

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Area hit a new record low again Friday morning. The temperature dipped to 4.8 degrees, breaking the 2007 record of 6 degrees.

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State DI Tournament Today

The State Destination Imagination Tournament is going on today in Pierre. The awards ceremony will be broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM starting at approximately 4 p.m.

South Dakota State Tournament

4 p.m.
Sat., April 7, 2018
Riggs High School
Pierre, SD

DESTINATION IMAGINATION

Awards Ceremony

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

The cardboard/paper recycling trailer at the school is GONE

Groton receives Twins Fields for Kids Grant



BALL FIELD RENOVATION GRANTS

The City of Groton was the recipient of a \$10,000 matching grant for the renovation work at the Groton Baseball Complex.

According to Jarod Fliehs, the money will be used to replace the four dugouts on Nelson and Falk Fields.

Stephanie Johnson, Senior Manager, Community Relations | Minnesota Twins Baseball Club, said, "In the first round of grant applications this year, 28 grants were awarded totaling \$211,651. The South Dakota communities of Clark, Groton and Parkston each received a grant in this review period."

According to the Twins Fields for Kids web site, "The Twins Community Fund's Twins Fields for Kids program provides financial support to improve baseball and/or softball facilities for youth in the Upper Midwest and Southwest Florida. The program makes matching grants to nonprofit organizations and local government units that operate baseball and/or softball programs.

"The Twins Community Fund and its grant programs are supported in part by Target, US Bank, Treasure Island and Delta.

"The Fields for Kids grant program is sponsored Cenex."

Johnson said, "The program was established in 1999, and since that time 772 Fields for Kids grant have been given, totaling more than \$4.3 million."

There is also a second round of grants for 2018 with a deadline of May 11.

- Paul Kosel



Wheatcrest Hills

HEALTHCARE
COMMUNITY

by Welcov Healthcare

Sign-on Bonus

\$2,500
PT
SIGN-ON
BONUS

\$5,000
FT
SIGN-ON
BONUS

Currently
Seeking
Licensed Nurses
to join our team!

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- Use your technical skills
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\$10,000

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Apply today at
WELCOV.COM/CAREERS

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South Dakota Fishing Opportunities Abound for Making Memories

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota departments of Tourism and Game, Fish and Parks are encouraging residents and visitors to take advantage of the vast amount of fishing opportunities in South Dakota this spring and summer.

“Our outdoor resources are such an important component of what South Dakota is known for,” said Jim Hagen, Secretary of the Department of Tourism. “Residents are proud of them. We use them. We like to show them off. Fishing is at the top of that list and the quality of our fishing is second to none. With the Missouri River and the vast amount of prairie lakes in South Dakota, the state has more coastline than California.”

With the passage of HB 1081 to make the non-meandered waters arrangement more permanent, the departments want to clear up any confusion that may remain on which lakes are open and which lakes require landowner permission to access.

“Of the approximately 244,000 acres of publicly accessible non-meandered lakes mostly in eastern South Dakota, only two percent have been marked ‘closed’ and are open through landowner permission,” said Kelly Hepler, Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. “Combine that with the approximately 246,000 acres of meandered lakes that remain open to anglers, the massive Missouri River system and the reservoirs across this state, South Dakota remains, and will remain a place to visit, catch fish and make memories with friends and family.”

Hagen and Hepler agree that work remains on the non-meandered waters issue.

“This is an important topic for all anglers, both residents and nonresidents, who are planning to travel and enjoy our great lakes,” said Hagen. “I like to tell them, ‘Look, come on out and fish. I think you are going to find that most, if not all, of your favorite spots are open and you won’t see a change at all.’ That is the take home message.”

Hepler agrees, and is also committed to finding a good balance.

“Providing recreational opportunities while addressing the concerns of the landowners will continue to be the primary focus. I have tasked department staff to work together with landowners on agreements to keep waters open and open up the waters that have been closed,” stated Hepler.

Hepler continued, “Many areas of South Dakota are true hunting and fishing treasures. Access to these areas takes an investment of time, compromise and an honest, respectful approach. Striking a balance between the public’s interest in recreation and respect for private property rights is a top priority for the department and this state. This means respectful dialogue must continue between landowners and sportsmen and women to ensure recreational opportunities remain strong.”

For more information on the non-meandered waters, including water closures, visit: <https://gfp.sd.gov/fish/>.

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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Specializing in Land &
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Proposed Chinese Tariffs Will Hurt Ag

With 95 percent of the world's consumers living outside the U.S., free and fair trade in the international market is vital for American producers to thrive and grow. With approximately one-fifth of U.S. agriculture products going to foreign markets, our farmers and ranchers, in particular, benefit from positive trade agreements.

China recently unveiled a proposal to impose an additional 25 percent tariff on more than 100 U.S. goods, including soybeans, wheat, corn and beef, and it has already begun imposing increased tariffs on pork products. This is in response to recent actions by the administration to impose sanctions and increase tariffs on certain products coming into the United States. China is one of our biggest customers of soybeans, buying more than 60 percent of U.S. soybean exports each year. In South Dakota, we produced more than 241 million bushels of soybeans in 2017, many of which were purchased by China. Increased tariffs on soybeans and other U.S. products would be devastating to our already-struggling ag economy.

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. 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. For example, every 10 cent drop in the soybean market represents a loss of \$24 million to South Dakota soybean producers. When the Chinese announced the proposed tariffs, the market dropped 30 cents – a scary statistic for farmers about to start planting.

As the administration continues to negotiate trade deals, 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 Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This will give us a tremendous advantage as we seek the best deal for South Dakota producers.

Earlier this year, I sent a letter to the president urging him to re-engage in TPP negotiations. Increasing engagement with the eleven TPP countries could greatly improve the competitiveness of U.S. businesses, including farms and ranches. Increasing access to a region and market that has a population of nearly 500 million—and growing—is a smart move for our country.

Free and fair trade drives down prices for American consumers and creates jobs here at home. We need to be creating and strengthening trade deals with our allies, including those in the TPP and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This will both expand our opportunities and strengthen our hand in negotiations with China. Over the past year, we've been able to substantially grow our economy through tax relief and regulatory 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.

I will continue working with my colleagues in the Senate to urge the administration to prioritize trade deals that benefit South Dakota businesses and our ag industry while also promoting positive trading relationships with our allies.

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Recycling Trailer is Gone

The Groton Destination Imagination sponsored Recycling Trailer south of the football field, is gone, permanently. According to Joann Donley, co-director of Groton DI, the contracting company has pulled the trailer because there was not enough weight on the trailer and that Groton is too far away from its recycling headquarters, Mason City, Iowa. Groton is the only town to have its recycling trailer removed.

Donley said that she called the company to see if Groton could have a trailer, but only have newspaper in it stead of cardboard, but they company representative has not returned her call.

Meanwhile, there is still the recycling trailer located at the City Shop.

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

JENCY AGENCY

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614 South Main Street, Aberdeen ~ 605-725-3130
Brittany Smart: 605/290-1487

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 motors 12' hyd. scraper, like new

MISCELLANEOUS

RR ties 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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Continuing The Courtesy Patrol's Legacy

Eighty-three years ago, Gov. Tom Berry appointed South Dakota's first patrolmen to enforce traffic laws and provide assistance to the public. Gov. Berry assigned ten men to what was then called the "Courtesy Patrol." Each was given a car called a "milk wagon," a tow chain, a first aid kit and a gallon of gasoline. The new officers were assigned to patrol the 2,000 miles of hard-surfaced roads and 4,000 miles of gravel highways.

Since the day Gov. Berry appointed those ten men, the South Dakota Highway Patrol has developed from a reactive organization to a proactive group of men and women that anticipates changes in highway safety and enforcement techniques. The Patrol has matured into a professional law enforcement agency prepared to respond to the needs of the public it serves.

This coming week 12 new recruits will officially join South Dakota's Highway Patrol and continue the legacy of the original ten. Class 60 is made up of nine men and three women, and we will celebrate their completion of recruit academy and field training at a ceremony in the Rotunda of the Capitol Building.

Our graduates put in a lot of hard work to make it through training. They completed 13 weeks of law enforcement basic training, 10 weeks in Highway Patrol Academy and 10 weeks of field training. They endured rigorous physical training and their work in the classroom included memorization of laws, radio codes, policies and procedures. They received the latest instructions about firearms, defensive tactics, vehicle stops, search and seizure, accident investigation, DUI enforcement and motor carrier enforcement. Then they took that new knowledge and skills to the field and did exceedingly well with all of the challenges presented to them.

