikh, mocked the contradictory statements, saying that "the latest developments around the Skripal case indicate the days of this British Cabinet are numbered."

Lederer reported from the United Nations. Associated Press writers Vladimir Isachenkov, Jim Heintz and Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow also contributed.

Police: Missing CDC worker drowned; no sign of foul play

By BEN NADLER, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — An employee for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention who was reported missing more than seven weeks ago was found drowned in a river not far from his house, with no sign of foul play, authorities said Thursday.

Timothy Cunningham's body was found Tuesday partially submerged in water and mud on the west bank of the Chattahoochee River in northwest Atlanta, fire-rescue department spokesman Sgt. Cortez Stafford said at a news conference. Stafford said rescue crews had to use boats and special equipment to reach Cunningham's body because it was in difficult terrain in a "remote area not easily accessible."

Fulton County Chief Medical Examiner Jan Gorniak determined the cause of death. "Since the investigation is ongoing, we do not have ... whether it was an accident, a suicide, or anything other than that" Cunningham drowned, Gorniak said.

Gorniak said the decomposing body was positively identified using dental records.

Fishermen first discovered Cunningham's body and called authorities, said Stafford, who noted the body was found in an area that authorities had searched in February without finding anything. The site where

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the body was found was not far from Cunningham's house, Maj. Michael O'Connor of the Atlanta Police Department's Major Crimes Section said. He did not elaborate.

Cunningham, 35, was an epidemiologist at the Atlanta-based federal agency. He disappeared Feb. 12. His family reported him missing on Feb. 16 after going to his home and finding his belongings and vehicle there.

Police previously had said they had no evidence of foul play but couldn't rule it out. The civilian group Crime Stoppers offered a reward of up to \$15,000 for information pointing to any criminal activity.

CDC officials said previously that reports Cunningham had been passed over for a promotion were incorrect. In a statement, the CDC said Cunningham received an "exceptional proficiency promotion" July 1 to the position of commander, an early promotion reflecting his excellence as an employee.

This story has been corrected to reflect that Cunningham's body was found more than seven weeks after he disappeared, not six, and that more than one fisherman found the body.

Arrest warrant issued for former Brazilian president 'Lula'

By PETER PRENGAMAN and MAURICIO SAVARESE, Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — A Brazilian judge issued an arrest warrant on Thursday for former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, dealing a major blow to the once wildly popular leader who was trying to mount a political comeback ahead of October's elections.

The warrant came several hours after the country's top body, the Supreme Federal Tribunal, voted 6-5 to deny a request by da Silva to stay out of prison while he appealed a corruption conviction that he contends was simply a way to keep him off the ballot.

Federal judge Sergio Moro gave Brazil's former president 24 hours to present himself to police in the southern city of Curitiba. In a statement, Moro said he was giving da Silva the opportunity to come in of his own accord because he had been president of the nation.

Last year, Moro convicted da Silva of trading favors with a construction company in exchange for the promise of a beachfront apartment. That conviction was upheld by an appeals court in January.

The speed with which Moro issued the warrant surprised many, as legal observers said there were technicalities from da Silva's upheld appeal that would not be sorted out until next week.

Such technicalities "were simply a pathology that should be eliminated from the judicial world," Moro said in his statement.

Minutes after Moro's issue the warrant, a fight broke out in front of the Lula Institute in Sao Paulo between hecklers and supporters of the former president universally known here as "Lula." One heckler was punched in the face and subsequently got hit by a passing vehicle as he was falling. He was taken to nearby hospital and police arrived.

"I've never seen this kind of hatred before," said Mariella Sanches, who was selling ice-cream where the fight broke out. "Why can't people get along?"

Da Silva's upcoming arrest will mark a colossal fall from grace for the man who led Latin America's most populous nation between 2003 and 2010, and left office with approval ratings over 80 percent.

Former U.S. President Barack Obama once called da Silva the "most popular politician on Earth."

Since leaving office, things have steadily gotten worse for da Silva, who has been charged in several corruption cases. He has always maintained his innocence while continuing to campaign across the country the past year.

Despite his legal troubles, he still leads preference polls to return to office — if by some chance he is allowed to run.

Earlier Thursday, the head of Brazil's Workers' Party warned that jailing da Silva would turn Latin America's largest nation into a "banana republic." His lawyers put out several statements saying they were filing injunctions in hopes of keeping him out of prison.

"We consider this to be a political imprisonment, an imprisonment that will expose Brazil before the

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world," said Gleisi Hoffmann, chairwoman of the Workers' Party. "We will become a banana republic."

Hoffmann also insisted that da Silva, 72, would be the party's candidate in October. The ex-president has not spoken since the ruling.

Like so much in a nation that has become deeply polarized, the reality that the once popular leader would be jailed was being interpreted differently by supporters and detractors.