It's easy for us to take our way of life for granted. There are many places around the world where chaos is the norm. In these places, lawlessness prevails and people live in fear, facing daily uncertainty over whether they'll be able to protect themselves and their families. The difference between those places and the place we call home boils down to law enforcement.

Without enforcement, laws are useless and democracies collapse. So while our new recruits will be investigating crimes, keeping our highways safe, and protecting property, they will also be preserving our free society. They, along with the rest of the men and women who serve in law enforcement roles, deserve much credit for our way of life.

Vander Vorst Family Thank You

We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to all our family and friends for the love and support given us through cards, prayers, memorials, flowers and your attendance at the prayer service and funeral. A special thanks to the clergy for their support and kind words at this difficult time. He will be greatly missed but is now "Free" and in a better place.

Family of Billy Vander Vorst



Getting Infrastructure on the Right Track

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with employees of the Rapid City, Pierre and Eastern Railroad (RCP&E) in Huron. In many respects, these individuals lay the groundwork for our state's economic prosperity.

In South Dakota, we have more than 1,800 miles of operational railroad lines, over which roughly half of our agriculture commodities travel. When hiccups occur, farmers often feel the impact immediately in the form of an increased basis. If backups or delays are bad enough, the state's entire farm economy can be impacted, especially if prices are low and producers have little wiggle room financially. It's critical, then, that we make the investments necessary to upgrade and maintain our nation's network of railroads.

Like many features of America's infrastructure system, the country's railways are aging. Private American companies, however, have made significant investments to repair and modernize lines. From a policy perspective, these are investments I want to incentivize.

One way to do that is through the Short Line Tax Credit, which generally offers a \$1 benefit for every \$2 of private investment. First enacted in 2005, the credit has helped spark \$4 billion worth of private investment by regional railroads, including millions of dollars in South Dakota.

In fact, the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association has held South Dakota up as an example of the credit's effectiveness. They write: "the improvements made by the 670-mile Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad since it began operations in 2015 have already attracted over \$311 million in new facility investments by six South Dakota companies. Those facilities employ 260 workers. This result is being duplicated in the 49 states that are served by America's 603 short line railroads."

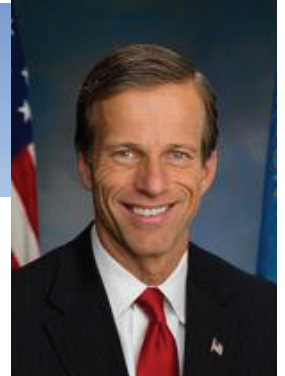
But the credit expired in 2017. In response, I've cosponsored legislation to make the tax credit permanent and will fight to include that proposal in an upcoming tax package.

Additionally, I've been thrilled to see President Trump's elimination of more than 1,600 unnecessary regulations, accelerating the pace at which developers can work. These same deregulation principles guided much of my advocacy in 2015, when we passed the first fully funded transportation bill in a decade and got it signed into law. The legislation cut red tape, streamlined rail project approvals, and increased support for highway-railway grade crossings.

But more can be done. President Trump has laid out an impressive infrastructure agenda to modernize our roads, bridges, and rails. More specifically, the president's plan prioritizes investments in rural America, further reduces the regulatory burden, and puts a renewed focus on the skills training needed to fill construction jobs.

Much of South Dakota's economy couldn't operate without a robust railroad infrastructure. Thank you to all those who work so hard to move our commodities and goods efficiently, safely, and affordably.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



There's No Offseason for Wildfire Prevention

South Dakota is no stranger to wildfires. In fact, while we're technically still in the offseason, it was only a few months ago that the Legion Fire scorched tens of thousands of acres in Custer State Park and forced numerous home evacuations in the area. Thankfully, no one was injured. It was a good reminder, though, that there's no offseason when it comes to discussing ways to reduce the risk of future wildfire incidents, which is a good thing for the land, property owners, and local communities that often face the brunt of the damage and clean-up.

Congress recently took an important step in that direction. Included in a newly enacted law, which I supported in the Senate, was a package of proposals that will take a significant financial burden off of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), one of the primary federal agencies that's often tasked with both battling forest fires and helping to prevent them from happening in the first place.

Until this new bill was signed into law, wildfires weren't treated the same as other natural disasters, like hurricanes. In those cases, dedicated federal funds were set aside to help with rescue operations and the subsequent clean-up. In bad wildfire years, like 2017, for example, the USFS was forced to use money that was set aside for other purposes, like tools for fire mitigation, to instead fight wildfires across the country. Every dollar intended for forest maintenance that's spent battling a blaze is a dollar that isn't being spent on future preventative measures.

Thanks to the change in the law, fire-borrowing (using previously allocated funds for unrelated fire suppression costs) will now be a thing of the past. A new contingency account will be established so the USFS can more efficiently prioritize its annual funding without having to worry about the uncertainty that can be created in bad wildfire years.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, who oversees the USFS, hailed the new law, saying, "Improving the way we fund wildfire suppression will help us better manage our forests. If we ensure that we have adequate resources for forest management, we can mitigate the frequency of wildfires and severity of future fire seasons."

I've also introduced a handful of bills over the last few years – including the Prescribed Burn Approval Act, which was signed into law in 2016 – that would help with wildfire prevention and federal forest service management. Last August, I introduced the Forest Service Management Improvement Act. It would make several improvements to the forestry title of the farm bill by increasing the effectiveness of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and improving the National Environmental Policy Act, which would help simplify and streamline federal forest management.

Several of these provisions were included in another bill, the Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Act, which I cosponsored last fall with fellow senators from western and Great Plains states. While it's still awaiting action in the Senate, I'm glad to see we're already making good progress on reducing wildfire risk in other areas – an issue that I will continue to work with my colleagues, federal agencies, and landowners to strengthen.

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WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY

...SIGNIFICANT SNOW POSSIBLE SUNDAY ACROSS THE AREA...ALONG WITH LIGHT ICING OVER CENTRAL SOUTH DAKOTA...

..WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY REMAINS IN EFFECT FROM 4 AM TO 10 PM CDT SUNDAY...

* WHAT...Mixed precipitation expected. Total snow accumulations of 3 to 5 inches, with localized amounts up to 7 inches, and ice accumulations of up to one tenth of an inch are expected.

* WHERE...Portions of central, north central and northeast South Dakota.

* WHEN...From 4 AM to 10 PM CDT Sunday.


* ADDITIONAL DETAILS...The ice will result in difficult travel conditions. Winds gusting as high as 35 mph will cause patchy blowing and drifting snow.

A Winter Weather Advisory means that periods of snow, sleet or freezing rain will cause travel difficulties. Expect slippery roads and limited visibilities, and use caution while driving.

The latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.

Coldest Wind Chills: April 6th, 2018

Eureka 13 ENE	-25° F	Sisseton AP	-14° F
Mahto	-22° F	Graceville 2 W	-14° F
Hillhead 3 WSW	-21° F	Shambo Ranch 2 N	-14° F
Aberdeen 7 W	-20° F	Redfield	-13° F
Barnard 5 W	-20° F	Onida 1 W	-13° F
Webster 3 S	-19° F	Wheaton AP	-12° F
Bullhead 10 S	-19° F	Lantry 3 NW	-12° F
Eureka	-19° F	Webster 3 S	-12° F
Gettysburg 1 S	-19° F	Miller 1 ENE	-12° F
Frederick 6 WSW	-18° F	Wallace 5 ENE	-12° F
Loyalton 5 NE	-17° F	Ortonville AP	-11° F
Groton 9 NNE	-17° F	Vivian 12 N	-10° F
South Shore 9 W	-16° F	Clark 1 ENE	-10° F
Watertown AP	-16° F	Britton 8 S	-9° F
Aberdeen AP	-16° F	Highmore 1 NNW	-9° F
Selby	-16° F	Pierre AP	-8° F
Mobridge AP	-15° F	Clear Lake	-8° F
Danforth 5 E	-15° F	Lees Corner 8 E	-7° F
Groton	-15° F	Peever 3 E	-6° F

 National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Published on: 04/06/2018 at 11:30AM

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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



1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton



All auto owners!

Save \$2-\$4 /tank

& grow your local economy by choosing low carbon

Super Premium E30's

94 octane, more power,

same mileage, fewer

carbon deposits, lower

maintenance costs,

slashed benzene & related

genotoxic, carcinogenic

tailpipe emissions;

*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for

info, E30 prices\locations.

***Farmers Union's**

PSA: Courtesy Merle

Anderson (Merle is 94

year old founder of Ace

and legendary ethanol

supporter... "because it is

the right thing to do")

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 7, 2001: Ten inches to two feet of snow fell in central South Dakota in a five-day period, beginning April 8th. Many roads became impassable. Several businesses, government offices, and schools closed on the 11th. Twenty-four inches fell at Ree Heights and Gettysburg, 20.0 inches at Faulkton, 18.0 inches at Kennebec, 16.0 inches at Pierre, and 10.0 inches at Doland.

1980: Severe thunderstorms spawned tornadoes that ripped through central Arkansas. The severe thunderstorms also produce high winds and baseball size hail. Five counties were declared disaster areas by President Carter. A tornado causing F3 damage also affected St. Louis and St. Charles counties in Missouri producing \$2.5 million in damage. Click [HERE](#) for a radar video of the F2 tornado that cut a path from near Mayflower to the north of Beebe, Arkansas. The radar video is courtesy of the NWS Office in Little Rock, Arkansas.

1857 - A late season freeze brought snow to every state in the Union. Even as far south as Houston TX the mercury plunged to 21 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1926: Lightning started a disastrous oil fire at San Luis Obispo, California, which lasted for five days, spread over 900 acres, and burned over six million barrels of oil. Flames reached 1000 feet, and the temperature of the fire was estimated at 2,500 degrees. The fire spawned thousands of whirlwinds with hundreds the size of small tornadoes. One vortex traveled one mile to the east-northeast of the blaze, destroying a small farmhouse and killing two people. Damage totaled \$15 million.

1929 - Record heat prevailed across New England. Hartford CT reported an afternoon high of 90 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1935 - Amarillo, TX, reported dust obscuring visibility for twenty hours. Blowing dust was reported twenty-seven of thirty days in the month. On several days the visibility was reduced to near zero by the dust. (The Weather Channel)

1948: Six tornadoes ripped through Northern Illinois and Indiana; mainly across the southern and eastern suburbs of Chicago. The hardest hit was from a tornado that moved east from near Manteno, IL to near Hebron, Indiana. This storm left four people dead; three in Grant Park, IL and one near Hebron, IN with 67 injuries and over a million dollars damage. Other strong tornadoes in the area moved from near Coal City, IL to Braidwood, IL and from Calumet City, IL into Indiana. Further south, two strong tornadoes occurred across the northern parts of Champaign and Vermilion Counties in Illinois.

1980 - Severe thunderstorms spawned tornadoes which ripped through central Arkansas. The severe thunderstorms also produce high winds and baseball size hail. Five counties were declared disaster areas by President Carter. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - International Falls, MN, with record warm afternoon high of 71 degrees, was warmer than Miami FL, where the high was a record cool 66 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - High winds in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region gusted to 172 mph atop Grandfather Mountain NC. Twenty-nine cities in the southwest and north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Yankton SD with a reading of 91 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty-seven cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees in Downtown San Francisco and 104 degrees at Phoenix AZ established records for April. Highs of 78 degrees at Ely NV and 93 degrees at San Jose CA equalled April records. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Low pressure brought strong winds to the Alaska peninsula and the Aleutian Islands. Winds gusted to 68 mph at Port Heiden two days in a row. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across central Alaska. Yakutat reported a record high of 54 degrees. Unseasonably cold weather prevailed over central sections of the Lower Forty-eight states. A dozen cities from Kansas to Indiana and Alabama reported record low temperatures for the date. Evansville IN equalled their record for April with a morning low of 23 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - A temperature of 80 degrees is measured on Grandfather Mountain, NC, the warmest ever measured in April and three degrees short of the all-time record high for any month.

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Sat Apr 7	Sun Apr 8	Mon Apr 9	Tue Apr 10	Wed Apr 11	Thu Apr 12	Fri Apr 13
28°F	30°F	34°F	44°F	48°F	43°F	39°F
17°F	19°F	18°F	26°F	28°F	29°F	26°F
NW 6 MPH	ESE 21 MPH Precip 90%	NNE 8 MPH	SSW 11 MPH	S 9 MPH Precip 20%	NE 16 MPH	ENE 26 MPH Precip 70%

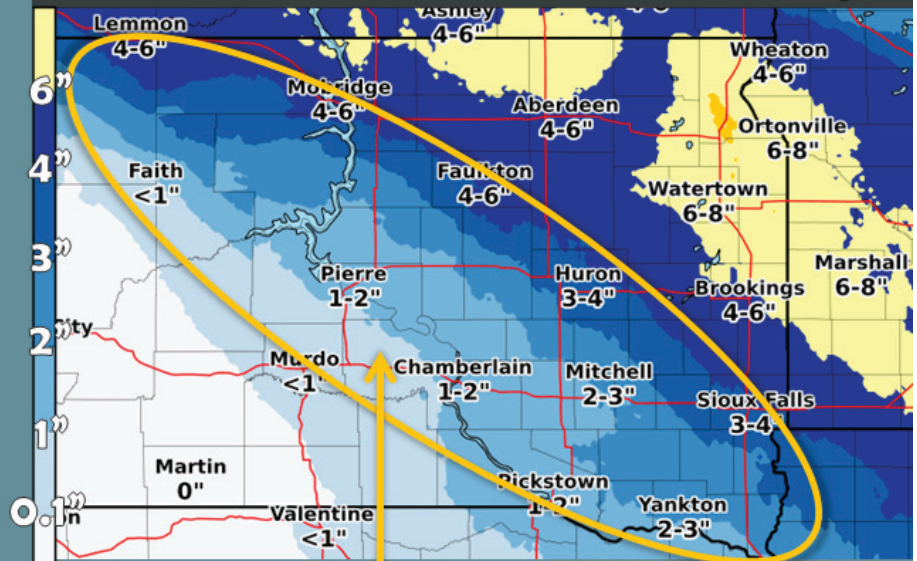
Snowstorm to Impact area Sunday

What: Moderate to heavy snow and wind gusts of 20-30 mph possible

When: Sunday morning through evening

Impacts: Slick roads and reduced visibilities possible.

Forecast Snowfall Amounts Sunday



Light Icing Possible Sunday Morning



www.weather.gov/abr

Graphic created 4/7/2018 4:47 AM

Published on: 04/07/2018 at 4:55AM

Light snow sliding into central SD late tonight will increase and target northeastern SD and western MN during the daytime hours Sunday, before diminishing Sunday evening. Snow will last for around 6 to 9 hours, with the heaviest snow expected to fall within the first few hours of starting. Light freezing rain will also be possible over morning of mainly central SD Sunday morning, creating light icing. Check out the latest forecast for your area at www.weather.gov/abr