"Brazil scored a goal against impunity and corruption," said Congressman Jair Bolsonaro, a right-leaning former army captain who is second in the polls after da Silva.

Mariana Setra, a da Silva supporter in Sao Paulo, called the top court's decision "ridiculous."

"It was applied to only one person," she said. "As if Lula were the only thief in this country."

Da Silva is the latest of many high-profile people to be ensnared in possibly the largest corruption scandal in Latin American history. Over the last four years, Brazilians have experienced near weekly police operations and arrests of elite, from top politicians to businessmen like former Odebrecht CEO Marcelo Odebrecht.

Investigators uncovered a major scheme in which construction companies essentially formed a cartel that doled out inflated contracts from state oil company Petrobras, paying billions in kickbacks to politicians and businessmen.

Moro, who oversees cases in the so-called "Operation Car Wash," is hailed as a hero by many Brazilians. Others, particularly on the left, see him as a partisan hit man out to get da Silva and the Workers' Party.

Still, the list of targets in the scandal include people across the spectrum, including President Michel Temer. Temer took power in 2016 after da Silva's successor and protege, Dilma Rousseff, was impeached and ousted from office.

Last year, Temer was twice charged with corruption but remained in office because in both cases Congress, which must vote on criminal cases involving a sitting president, decided to spare him prosecution. Many members of Congress have been charged with corruption or are being investigated.

Da Silva was convicted in July of helping a construction company get sweetheart contracts in exchange for the promise of the apartment. He denies any wrongdoing in that case or in several other corruption cases that have yet to be tried. An appeals court upheld the conviction in January, and the three reviewing magistrates even lengthened the sentence to 12 years and one month.

Technically, the Supreme Federal Tribunal's decision doesn't keep da Silva off the ballot. In August, the country's top electoral court makes final decisions about candidacies. It was expected to deny da Silva's candidacy under Brazil's "clean slate" law, which disqualifies people who have had criminal convictions upheld. However, da Silva could appeal such a decision, though doing so from jail would be more complicated.

Sen. Lindbergh Farias from the Workers' Party said vigils would be organized nationwide beginning on Friday.

"People want to be close to President Lula after this injustice," he said.

Whether the Workers' Party will be able to mobilize major demonstrations remains to be seen. During the impeachment trials against Rousseff in 2016, many demonstrations were small despite calls by major unions to take to the streets.

Peter Prengaman reported from Rio de Janeiro.

Peter Prengaman on Twitter: twitter.com/peterprengaman

Mauricio Savarese on Twitter: twitter.com/MSavarese

Trump says he didn't know about payment to Stormy Daniels

By CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday he didn't know about the \$130,000 payment his personal attorney made to Stormy Daniels, issuing a firm denial in his first public comments about the adult-film actress who alleges she had an affair with him.

Asked aboard Air Force One whether he knew about the payment, Trump said flatly: "No."

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Trump also said he didn't know why his longtime lawyer, Michael Cohen, had made the payment.

"You'll have to ask Michael Cohen. Michael is my attorney. You'll have to ask Michael," he said. He added that he didn't know where Cohen had gotten the money. Trump didn't answer a question about whether he set up a fund that Cohen could tap.

Until now, Trump had avoided questions on Daniels, though the White House has consistently said Trump denies there was a relationship. Still, he has been dogged by the focus on the porn actress, who says she had a sexual encounter with him in 2006 and was paid to keep quiet as part of a nondisclosure agreement she signed days before the 2016 presidential election. Daniels is now seeking to invalidate that agreement.

Her attorney, Michael Avenatti said in a statement: "Our case just got that much better. And we very much look forward to testing the truthfulness of Mr. Trump's feigned lack of knowledge concerning the \$130k payment as stated on Air Force One."

Avenatti, who has sought to have Trump give sworn testimony, added, "It is one thing to deceive the press and quite another to do so under oath."

He later argued on MSNBC that Trump's statement could create legal problems, saying: "If the president didn't know anything about the payment, then he obviously didn't know anything about the agreement, in which case you can't have an agreement. And then there is no such thing as an NDA."

Cohen didn't immediately respond to requests for comment Thursday.

Daniels, one of several women pursuing potentially damaging legal action against Trump, has kept up the highest profile in the media, helped by a punchy Twitter feed, a widely viewed interview on CBS' "60 Minutes" and a camera-ready attorney who has become a fixture on cable news.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, has offered to return the \$130,000 as she tries to "set the record straight." She's said she had sex with Trump once in 2006, and their relationship continued for about a year. Trump married his current wife, Melania, in 2005, and their son Barron was born in 2006.

On "60 Minutes," Daniels described a sexual encounter with Trump that began with her suggesting he should be spanked with a magazine that featured his picture on the cover and then giving him a "couple swats." She also said she was threatened to keep silent about the relationship while she was out with her young daughter.

Daniels argues the nondisclosure agreement is legally invalid because it was only signed by her and Cohen, not by Trump.