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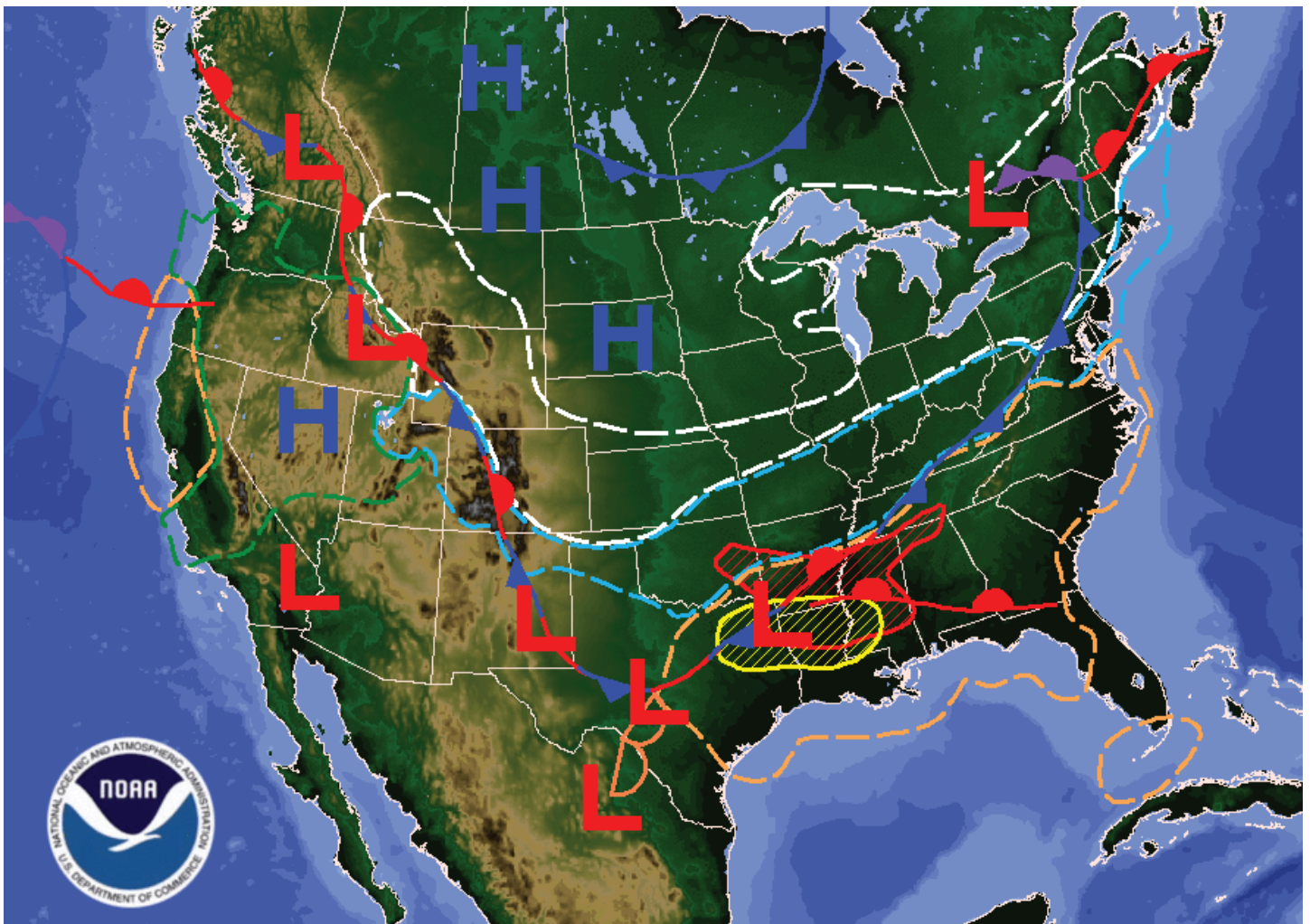
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 19.4 F at 12:23 AM
Low Outside Temp: 4.8 F at 7:40 AM (Record Low)
Wind Chill: -14.0 at 8:50 AM
High Gust: 33.0 Mph at 4:44 AM
Precip: Moisture in Snow: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 86° in 1988
Record Low: 4° in 1936
Average High: 52°F
Average Low: 28°F
Average Precip in April: 0.32
Precip to date in April: 0.28
Average Precip to date: 2.50
Precip Year to Date: 2.35
Sunset Tonight: 8:09 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:00



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Apr 06, 2018, issued 4:31 PM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by campbell 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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THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

No matter where you travel - from the darkest jungle to the highest mountain - you will find some type of music. It could be rap or rock and roll, hip-hop or jazz, rhythm and blues or opera, music for a marching band, the painful music of the pagan, the Middle Eastern style that seems to be so irritating or the majesty of hymns or worship music. It all makes a statement about the one who is making it and the ones who are listening.

Sometimes the music sounds sad and sorrowful or joyful and uplifting. Then again it might be the music of marches that stirs up our patriotism on the Fourth of July. Music can bring tears to our eyes or a smile to our face when it reminds us of a loved one. When we sit quietly in church or lift our arms to God, it can elevate our hearts to His presence or excite our senses when we hear music that proclaims the glory of God's goodness and grace, love, and salvation. But is there more?

A Psalmist once wrote of the music that should always fill the heart of a Christian: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, all my inmost being, praise His holy Name!"

Praise, in the life of the believer, is personal. If we remind ourselves of the work of Jesus while on this earth, we remember that He did His greatest works with individuals. Even when He was dying on the cross for our sins, He ministered to the one next to Him: "Lord," he cried, "remember me!" And Jesus said, "This day you will be with me in heaven!" Even as our prayer for pardon is personal, so should our praise to our God be personal.

Prayer: Lord, fill our hearts with praise! May our souls be filled with songs of joy and hymns of gladness, always! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 103:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!

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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

Rapid City flag redesigned after among nation's worst

By **SAMUEL BLACKSTONE**, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Back in 2004, a study of 150 city flags found that only two cities had a worse banner than Rapid City.

The North American Vexillological Association, which tracks flag designs, rated Rapid City's banner 148th, with only Huntington, West Virginia, and Pocatello, Idaho, flying more cringe-worthy banners.

A couple weeks ago, the potentially embarrassing designation was revisited when a March 4 Wall Street Journal story, "Surprise! Your City Has a Flag and It's Terrible," cited the results of the association's study. The story went on to note some city's efforts to redesign their flag following the results.

Milwaukee, which came in one spot ahead of Rapid City at 147th, commissioned a contest to redesign their flag in 2016. For now, though, the city has yet to formally adopt it as the city's new emblem. Provo, Utah, (143rd), unveiled a new flag in 2015, as did the city with the worst flag, Pocatello, in response to the ratings.

The Rapid City Journal reports that since the less than proud moment, Rapid City has changed its flag too, though no one is quite sure whether it was ever made official or when exactly it happened. City spokesman Darrell Shoemaker said some longtime city employees have guessed it was around 2010 or 2011.

The flag that garnered the abysmal rating — the words "Star of the West" at the top center in red, with "Rapid City, South Dakota" in blue underneath and the city's seal, in gold, in the bottom center — was redesigned to be more visually appealing.

The result is the faces of Mount Rushmore — sketched using blue lines akin to the etchings in rock on the true monument — with "Rapid City, South Dakota" below, and the nickname "City of Presidents" at the bottom. The white flag has gold trim at its bottom and top border. Though not present outside city hall, the flag currently rests in Mayor Steve Allender's office.

"Obviously, this has a different look than the one previous," city spokesman Darrell Shoemaker said in a Journal interview Tuesday. "We take a lot of pride in being the city of presidents."

Shoemaker noted how the same organization rated the South Dakota state flag 68th out of 72 flags in a different study, with only the Kansas, Montana, Nebraska and Georgia flags worse.

"Someone in the organization must have had a bad experience in South Dakota," Shoemaker joked. "They came here and the Mount Rushmore faces were fogged up or they didn't like our friendly attitude in Rapid City. But you know, we'd invite them back again to take a look at our new flag."

The association did not respond to a request for comment but according to a Black Hills Pioneer story in 2004, Ted Kaye, the man who conducted the survey, said incorporating the city seal and use of words on the flag are both big design no-nos. South Dakota's state flag, which has the state's name on it twice, also negatively affected its score.

Pierre, the only other South Dakota city in the 2004 survey, placed 115th. Sioux Falls does not have an official city flag.

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

Violent crime lags behind Sioux Falls population growth

By **DANIELLE FERGUSON** and **TREVOR MITCHELL**, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Violent crime is a hot topic in Sioux Falls.

Rising numbers and rampant headlines provide fodder for political campaigns and national media reports, including a recent national article that placed Sioux Falls as second on a list of cities where crime is "soaring" based on FBI data.

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A closer look, however, shows that much of that narrative is overblown. The Argus Leader examined 10 years of data from the State Attorney General's office, focusing on violent crimes such as murder, assault, rape, burglary and kidnapping.

The numbers reveal that while violent crime offenses have risen slightly during that period, the rate is actually lower than population growth. Sioux Falls' population increased by 20 percent from 2008 to 2017, while per capita violent crime grew at a rate of 6 percent.

Trend-tracking can be beneficial in showing a city's direction and addressing safety concerns, said Sioux Falls Police Chief Matt Burns. But changes in crime definitions, law enforcement tactics and population are all factors that play a role when crime numbers are examined.

The Argus Leader chose not to include drug possession in the tracking because controlled substance possession in itself is not a violent crime. It is, however, a felony. The number of felony arrests has doubled in the last eight years.

"Drugs are without a doubt the biggest driver in our crime, violent and property (crimes)," Burns said. "There's no doubt about that. We do know from experience that drugs contribute to the violent crime in our city."

Here's a breakdown of violent crime numbers in Sioux Falls.

Murder:

What it is — Murder is the unlawful killing of another human being, whether premeditated or not. Manslaughter is the killing of another human being "without any design to affect death," or unnecessarily while resisting a crime.

The trend — It's hard to find a trend within the last 10 years of Sioux Falls murder data. Victim numbers have gone up and down, never entering double digits while also never reaching zero.

The state crime report dives deeper into the demographics of murder victims, allowing for a closer look at some of the statistics.

Of the 42 victims over the last 10 years, the most common age group is 20-24, with eight victims. Ages 25-29 and juveniles are close behind, with seven and six victims, respectively.

Twenty-seven of the victims were male and 15 were female, with 2008 and 2014 the only years in which more women were killed than men.

Over the past decade, 27 of the murder victims were white, 10 were Native American and seven were black. That means that Native Americans represented 2.7 percent of the city's population as of a 2010 census, but nearly 24 percent of murder victims.

Notable cases — Manuel Jesus Frias is charged with first-degree murder, second-degree murder and four counts of manslaughter in connection with a January 2018 incident where police say he shot Samuel Crockett during a "drug rip gone bad." Frias faces the death penalty or life in prison if convicted.

Dylan Holler was charged with first-degree murder after police say he shot and killed Riley Stonehouse during an argument about a drug-related activity in Bakker Park. Holler is also charged with the attempted murder of Jayden Eastman in the same incident.

Assault:

What it is — Assault can range from injuring or attempting to injure someone, or threatening them with injury. Seriously injuring someone or threats with deadly weapons elevate the crime to aggravated assault.

The trend — Simple assault arrests have nearly doubled in the past 10 years, while the number of reported offenses remains largely the same. It's been a similar story with aggravated assaults, where arrests have more than tripled in the past decade as the number of offenses grew at a slower rate. That disparity could be attributable to factors such as legislative changes, shifting police tactics and reporting variations.

Notable cases — Jason James Schmidt was found guilty on aggravated assault charges in December 2017 after he pulled a gun on a driver — who he believed to be armed — after an argument with another driver in the parking lot of a gas station.

Tony Ledbetter pleaded guilty in August 2017 to aggravated assault charges that stemmed from an October 2016 incident where he punched and choked his pregnant ex-girlfriend before cutting off her nipples with a pair of scissors.

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Kidnapping:

What it is — When someone unlawfully moves a substantial distance or confines someone for a substantial amount of time. The crime is elevated when the victim is injured.

The trend — The number of reported kidnappings and abductions was about eight times higher in 2017 than it was in 2008, but the number of arrests increased at a slower pace. Kidnapping reports have increased at a faster pace than aggravated kidnappings. The crime is elevated to aggravated kidnapping when it involves serious bodily injury to the victim.

Notable cases — Joseph Patterson was convicted in 2015 of murdering 2-year-old Tyrese Ruffin, the biological son of NFL star Adrian Peterson. Patterson was arrested on kidnapping charges while he was awaiting trial for the murder case. He was sentenced to an additional five years in prison for kidnapping and assaulting Ruffin's mother.

Jon Henri Bryant Sr. was sentenced in November 2017 to 30 years in prison after he hid in his ex-girlfriend's garage, assaulted her, forced her into the trunk of her own vehicle and led police on a chase through Minnehaha County.

The kidnappings and abductions were often committed by someone known to the victim, but not in every case.

Robert Frederick Larson, 65, was charged with first-degree kidnapping and sexual exploitation of a minor in December 2017 after he prevented a 13-year-old boy from leaving his workplace and then took the child to his home and attempted to grope him, according to police.

Rape:

What it is — Sexual penetration with someone under the age of 13 or someone incapable of giving consent. Rape also occurs if the victim was forced, coerced, threatened or harmed. Statutory rape occurs when the victim is under the age of consent. It's a felony because a "consenting" minor cannot consent in the eyes of the law.

The trend — Rape is a crime difficult to accurately track. Some survivors choose not to report the offense to law enforcement and some may report an offense years later, both of which can skew data. The number of rapes reported in Sioux Falls shows a slight downward trend over the past decade, though that doesn't mean the number of actual rapes is on the decline.

Sexual crimes are often difficult to track, investigate and prosecute. Rapes can be reported to local advocacy groups or hospitals and never reach law enforcement.

Notable cases — A Sioux Falls man was sentenced in November 2017 to 100 years in prison for raping a minor behind a barn just outside Sioux Falls. Ivor Leroy Grove, 39, knew the victim's family and was supposed to be bringing the victim and victim's siblings on a day trip to Wall Lake. The victim received medical treatment and completed a sexual assault response kit.

Frederick James McAbee was sentenced to 50 years for raping a 14-year-old girl and firing a gun at her as she attempted to escape in 2015. The victim, known to McAbee, gave testimony in his sentencing hearing, saying his actions affected every aspect of her life.

Lance Miller was accused of repeatedly raping a 15-year-old girl who was babysitting his father's other children. Miller's father, Dr. Patrick Miller, was sued by the victim's family for allowing his son, who at the time was a convicted sex offender recently released from prison, to be alone with the victim. Lance Miller is serving a five-year sentence for fourth-degree rape, a type of statutory rape.

Burglary:

What it is — Entering or staying in an occupied structure with an intent to commit any crime. The crime is first-degree burglary if the suspect injures or threatens another, is armed or commits the crime at nighttime.

The trend — There doesn't appear to be an overall offense trend, but the number of arrests has continuously increased since 2008. The crime is also referred to as "breaking and entering" in the Attorney General's statistics.

Notable cases — Burglary is often one of numerous crimes listed when someone is charged. Some commit burglary with the intent to steal, such as 20-year-old Alexander Vorjolo, who was charged in March

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for a string of burglaries and purse and car thefts dating back to 2015. Six teens were arrested in July 2017 after they had committed several burglaries in and around Sioux Falls. The group stole multiple guns and an ATV.

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

16-33-51-54-67, Mega Ball: 20, Megaplier: 4

(sixteen, thirty-three, fifty-one, fifty-four, sixty-seven; Mega Ball: twenty; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$74 million

Dakota Access pipeline developer submits spill response plan

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The developer of the Dakota Access oil pipeline that goes under a reservoir in the Dakotas has submitted a court-ordered spill response plan, but an American Indian tribe that draws water from Lake Oahe is unsatisfied with the company's efforts and is taking steps of its own to protect its water supply.

The Standing Rock Sioux also worries that cultural sites could be harmed by oil spill response efforts or by the staging of equipment at the Missouri River reservoir.

Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners submitted its 270-page spill response plan for Lake Oahe on Monday, along with a review by an independent engineering company that concludes the pipeline complies with federal regulations.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg ordered Energy Transfer Partners last December to produce a plan, six months after ordering the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to further review the impact on tribal interests of the \$3.8 billion pipeline that moves North Dakota oil to Illinois. That work is ongoing.

The Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes, which are leading a four-tribe lawsuit against the pipeline, say the Corps and ETP have not given them a meaningful role in the process. The tribes contend they weren't allowed to provide adequate input in the spill response plan or in the selection of the independent engineering company.

Standing Rock Chairman Mike Faith said in a statement filed with the court Monday that ETP failed to provide necessary documents for the tribe to review and didn't adequately communicate with the tribe, which "made it virtually impossible to conduct a good-faith, meaningful negotiation on emergency planning."

The tribe says Faith highlighted concerns about cultural sites being damaged in a Feb. 28 letter to ETP. The company's plan acknowledges the tribe's concern but says the tribe "did not specify locations for the sites ... (and) did not respond to a request for locations or other relevant information about these sites."

The tribe also has criticized ETP's estimate of a "worst-case scenario" spill, saying it did not use industry best practices and relied on "optimistic assumptions." The company says it follows the spill modeling requirements of the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

The tribe has announced its own "Clean Water Campaign," and is raising money to fund water-monitoring wells, equipment purchases and training for a rapid response team in the case of a spill.

Corps and ETP attorneys have accused the tribes of being difficult, and Justice Department attorney Matthew Marinelli told Boasberg on Monday that the Corps had yet to receive requested information from

three of the four tribes that are suing. That will further delay completion of the review ordered by the judge, until at least next month, he said.

The pipeline has been operating since last June. Boasberg is allowing oil to flow while the reviews are being conducted.

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

Defendant in Sioux Falls lounge collapse wants venue change

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A developer listed as a defendant in lawsuits over a 2016 fatal building collapse in downtown Sioux Falls has alleged the company never owned the structure.

Legacy Developments also asked a judge for a change of venue to Aberdeen, arguing the company can't get a fair trial in Sioux Falls. Legacy is one of several defendants in three lawsuits filed after the Dec. 2, 2016, collapse of the Copper Lounge building that killed construction worker Ethan McMahon.

Legacy alleged it never had a role in hiring or overseeing those involved in the construction work, the Argus Leader reported .

"The media coverage gave the public a false impression that Legacy owned the property, hired the contractor, was culpable in the collapse and at fault for the death and injuries that followed, and should be punished for the same," the company said in its request for a trial location change.

Boomerang Investments bought the Copper Lounge from CLP Investments with a transfer fee recorded a day before the collapse, according to Minnehaha County records. Both entities share a Sioux Falls address, which matches Legacy Developments' address.