Cohen has said that he paid the \$130,000 out of his pocket and that neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Daniels and he was not reimbursed for the payment.

However, Avenatti told "60 Minutes" he has documents showing that Cohen used his Trump Organization email address in setting up the payment and that the nondisclosure agreement was sent by FedEx to Cohen at his Trump Organization office in Trump Tower.

Earlier this week, Trump asked a federal judge to order private arbitration in the case. Trump and Cohen filed papers in federal court in Los Angeles asking a judge to rule that the case must be heard by an arbitrator instead of a jury.

Avenatti said they would oppose private arbitration, arguing it should be heard by the American public.

Avenatti also wants Trump to give sworn testimony in the case, but a federal judge ruled this week that those efforts were premature. If ultimately successful, it would be the first deposition of a sitting president since Bill Clinton had to answer questions in 1998 about his conduct with women.

Trump faces a number of allegations about his sexual exploits long before he ran for president.

Former Playboy model Karen McDougal recently told CNN that she had an affair with Trump that started in 2006 and ended in 2007. She filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles seeking to invalidate a confidentiality agreement with American Media Inc., the company that owns the supermarket tabloid National Enquirer. It paid her \$150,000 during the 2016 presidential election.

Trump is also facing a New York defamation lawsuit filed by Summer Zervos, a former contestant on "The Apprentice." Zervos has accused Trump of unwanted sexual contact in 2007 and sued him after he

dismissed the claims as made up.

A judge ruled the lawsuit can move forward.

Spieth back in his comfort zone at Masters

By DOUG FERGUSON, AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Tiger Woods attracted most of the attention. Jordan Spieth caused the most concern.

Opening day at the Masters had a wide-open feel until Spieth hit his stride Thursday afternoon. He saved three straight pars with that superb short game. He ran off three straight birdies to take the lead. And then he fired an 8-iron at the pin on the par-3 16th, letting the club twirl through his hands as he walked away, knowing only that it was another good one. It plopped down 5 feet away.

"You don't know where it's going to end up," he said, "but you know it's going to be in a good position."

Spieth took only 10 putts on the back nine. He made five straight birdies, a career best for him in the majors. Even a bogey on the final hole felt like a par the way he navigated out of the trees and limited the damage with a pitch that stopped inches from going in.

That gave him a 6-under 66 and a two-shot lead over Tony Finau and Matt Kuchar.

It was the eighth time in his last 13 rounds at the Masters that Spieth ended a round with the lead. Given his short history at Augusta National — a victory, two runner-up finishes and a tie for 11th — his name atop the leaderboard gets attention.

Ditto for Woods, except that he has some catching up to do.

Woods failed to birdie any of the par 5s. He was under par one only one hole. He hit a 9-iron into Rae's Creek. And only a pair of birdies over the last five holes enabled him to scratch out a 73 and at least stay in range, seven shots behind.

"Seventy-three is fine," Woods said. "By the end of the week, this will be a pretty packed leaderboard the way the golf course is set up. They have it right where they want it. It's really hard to run away from it, but it's also really easy to lose it out there."

Spieth could have built a bigger margin except for his wild tee shot to the left and into the trees on No. 18. Even so, his 66 sent a strong message.

"Absolutely, absolutely," said Kuchar, who shot 31 on the back nine. "With the round he's posted, the quality of golfer he is, he's on some similar form. You can just kind of see good things happening, and particularly for him around here. His record is spectacular around here."

Rory McIlroy, needing only a green jacket to compete the career Grand Slam, also took notice. He played in the group ahead of Spieth, and McIlroy was scratching our key par saves just to stay in range. He was in the large group at 69, the solid start McIlroy needed, especially with how Spieth was going.

It was the first time since 2011 that McIlroy broke 70 in the first round at Augusta.

"Jordan had a pretty strong finish there," McIlroy said. "But this is my best start in a few years. It's such a hard golf course to play catch up on. If you start to chase it around here, that's when you start to make mistakes. But to be right up there and have the ability to stay patient, because of the position I'm in, that's a nice luxury I have over the next few days."

The best comeback? That might now belong to Finau.

On the eve of his first Masters, he made a hole-in-one on the seventh hole of the Par 3 Tournament, raced toward the green to celebrate and as he turned back toward the tee, his left ankle rolled. Finau went down, the ankle contorted, and he popped it into place. He wasn't sure he could play until tests showed he was cleared to play.

And he played great, opening with a 68 despite a short par putt that he missed on the 14th hole.

"I was just extremely happy that nothing was seriously wrong with my foot," he said. "Quite honestly, it was a pretty cool moment followed by probably one of my most embarrassing moments and a scary moment at the same time. It was quite crazy, all the emotions that I dealt with overnight, but I was more than ecstatic to just be walking to that first tee and be playing in my first Masters."