Boomerang and CLP both have listed their sole manager and president as Norm Drake, who is the CEO of Legacy.

The company assigned with remodeling Copper Lounge at the time of collapse, Hultgren Construction, was run by Aaron Hultgren, who was also Legacy's director of development and operations.

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

Nevada gets rematch with Loyola Chicago next season

RENO, Nev. (AP) — The Nevada Wolf Pack will get a rematch next season against the team that beat them in the Sweet 16 of the NCAA basketball tournament.

The Reno Gazette Journal reported Friday that Loyola Chicago is among the eight non-conference teams Nevada already has scheduled for the 2018-19 season.

The Ramblers defeated Nevada 69-68 enroute to the Final Four before losing to Michigan in the semi-finals 69-57.

The rematch at Loyola Nov. 28 is part of the annual Mountain West-Missouri Valley Challenge.

The Wolf Pack will host Pacific (Nov. 9), Arkansas Little Rock (Nov. 16), Cal Baptist (Nov. 19) and South Dakota State (Dec. 25).

They'll play Tulsa Nov. 22 at the Las Vegas Invitational with a game the next day against an undetermined opponent. They'll also play an undetermined team Dec. 7 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Man in motorized wheelchair struck and killed by semitrailer

MILLER, S.D. (AP) — A man in a motorized wheelchair has died after being struck by a semitrailer in Miller.

The Highway Patrol says the 80-year-old man was in an intersection crosswalk when he was struck by the semi, which was making a turn off state Highway 45 and onto U.S. Highway 14.

It happened shortly after 1 p.m. Thursday. The pedestrian later died at a hospital. He wasn't immediately identified.

The patrol says charges are pending against the semi driver.

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University sets up online donation sites for crash victims

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The University of Sioux Falls Athletics is trying to help the families of two students involved in a fatal car crash with expenses.

Head Football Coach Jon Anderson says GoFundMe donation accounts have been set up online to help the families of wide receiver Courtney Beane, who was killed in the crash, and junior defensive end Jared Brito, who was seriously injured when he was thrown from the vehicle.

The Argus Leader says donations to Brito's account goes toward his medical expenses. Any amount raised beyond that will be donated to charity in accordance with NCAA bylaws.

Authorities say the players' car hit a bridge guard rail head on, traveled down a levee embankment and came to rest under the bridge last Sunday.

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

Email glitch causing headache for Brown County departments

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Brown County officials and employees are unable to receive the bulk of email sent from Google accounts despite months of trouble-shooting.

While some emails from Gmail accounts get through, many are rejected, county Chief Information Officer Paul Sivertsen told the American News . The emails often are deferred from the county's primary server to a secondary server, and not delivered.

The mysterious glitch has caused problems for nearly all county departments.

"I had a veteran and it almost cost him thousands of dollars because he was trying to email me his information, and I had to call him and ask where his stuff was at, and he got mad at me and told me he sent it to me twice," Veterans Service Officer Aaron Walberg said.

Brown County Fair Manager Derek Ricci said he has been unable to get emails from a contracted ticket company, the people in charge of livestock and 4-H exhibits, three entertainment buyers and 11 fair board members because they have Gmail accounts.

"We look stupid with our people because they keep saying they sent us an email and we're telling them we didn't get it," Ricci said.

Sivertsen said he has yet to find a solution. County commissioners this week directed him to get pricing information from third parties that specialize in solving such problems.

"I don't think we can afford not to fix it," Commissioner Tom Fischbach said.

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

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

American News, Aberdeen, April 4

Finding the good, even under April snowstorms

Yes, yes, we know: A snowstorm when it is supposed to be more spring-like.

But just keep in mind our farming friends.

Most of state and area are behind on moisture, so this is a good thing.

Even if that moisture blesses us in the form of snow in April.

Today, let's recognize the positive, wherever we find it:

— The Aberdeen Parks and Recreation Department is a good example of a team of people who believe good is the enemy of great.

That department never seems satisfied with status quo, and will be making changes this year to Story-book Land. Aberdeen's most popular tourist attraction is scheduled to open this week, weather permitting.

Officials hope that two new rides, a train and teacups, at the free-admission park will be open by Me-

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morial Day weekend.

The two rides cost \$58,300, but the Sertoma Club is also covering the estimated \$36,700 in installation costs for electricity, concrete and fencing. That wonderful Sertoma Club has had its fingerprints all over Storybook Land since construction on the Aberdeen icon started in 1976.

Individual sponsorship opportunities are available for the rides and other improvements as well (call the parks department at 605-626-7015).

In addition to the rides, a static exhibit of two flying monkeys carrying Dorothy will be new this year at Storybook Land. A booth-style Hurricane Simulator wind tunnel is also planned this year in the Land of Oz area.

We should all be on such a path of "if we are not getting better, we are getting worse."

— We find comfort in our traditions.

That is why the story about long-time Hoven High School teacher and alumna Linda Coyne and her wooden podium made us smile. Hoven students have been signing their names to it since the 1990s.

When they return, the podium is a must-see stop for many of them.

What makes the podium even more special is that it survived the 2014 fire that took the community's school.

Worthless monetarily, priceless in memories.

— During this Easter season, many of us heard messages about how we should be kind to each other.

Now the real work begins. At least for those who are sincere about becoming better human beings.

Just think if many of us woke up tomorrow morning with the idea of doing two or three kind acts during our busy day?

How would that change our communities for the better?

Because remember what happens in drive-through lines at fast-food restaurants when someone in front decides to pay the bill of the car behind them. Employees tell us that can go on for car after car.

Often, our random acts of kindness inspire others to do the same. A handful of good deeds could easily turn into hundreds, or maybe even thousands of kind acts.

With numbers like that, we could transform the mood of our community.

Remember, it is not our job to judge, but to love others. That is our top mission in life.

Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan, Yankton, April 2

Efficiency standard rollback a mistake

The Trump administration has seemed dedicated to undoing the Obama years piece by piece. You can take that for what you will, depending on your political and philosophical leanings. But one looming move makes little sense in the broader scheme of U.S. energy policy, and it could be argued that the decision falls prey to the kind of short-term, short-sighted optimism that befalls many of us when fuel prices are low.

It was reported last week that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is preparing to announce a rollback of the fuel efficiency standards for U.S. cars and light trucks that the Obama administration introduced in 2012. The current Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards would require U.S. automakers to sell vehicles by 2025 with a fleet average of 54.5 miles per gallon. By fleet average, that means that for every poor-mileage SUV sold, a more efficient vehicle, like a small car or a hybrid, must also be sold to create an energy balance.

Such a rollback would be considered a win for automakers, who say that meeting the CAFE standard would be expensive and cost jobs, especially in light of the recent run of low fuel prices which have more consumers, who are conveniently forgetting the past, turning their attentions to those gas-guzzling SUVs again. (Oddly, automakers once favored the standards as a means of avoiding the confusing approach taken by California. But when Trump took office, an opportunity for a reset changed some thinking.)

But rolling back the CAFE standards would be a mistake on many fronts — including the economic element, for it would not necessarily be a plus for automakers.

One of the reasons behind the higher fuel efficiency standards is to help the U.S. become less reliant on

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foreign oil and more immune to the fickle nature of the oil market. America has sought so-called "energy independence" since at least the painful height of OPEC's clout in the 1970s, and creating energy efficiency was one means to that end. (Without a doubt, the recent ramped-up domestic fuel production is another, so much so that the U.S. is expected to become a net exporter of petroleum by 2021, according to the EPA itself.) But relaxing efficiency standards would throw much of that effort into reverse. According to the OilPrice.com website, keeping the current standards would mean the U.S. would further reduce its oil consumption by 2 million barrels a day by 2025.

According to Fortune magazine, relaxing the fuel standards could hurt the automotive industry by putting U.S. automakers out of step with a world "moving in the opposite direction in response to energy security concerns, consumer preferences and climate regulation."

The notion of energy independence — or "energy dominance," as Trump calls it — is actually already within reach, and so much of that has to do with various efficiency efforts that have been enacted since the 1970s. As the Council on Foreign Relations noted, "Nearly 40 years after the first set of CAFE standards were established in 1975, the United States is finally close to achieving the standard's original intent: oil self-reliance and energy security. It would be misguided to undo all the progress on this front right when the United States has reached the home stretch."