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It was just tough to score, with the greens slick and firm and several tough pin positions, mainly toward the front of the greens. That included the par-5 15th, and no one suffered quite like defending champion Sergio Garcia.

He hit his second shot into the water, and then had his next four shots with a wedge roll back into the water. He made a 10-foot putt — close to the same length of his eagle putt when he won last year — to make a 13, the highest score ever recorded on No. 15. He wound up with an 81, the highest score in the opening round by a defending Masters champion.

"It's the first time in my career where I make a 13 without missing a shot," Garcia said. "Simple as that."

Phil Mickelson and Rickie Fowler were among those at 70. So was Marc Leishman, who played in the group with Woods and Tommy Fleetwood and led most of the day until a chip from behind the 15th green came out too strong and didn't stop rolling until it was headed down the bank and into the water, leading to double bogey.

Woods, dressed all in black, felt as though he played better than he scored, and there was no sense of panic. He was tied for 29th. Only two players have started farther down the leaderboard after the first round and won the Masters — Woods in 2005 and Ian Woosnam in 1991.

In one sense, he was happy to be playing. Just under a year ago, he was going through a fourth back surgery.

"I played in a major championship again," he said. "But also the fact that I got myself back in this tournament, and I could have easily let it slip away. And I fought hard to get it back in there, and I'm back in this championship. There's a lot of holes to be played."

For more AP golf coverage: <https://apnews.com/tag/TheMasters>

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Bollywood star Salman Khan gets 5 years for poaching deer

By ASHOK SHARMA, Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Bollywood superstar Salman Khan was convicted Thursday of poaching rare deer in a wildlife preserve two decades ago and sentenced to five years in prison, with the judge describing him as a "habitual offender."

Khan, who was in court for the ruling in the western city of Jodhpur, was taken to a local prison after the verdict, though he is likely to be freed on bail in the next few days. Police said additional security had been ordered for his prison ward.

"He has filed an appeal and the appellate court will decide whether they will hear the appeal tomorrow or at another date," prosecutor Bhawani Singh Bhati told reporters.

The heavily muscled actor contended he did not shoot the two blackbuck deer in the western India preserve in 1998. He was acquitted in related cases.

Khan, 52, has starred in more than 90 Hindi-language films, but has also had a reputation as a Bollywood bad boy, known for his run-ins with the law — including a fatal car accident — and his troubled relationships with women.

His relation with actress Aishwarya Rai in the early 2000s reportedly included him beating his hands bloody as he pounded on her apartment door during an argument.

"If you won't fight, that means there is no love between you," he later said in an interview. "When we fight, it is all because of our love."

He starred with Rai in the 1999 hit "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam." Other hits included "Sultan," "Ek Tha Tiger," and last year's "Tiger Zinda Hai."

He spent a total of 18 days in prison in 1998, 2006 and 2007 in the poaching cases, but was freed on bail, the Press Trust of India news agency said. He had been sentenced to prison terms of between one and five years in related cases before being acquitted by appeals courts for lack of evidence.

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Bollywood quickly rallied to Khan's defense. "My heart goes out to" Khan, the actor Arjun Rampal said on Twitter. "I feel this is too harsh."

Four other stars also accused in the case — Saif Ali Khan, Sonali Bendre, Tabu and Neelam — were acquitted by Chief Judicial Magistrate Dev Kumar Khatri. They were in the jeep that Salman Khan was believed to be driving during the hunt. Tabu and Neelam both use just one name.

Khatri in his ruling called Khan a "habitual offender," the Economic Times newspaper said.

The blackbuck is an endangered species protected under the Indian Wildlife Act.

The Bishnoi, a religious sect whose beliefs include worshipping nature and wildlife, and who have long protected the blackbuck deer, expressed disappointment at the acquittal of the four actors.

Chogaram Bishnoi, a member of the community, told reporters that he had seen Khan stopping his jeep and shooting the two blackbucks in a village near Jodhpur in October 1998. Khan and the other actors were in the area at the time filming a movie.

Khan has faced other charges in the past. In 2014, the Mumbai High Court acquitted Khan in a drunken-driving, hit-and-run case, after he was accused of running over five men sleeping on a sidewalk in 2002, killing one of them.

The judges found that prosecutors had failed to prove charges of culpable homicide.

The government of Maharashtra state has challenged his acquittal in the Supreme Court.

Trump: 2,000-4,000 troops needed for Mexico border security

By ANITA SNOW and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday that he wants to send between 2,000 and 4,000 National Guard members to the U.S.-Mexico border to help federal officials fight illegal immigration and drug trafficking, but it wasn't clear who would be called up or if they would even be allowed to carry guns.

Trump's comments to reporters on Air Force One were his first estimate on guard levels he believes are needed for border protection. It is lower than the 6,400 National Guard members that former President George Bush sent to the border between 2006 and 2008.

Trump said his administration is looking into the cost of sending the troops to the border and added "we'll probably keep them or a large portion of them until the wall is built."

Earlier Thursday, Ronald Vitiello, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's acting deputy commissioner, cautioned against a rushed deployment.

"We are going to do it as quickly as we can do it safely," Vitiello told Fox News Channel.

He said that guard members would be placed in jobs that do not require law enforcement work, an apparent reference to undertaking patrols and making arrests.

The Republican governors of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas have backed the deployment but it was unclear Thursday how Democratic California Gov. Jerry Brown would respond to Trump's call.

Brown's office repeatedly referred requests for comment to the California National Guard, which said the state first must be informed where money for the deployment would come from, how long it would last and clearly define the operation's objectives.

In Washington, Marine Lt. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie told reporters at the Pentagon that it has not yet been determined how many, if any, of the troops in the border security operation will be armed.

Trump ordered the deployment because "we are at a crisis point" with illegal immigration, Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen of the Department of Homeland Security said.

"We'd like to stop it before the numbers get even bigger," she said.

Nielsen said guard members would provide support to border officials, "help look at the technology, the surveillance, in some cases we'll ask for some fleet mechanics" and free up agents trained in law enforcement for other duties.

Arrests along the U.S. border with Mexico jumped to 50,308 in March, a 37 percent increase from February, and more than triple the same period last year. Border arrests rose 10 of the last 11 months after falling in April 2017 to the lowest since the Department of Homeland Security was created in 2003.

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In Mexico, the country's politicians condemned Trump's deployment decision and Mexico's Senate passed a resolution Wednesday calling for the suspension of cooperation on illegal immigration and drug trafficking in retaliation.

In 1997, camouflage-clad U.S. Marines ordered to patrol the border for drugs in West Texas shot and killed 18-year-old Esequiel Hernandez Jr. while he was herding his family's goats near the tiny village of Redford, Texas, along the border.

That shooting sparked anger in the region and ended the President Bill Clinton-era military presence along the international line.

After Sept. 11, Bush sent unarmed National Guard units to the border to support federal agents.

The troops that Bush sent improved lighting at border crossings, extended existing fencing along the international boundary, built roads, monitored remote cameras, operated communications equipment and sat in mobile observation towers watching for people sneaking into the U.S.

Their presence was especially felt in Palomas, Mexico, a smuggling hub south of the village of Columbus, New Mexico, where the increased presence and equipment was credited with easing illegal northbound immigrant travel.

President Barack Obama in 2010 deployed National Guard troops to the border over fear of increasing drug-trafficking violence.

Those troops worked on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support, analysis and training, and support efforts to block drug trafficking.

They temporarily supplemented Border Patrol agents until Homeland Security could recruit and train additional officers and agents to work on the border. While some were armed for their own self-defense, they were not authorized to make arrests.

During the last two border deployments, the guard's supporting role was criticized by some people who thought they should be more involved in enforcement.

There are now more than 20,000 Border Patrol agents along the U.S.-Mexico boundary and Trump wants to add 5,000 more to the force's currently funded level of about 21,000.

Guard members sent to the border to help don't always come from border states. Some of the first sent under Bush's two-year deployment were from Utah.

Democratic Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon said she would not send troops if asked because she is "deeply troubled by Trump's plan to militarize our border." And Republican Vermont Gov. Phil Scott said he "would not be eager" to send troops because so many other states are closer to the border with Mexico.

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a Republican, said he would be willing to send National Guard members to the border "who are experienced and who have done that before.

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, a Democrat, said he would never deploy National Guard troops "based simply on the whim of the President's morning Twitter habit."

A fifth-generation Arizona rancher who is an outspoken supporter of Trump's border wall said he was "absolutely elated" by the president's National Guard deployment plans.

Jim Chilton's ranch in Arivaca, Arizona stretches 14 miles (23 kilometers) along the border, separated from Mexico by barbed wire cattle fence.

When Bush deployed troops "there was no traffic by drug packers and immigrants," he said. "The problem for the National Guard guys now is that they will die of boredom because the Sinaloa Cartel will know where they are and won't send their drug packers through."

Lucey reported from aboard Air Force One. Associated Press staff writers Nomaan Merchant in Houston, Bob Christie and Jacques Billeaud in Phoenix, Morgan Lee in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Russell Contreras in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Zeke Miller and Robert Burns in Washington and Elliott Spagat contributed to this report.

Muslims: Settlement will prevent illegal NYPD surveillance

By LARRY NEUMEISTER, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Police Department has agreed not to conduct surveillance based on religion or ethnicity and to listen to Muslims as it develops new training materials as part of a deal to settle claims it illegally spied on Muslims for years after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The agreement announced Thursday by the city and the Islamic community also calls for the city to pay \$75,000 in damages and nearly \$1 million in legal fees. It also ensures surveillance in New Jersey will follow rules defined in another landmark civil rights case.