And what happens if another "energy crisis" comes along? As we've seen so many times before, that's when everyone worries about fuel economy, looking for more efficient vehicles and striving to reduce overall consumption. Indeed, oil market analysts are warning of a potential supply shortage in the early 2020s when U.S. production is expected to plateau. "The supply shortage will be a lot more painful if the U.S. government undercuts one of its most effective tools by undoing fuel efficiency standards," OilPrice.com stated.

And yes, there is also the environmental concern, which the rest of the world, at least, recognizes as it tries to reduce fossil-fuel consumption. Again, the U.S., once a leader on this front, is trying to exclude itself from that reality, and a CAFE rollback would be another step in that direction.

So, why should we make a move to undo something that has clearly worked for U.S. energy policy, and instead embrace an approach that would undercut our energy security and potentially put U.S. automakers out of step with world consumer demands?

Instead, we should be looking to the future, not trying to reinvent the past. And make no mistake, changing the CAFE standards would be looking backwards, not forward.

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, April 3 **Runner goes the distance with lifestyle change**

GOOD: If you are looking for inspiration, you need to look no further than at the life story of Rapid City's Caiti Kean. The 31-year-old nurse practitioner qualified in August to run in the Boston Marathon after finishing the Leading Ladies Marathon in Spearfish in 3 hours, 28 minutes and 30 seconds, her best time ever. But it is the distance she traveled before the race that makes her accomplishment so impressive. According to a story in Monday's Journal, Kean lost more than 100 pounds on her road to marathon success. When she started her journey, she said she would mostly walk on the treadmill with intermittent runs of 10 to 15 seconds. She persevered, however, and made lifestyle changes that have taken her far. On April 16, she will be running with the best long-distance runners in the world in Boston, which makes her a winner already.

BAD: China has retaliated in a trade war initiated by President Trump and it could hit a number of South Dakota businesses where it hurts — in the pocketbook. On Friday, China raised import duties on 128 products exported by the United States, including pork, which is going to be hit with a 25 percent tariff on goods entering China. According to Glenn Muller, the executive director of the South Dakota Pork Producers Association, this will be "extremely detrimental" as China is a major consumer of U.S. pork. China's decision to raise the tariffs on the products is in response to Trump's recent announcement to implement higher duties on imported steel and aluminum from China and other countries. In announcing those tariffs,

the president said he expects the U.S. will eventually win any trade war. But like with all wars, casualties can be expected and it looks like pork farms and their supplies will get hit.

UGLY: The area's meth epidemic is a drag on society in many ways. The drug destroys families and lives with all the precision of a wrecking ball. It also burdens the public safety system as users become irresponsible, reckless, menacing and idiotic. All those shameful characteristics were on full display recently in an incident that began at one of Rapid City's busiest stores — Walmart on the south side of town. It started when one of a group of five threatened a store employee with what turned out to be a toy gun. As a result of that threat, the police were called and responded with vigor after a report of an armed robbery at the store. It took just a few minutes before at least a dozen squad cars stopped the suspect's vehicle on busy Sheridan Lake Road in a "high-risk" traffic stop. A subsequent search revealed the toy gun and meth in the car. Two adults were arrested. Three juveniles also were in the car. The police response was impressive. The news of another meth arrest and of all the others who were affected is a sad reminder of the harm this drug causes to those in its web.

House's Steny Hoyer takes a last shot at the top spot

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi is not welcome in Trump country, which was probably one reason another top Democrat — her long-term rival Steny Hoyer — was zipping through Republican-friendly corners of western Wisconsin this week.

Hoyer, the Maryland centrist and perpetual leader-in-waiting in the House of Representatives, was on a mission to woo blue-collar voters and help his party win back control of the House.

He was also looking for what could be his last shot.

"Would I like to be speaker? Of course. Would I be disappointed if it doesn't happen? No," the No. 2 House Democrat said by phone, reflecting on his long career as he cut through snow-covered rolling hills, a world away from his Chesapeake Bay home turf.

Hoyer has been eying the top spot for more than a decade, living in the shadow of a San Francisco Democrat who has a white-knuckle grip on power. Now, as the party wrestles with its ideological impulses and younger lawmakers push for a generational shift — both he and Pelosi are 78 years old — Hoyer may be looking for one more play.

Replacing one longtime leader with another is not what many Democrats have in mind. Still, Hoyer is actively, if quietly, seeking lawmakers' support. His allies put him forward as a possible "bridge" leader, who might ease a transition to a next generation — if Pelosi ever steps aside. Others find far-fetched the notion that a white, male centrist from blue Maryland would be the new face of the Democratic Party.

Those questions, Hoyer insisted, are for another day. On Thursday, he was dashing to keep a lunch date at the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce in Wisconsin to listen to a crowd of Midwestern voters, including those who backed Trump.

"I'm going in to talk to Americans," he said. "It's not Trump country or Hoyer country. These are Americans."

As Democrats battle to win back some two dozen House seats, the fight for majority control is also a struggle between the liberal and centrist wings over how best to frame the party's image and priorities in the age of Trump.

Several House candidates face bruising primary contests this spring that will showcase the divide. But perhaps nowhere is it more apparent than in the simmering saga of House Democratic leadership.

Younger lawmakers talk about sweeping all the top leaders from office as they hunger for fresh faces. New York Rep. Joe Crowley is among those often mentioned among up-and-comers, but others are in the wings, and a person close to him said he is focused right now on helping Democrats win the House.

Pelosi meanwhile shows no signs of retiring, especially as she has the chance to wield the speaker's gavel if Democrats regain the House. Nearly a year younger than Hoyer — they were on staff together

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in the Capitol decades ago — Pelosi is undeterred by the constant chatter or year-round GOP attack ads pillorying her leadership.

Asked recently how she felt about no-votes from Democratic candidates like Conor Lamb, who won a special election in a Trump-district in Pennsylvania but said he wouldn't back Pelosi, she quipped it's just not as important as winning the seat and the House majority.

That leaves Hoyer's allies floating the unusual idea of him becoming a short-term leader — someone who could temporarily take the helm, if and when Pelosi steps down, to ease the transition.

It's a hard sell.

While few lawmakers or aides will talk openly about what's to come, some dismissed the idea as setting up a lame-duck leader who would have little control over the caucus and only prolong the day when younger members could rise.

Republicans scoff at Hoyer's attempt influence the fall midterms by swooping in to Trump districts to drum up support for Democrats.

"It's not like... 'Ladies and Gentlemen, the Majority Whip!' and he comes out to strobe lights," said Matt Gorman, a spokesman for the GOP's campaign committee in the House. "People don't know who Steny Hoyer is."

Then again, Hoyer's ability to show up with his "Make it in America" listening tour can't hurt. He has stopped in Pittsburgh; Toledo, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri, and other places this election cycle, and while he may not move masses, lawmakers welcome his ability to make inroads in places where Democrats don't always tread.

"Steny Hoyer went to Peoria, Illinois, it's sort of the epicenter of America," said Rep. Cheri Bustos, who represents a Trump-won district in the northwestern part of the state and is also often mentioned for a future party leadership role.

"We have to pick up 23 seats to win back the majority, and most of those are right here in the heartland of America. This is where we need to pay attention."

As Hoyer made his way to Eau Claire this week, he spotted an outbuilding on the landscape that reminded him of the tobacco barn on his own property back home in Mechanicsville, Maryland, in the southern part of the state where he is seeking re-election to a 20th term in office.

"I'm glad that people welcome me to our districts," he said. "We are the party of the people, we are the party of workers... men and women in this country who are the reason this country is great — historically, and now."

Hosting his arrival was Rep. Ron Kind, one of four Democrats who voted against Pelosi during the last leadership race, at the Chamber luncheon.

"Steny's been at the forefront of this, the message works incredibly well around here," Kind said in an interview. "Showing up, being respectful and listening."

Follow Mascaro on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/LisaMascaro>

AP sources: EPA chief spent millions on security and travel

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt's concern with his safety came at a steep cost to taxpayers as his swollen security detail blew through overtime budgets and at times diverted officers away from investigating environmental crimes.

Altogether, the agency spent millions of dollars for a 20-member full-time detail that is more than three times the size of his predecessor's part-time security contingent.

New details in Pruitt's expansive spending for security and travel emerged from agency sources and documents reviewed by The Associated Press. They come as the embattled EPA leader fends off allegations of profligate spending and ethical missteps that have imperiled his job.

Shortly after arriving in Washington, Pruitt demoted the career staff member heading his security detail

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and replaced him with EPA Senior Special Agent Pasquale "Nino" Perrotta, a former Secret Service agent who operates a private security company.