"Today's settlement sends a message to all law enforcement: Simply being Muslim is not a basis for surveillance," said Farhana Khera, executive director of Muslim Advocates, a legal advocacy and educational organization.

"We won this case, make no mistake about it. But as a member of the armed forces, I believe the United States won as well," said Farhaj Hassan, a U.S. Army reservist and the lead plaintiff in the 2012 lawsuit in federal court in Newark, New Jersey.

"No one likes to take on the cops. Cops are good," he said. "But in this case, when cops were acting bad, it had to be done."

The lawsuit came after The Associated Press revealed in a series of Pulitzer Prize-winning articles how the NYPD infiltrated Muslim student groups and put informants in mosques as part of a broad effort to prevent terrorist attacks. In New Jersey, the department collected intelligence on ordinary people at mosques, restaurants and schools starting in 2002, the AP reported.

At a news conference, the plaintiffs noted that surveillance program never produced a terrorism lead as it spied on at least 20 mosques, 14 restaurants, 11 retail stores, two grade schools and two Muslim student associations in New Jersey.

The deal came after a Philadelphia appeals court in 2015 likened the surveillance program to when Japanese Americans were interned during World War II and discrimination before racial unrest in the 1950s and 1960s forced change.

Baher Azmy, legal director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, said the agreement protects an increasingly empowered Muslim community.

It bans the police department from conducting surveillance without suspicion on the basis of religion or ethnicity and calls for the Muslim litigants to provide input into a new policy guide to control the police department's Intelligence Bureau. It also requires NYPD counter-terrorism probes in New Jersey to follow the Handschu Guidelines, which resulted from a 1971 lawsuit by the Black Panther Party alleging police engaged in widespread surveillance of legitimate political activity.

It also requires the city to pay \$47,500 to businesses and mosques harmed by surveillance and \$25,000 to individual plaintiffs in \$5,000 increments. The city also will pay \$950,000 in legal fees for plaintiffs.

"This settlement demonstrates a continued commitment by the NYPD to safeguard individual constitutional rights while keeping New York the safest city in America," said Zachary W. Carter, the city's top lawyer.

Associated Press Writer Tom Hays contributed to this report.

Jury selection wraps up in Bill Cosby's sexual assault trial

By MICHAEL R. SISK, Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Prosecutors and the defense wrapped up jury selection in the Bill Cosby sexual assault case Thursday, setting the stage for the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era.

All six alternates — half of them black — were picked without incident after an earlier showdown over the jury's racial makeup. Alternate jurors listen to the evidence and testimony, but do not participate in jury deliberations unless called upon to replace jurors on the main panel.

Cosby's lawyers had accused prosecutors of discrimination for removing a black woman from consideration on the main jury of 12 that will decide the fate of the 80-year-old black comedian.

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The district attorney's office rejected the allegation, noting that prosecutors had no objection to seating two other black people on the jury. The other 10 jurors are white. There are seven men and five women. Opening statements are scheduled for Monday in a trial that's expected to last a month.

As he left the courthouse, Cosby thanked a woman who wished him good luck. His spokesman, Andrew Wyatt, urged jurors to remain "fair and impartial," adding, "We would want them to erase everything they heard outside this courtroom when they come in for Monday."

Prosecutors didn't comment on the case Thursday.

Cosby faces three felonies stemming from allegations by a former Temple University women's basketball administrator who says Cosby, a Temple alum and longtime trustee, gave her pills that made her woozy, then assaulted her at his home in the Philadelphia suburbs in 2004.

Cosby, once revered as "America's Dad" for his family sitcom "The Cosby Show," says the encounter was consensual.

The first alternate picked Thursday, a middle-aged black man, said he could set aside what he's heard about the Cosby case but hesitated and couldn't guarantee it when pressed by the judge. Prosecutors and Cosby's lawyers nevertheless found him acceptable.

A middle-aged white woman also picked as an alternate said she could put aside her thoughts that Cosby is guilty.

A Philadelphia judge, meanwhile, threw out a former prosecutor's defamation lawsuit against Cosby's accuser.

Judge Ann Butchart on Tuesday dismissed the lawsuit against Andrea Constand and two of her lawyers by Bruce Castor Jr. He claimed Constand and her lawyers harmed his reputation and cost him a chance to return as district attorney by criticizing him and suing him for defamation days before the 2015 election.

Castor was district attorney in 2005 when Constand first told police Cosby had drugged and molested her. Castor ended his investigation into Cosby after four weeks, announcing the comedian wouldn't be charged because the evidence showed both parties "could be held in less than a flattering light."

A new district attorney reopened the case in 2015 after Cosby's deposition in Constand's lawsuit was unsealed at the request of The Associated Press. Cosby gave the deposition in 2005 and 2006 as part of Constand's suit against him.

Castor's lawsuit said Cosby paid Constand "well into the millions of dollars" in a settlement.

Constand's federal defamation suit against Castor is still active.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission, which Constand has done.

Associated Press writer Mark Scolforo in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, contributed to this report.

Follow Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak

For more on the Cosby trial, go to apnews.com/tag/CosbyonTrial

Trump expresses confidence in EPA chief as questions linger

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House officials sounded increasingly doubtful Thursday about the future of embattled Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt, even as President Donald Trump appeared to throw him a public lifeline.

Speaking Thursday to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump used a series of superlatives to describe Pruitt.

"I think he's done a fantastic job," the president said. "I think he's done an incredible job. He's been very courageous. It hasn't been easy, but I think he's done a fantastic job. I think he'll be fine."

That was contrasted by more tepid remarks earlier from White House deputy press secretary Hogan

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Gidley.

"They say we all serve at the pleasure of the president," Gidley told reporters. "The president himself said he had confidence (in Pruitt), and so that's where we stand today."

Pruitt has been under fire for days amid numerous ethics questions, including his rental of a bargain-priced Capitol Hill condo with ties to a fossil fuels lobbyist. If Trump were to fire him, he would be the fourth agency head ousted in the Trump administration's first 15 months.

Trump has often lavished praise on Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general who has worked relentlessly to scrap, delay or rewrite Obama-era environmental regulations opposed by the oil, gas and coal industries.

But he also has publicly expressed support for other administration officials who were fired or resigned, right up until sending tweets announcing their departure.

A review of Pruitt's ethical conduct by White House officials is underway, adding to other probes already being conducted by congressional committees and EPA's inspector general into outsized spending on luxury air travel and unusual security precautions.

The ranking Democrat on the House oversight committee, Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, called Thursday for Pruitt to appear on Capitol Hill next week to provide sworn testimony. In a letter to the committee chairman, Trey Gowdy, a South Carolina Republican, Cummings said EPA had failed to fully comply with prior demands for Pruitt's travel records and requested that the documents be subpoenaed.

The New York Times reported Thursday that at least five EPA officials were reassigned or demoted after pushing back against spending requests that included a \$100,000-a-month private jet membership, a bulletproof vehicle and \$70,000 to replace two desks in the administrator's office suite. None of those purchases were approved, but Pruitt is reported to have gotten an ornate refurbished desk comparable in grandeur to the one in the Oval Office.

CBS News first reported that the head of Pruitt's security detail was demoted last year after the career employee refused the administrator's demand to use the lights and sirens on his EPA vehicle to get him through D.C. traffic faster.

Meanwhile, an EPA ethics official said Wednesday he wasn't provided all of the relevant "factual information" before determining last week that Pruitt's \$50-a-night rental was not an ethics violation.

EPA lawyer Kevin Minoli said his finding that Pruitt was paying fair-market value was based on the assumption that Pruitt occupied only one bedroom for \$50 a night, as outlined in the lease.

Media reports later disclosed that Pruitt's college-aged daughter occupied a second bedroom in the unit while she interned at the White House last summer. Minoli said he did not consider the value of a second room in his analysis.

Pruitt paid about \$1,000 a month, less than a third of what Minoli's review found nearby two-bedroom homes listed for. The Associated Press obtained a copy of Minoli's letter, which was first reported by CNN.

Pruitt had gone on the offensive Wednesday, trying to shore up his position in a series of interviews with Fox News and conservative media outlets during which he continued to suggest he had lived alone.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said Wednesday that Trump is not OK with some of the details that have emerged, including news this week of enormous raises awarded to two of Pruitt's close aides. In a combative Fox News interview, Pruitt said he didn't approve the raises and doesn't know who did.

Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York on Thursday became the third House Republican to say Pruitt should go, joining a growing chorus of Democrats and environmentalists. She was speaking to about 200 constituents in her home district.

Amid the ethics cloud, one of Pruitt's closest aides has resigned. Samantha Dravis served as his senior counsel and associate administrator for policy. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said Thursday that Dravis, 34, was leaving to pursue other opportunities.

Dravis previously worked for a fundraising group founded by Pruitt before being hired at EPA. She often accompanied the administrator on his frequent trips across the country and overseas.

The condo rented by Pruitt is co-owned by the wife of J. Steven Hart, chairman and CEO of the power-

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house lobbying firm Williams & Jensen.

On Pruitt's lease, a copy of which was reviewed by AP, Steven Hart's name was originally typed in as "landlord" but was scratched out. The name of his wife, health care lobbyist Vicki Hart, was scribbled in.

Federal disclosure reports show Hart's firm lobbied EPA, including Pruitt himself, extensively over the past year.

The Associated Press reported last week that while living in the Hart condo he met in his EPA office with a lobbyist from Hart's firm and two executives from an energy company seeking to scuttle tighter pollution standards for coal-fired power plants.

Beyond the question of whether Pruitt paid a fair-market value for the rental, Hart's business interests potentially raise other ethics issues that Minoli said he did not consider as part of his earlier review of whether the favorable lease constituted an improper gift to Pruitt from the lobbyist.

Ethics rules covering federal officials say they must remain impartial when making regulatory decisions and can't show favoritism. Pruitt also signed an ethics pledge when joining the Trump administration in which he promised not to accept gifts from lobbyists.

But, ultimately, it's up to the president to determine whether Pruitt goes or stays.

"I'll make that determination," Trump said when asked whether he was bothered by the ethics issues surrounding Pruitt. "But he's a good man, he's done a terrific job. But I'll take a look at it."

Associated Press reporters Zeke Miller, Catherine Lucey and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

Follow AP environmental reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, April 6, the 96th day of 2018. There are 269 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 6, 1968, 41 people were killed by two consecutive natural gas explosions at a sporting goods store in downtown Richmond, Indiana.

On this date:

In 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized by Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York.

In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Shiloh began in Tennessee as Confederate forces launched a surprise attack against Union troops, who beat back the Confederates the next day.

In 1896, the first modern Olympic games formally opened in Athens, Greece.

In 1909, American explorers Robert E. Peary and Matthew A. Henson and four Inuits became the first men to reach the North Pole.

In 1917, the United States entered World War I as the House joined the Senate in approving a declaration of war against Germany that was then signed by President Woodrow Wilson.

In 1943, "Le Petit Prince" (The Little Prince) by Antoine de Saint-Exupery was first published by Reynal & Hitchcock of New York.

In 1954, Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., responding to CBS newsman Edward R. Murrow's broadside against him on "See It Now," said in remarks filmed for the program that Murrow had, in the past, "engaged in propaganda for Communist causes."

In 1965, the United States launched Intelsat I, also known as the "Early Bird" communications satellite, into geosynchronous orbit.

In 1971, Russian-born composer Igor Stravinsky, 88, died in New York City.

In 1988, Tirza Porat, a 15-year-old Israeli girl, was killed in a West Bank melee. (Although Arabs were initially blamed, the army concluded Tirza had been accidentally shot by a Jewish settler.)

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In 1998, the Dow Jones industrial average closed above 9,000 points for the first time, ending the day at 9,033.23. Country singer Tammy Wynette died at her Nashville home at age 55.

In 2014, actor Mickey Rooney, 93, died in North Hollywood.

Ten years ago: Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, speaking at a private fundraiser in San Francisco, spoke of voters in Pennsylvania's Rust Belt communities who "cling to guns or religion" because of bitterness about their economic lot; Democratic rival Hillary Rodham Clinton seized on the comment, calling it "elitist." President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, meeting at the Black Sea resort of Sochi, failed to overcome sharp differences over a U.S. missile defense system as they closed their seven-year relationship.

Five years ago: Iran and six world powers failed to reach agreement during talks in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on how to reduce fears that Tehran might use its nuclear technology to make weapons. Militants killed six Americans, including diplomat Anne Smedinghoff, 25, and an Afghan doctor in a pair of attacks in Afghanistan, the deadliest day for the United States in the war in eight months.

One year ago: President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping (shee jihn-peeng) opened a two-day summit at Trump's Florida beach resort. The National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, hosted a centennial observance of the day the U.S. entered the global conflict. Don Rickles, the big-mouthed, bald-headed "Mr. Warmth" whose verbal assaults endeared him to audiences and peers and made him the acknowledged grandmaster of insult comedy, died at his Beverly Hills home at age 90.

Today's Birthdays: Nobel Prize-winning scientist James D. Watson is 90. Composer-conductor Andre Previn is 89. Actor Billy Dee Williams is 81. Actor Roy Thinnes is 80. Movie director Barry Levinson is 76. Actor John Ratzenberger is 71. Actress Patrika Darbo is 70. Baseball Hall of Famer Bert Blyleven is 67. Actress Marilu Henner is 66. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Janet Lynn is 65. Actor Michael Rooker is 63. Former U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., is 62. Rock musician Warren Haynes is 58. Rock singer-musician Frank Black is 53. Actress Ari Meyers is 49. Actor Paul Rudd is 49. Actor-producer Jason Hervey is 46. Rock musician Markku Lappalainen (mar-KOO' lap-uh-LAN'-en) is 45. Actor Zach Braff is 43. Actor Joel Garland is 43. Actress Candace Cameron Bure (buhr-RAY') is 42. Actor Teddy Sears is 41. Jazz and rhythm-and-blues musician Robert Glasper is 40. Actress Eliza Coupe is 37. Folk singer-musician Kenneth Pattengale (Milk Carton Kids) is 36. Actor Bret Harrison is 36. Actor Charlie McDermott is 28.

Thought for Today: "If fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing." — Anatole France, French author and critic (1844-1924).