An EPA official with direct knowledge of Pruitt's security spending says Perrotta oversaw a rapid expansion of the EPA chief's security detail to accommodate guarding him day and night, even on family vacations and when Pruitt was home in Oklahoma. The EPA official spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

Perrotta also signed off on new procedures that let Pruitt fly first-class on commercial airliners, with the security chief typically sitting next to him with other security staff farther back in the plane. Pruitt's premium status gave him and his security chief access to VIP airport lounges.

The EPA official said there are legitimate concerns about Pruitt's safety, given public opposition to his rollbacks of anti-pollution measures.

But Pruitt's ambitious domestic and international travel led to rapidly escalating costs, with the security detail racking up so much overtime that many hit annual salary caps of about \$160,000. The demands of providing 24-hour coverage even meant taking some investigators away from field work, such as when Pruitt traveled to California for a family vacation.

The EPA official said total security costs approached \$3 million when pay is added to travel expenses.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said late Friday that Pruitt has faced an "unprecedented" amount of death threats against him and his family.

"Americans should all agree that members of the President's cabinet should be kept safe from these violent threats," Wilcox said.

A nationwide search of state and federal court records by AP found no case where anyone has been arrested or charged with threatening Pruitt. EPA's press office did not respond Friday to provide details of any specific threats or arrests.

Pruitt has said his use of first-class airfare was initiated following unpleasant interactions with other travelers. In one incident, someone yelled a profanity as he walked through the airport.

The EPA administrator has come under intense scrutiny for ethics issues and outsized spending. Among the concerns: massive raises for two of closest aides and his rental of a Capitol Hill condo tied to a lobbyist who represents fossil fuel clients.

At least three congressional Republicans and a chorus of Democrats have called for Pruitt's ouster. But President Donald Trump is so far standing by him.

A review of Pruitt's ethical conduct by White House officials is underway, adding to probes by congressional oversight committees and EPA's inspector general.

Pruitt, 49, was closely aligned with the oil and gas industry as Oklahoma's state attorney general before being tapped by Trump. Trump has praised Pruitt's relentless efforts to scrap, delay or rewrite Obama-era environmental regulations. He also has championed budget cuts and staff reductions at the agency so deep that even Republican budget hawks in Congress refused to implement them.

EPA's press office has refused to disclose the cost of Pruitt's security or the size of his protective detail, saying doing so could imperil his personal safety.

But other sources within EPA and documents released through public information requests help provide a window into the ballooning costs.

In his first three months in office, before pricey overseas trips to Italy and Morocco, the price tag for Pruitt's security detail hit more than \$832,000, according to EPA documents released through a public information request.

Nearly three dozen EPA security and law enforcement agents were assigned to Pruitt, according to a summary of six weeks of weekly schedules obtained by Democratic Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island.

Those schedules show multiple EPA security agents accompanied Pruitt on a family vacation to California that featured a day at Disneyland and a New Year's Day football game where his home state Oklahoma Sooners were playing in the Rose Bowl. Multiple agents also accompanied Pruitt to a baseball game at the

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University of Kentucky and at his house outside Tulsa, during which no official EPA events were scheduled.

On weekend trips home for Sooners football games, when taxpayers weren't paying for his ticket, the EPA official said Pruitt flew coach. He sometimes used a companion pass obtained with frequent flyer miles accumulated by Ken Wagner, a former law partner whom Pruitt hired as a senior adviser at EPA at a salary of more than \$172,000. Taxpayers still covered the airfare for the administrator's security detail.

Pruitt's predecessor, Gina McCarthy, had a security detail that numbered about a half dozen, less than a third the size of Pruitt's. She flew coach and was not accompanied by security during her off hours, like on weekend trips home to Boston.

Pruitt was accompanied by nine aides and a security detail during a trip to Italy in June that cost more than \$120,000. He visited the U.S. Embassy in Rome and took a private tour of the Vatican before briefly attending a meeting of G-7 environmental ministers in Bologna.

Private Italian security guards hired by Perrotta helped arrange an expansive motorcade for Pruitt and his entourage, according to the EPA official with direct knowledge of the trip. The source described the Italian additions as personal friends of Perrotta, who joined Pruitt and his EPA staff for an hours-long dinner at an upscale restaurant.

Perrotta's biography, on the website of his company, Sequoia Security Group, says that during his earlier stint with the Secret Service he worked with the Guardia di Finanza, the Italian finance police.

The EPA spent nearly \$9,000 last year on increased counter-surveillance precautions for Pruitt, including hiring a private contractor to sweep his office for hidden listening devices and installing sophisticated biometric locks for the doors. The payment for the bug sweep went to a vice president at Perrotta's security company.

The EPA official who spoke to AP said Perrotta also arranged the installation of a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth for Pruitt's office.

At least five EPA officials were placed on leave, reassigned or demoted after pushing back against spending requests such as a \$100,000-a-month private jet membership, a bulletproof vehicle and \$70,000 for furniture such as a bulletproof desk for the armed security officer always stationed inside the administrator's office suite.

Those purchases were not approved. But Pruitt got an ornate refurbished desk comparable in grandeur to the one in the Oval Office.

Among the officials who faced consequences for resisting such spending was EPA Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations Kevin Chmielewski, a former Trump campaign staffer who was placed on unpaid administrative leave this year.

The prior head of Pruitt's security detail, Eric Weese, was demoted last year after he refused Pruitt's demand to use the lights and sirens on his government-owned SUV to get him through Washington traffic to the airport and dinner reservations.

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

Koreas discuss communication issues ahead of summit

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North and South Korea on Saturday held talks over establishing a telephone hotline between their leaders and other communication issues ahead of a rare summit between the rivals later this month.

The closed-door talks between working-level officials at a border village were part of preparatory discussions to set up the April 27 summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. The meeting, only the third summit between the Koreas since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, could prove to be significant in the global diplomatic push to resolve the standoff over North Korea's nuclear program.

A summit between Kim and President Donald Trump is anticipated in May.

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Before Saturday's meeting, South Korea didn't specify what would be discussed other than the hotline between the leaders. The Koreans have agreed not to disclose the contents of their preparatory talks until they reach an agreement, Moon's office said. The Koreans agreed on the date of the summit in a high-level meeting last week.

South Korea, which has shuttled between Pyongyang and Washington to set up the talks, said Kim had expressed willingness to talk about giving up nuclear weapons during his upcoming meetings with Moon and Trump. The North has yet to officially confirm such intent or Kim's interest in meeting Trump.

Kim last month made a surprise visit to Beijing and met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, a move widely seen as strengthening the North's position ahead of his talks with Moon and Trump. China, North Korea's only major ally and main economic lifeline, has been calling for a "dual suspension" of North Korean nuclear and missile activities in return for the United States and South Korea suspending their large-scale military exercises.

The Koreans earlier this week held separate working-level discussions on the protocol, security and media coverage issues of the inter-Korean summit. The countries will hold at least one more meeting on these issues to discuss the summit's agenda.

Working-level officials need to determine how Kim would arrive at the southern side of the border village for the summit.

South Korean media have speculated whether Kim, who has a flair for the dramatic, would cross the Military Demarcation Line that bisects the countries in a symbolic gesture of peace. The Koreans have to also decide how many times Kim and Moon would meet on April 27 and whether parts of the summit would be broadcast on live television.

The rivals agreed to set up a hotline between the offices of Kim and Moon in March when Moon's envoys visited Kim in Pyongyang. In a subsequent trip to Washington, Moon's envoys brokered a meeting between Kim and Trump, who said he would meet the North Korean leader by May.

South Korea says a functional hotline between Kim and Moon would help facilitate dialogue and reduce misunderstanding during times of tension. Moon and Kim plan to hold their first telephone conversation sometime before their face-to-face meeting, according to Moon's office.

North Korea's abrupt diplomatic outreach since the start of the year has brought a temporary lull to tensions sparked by its flurry of nuclear weapons and missile tests last year that resulted in Kim and Trump exchanging crude insults and threats of war.

The North last year tested a purported thermonuclear warhead and three intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to strike the continental United States. It also flew two midrange missiles over Japan while threatening to fire similar weapons toward Guam, the Pacific U.S. military hub.

The United States responded by frequently sending its strategic assets such as long-range bombers and aircraft carriers to the region in a show of force and floating talks of military options against North Korea.

Follow Kim Tong Hyung on Twitter at @KimTongHyung

China applies its own maximum pressure policy on Pyongyang

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — As the U.S.-North Korea summit looms, President Donald Trump's maximum pressure policy on North Korea may be working — thanks to China.

Beijing appears to have gone well beyond U.N. sanctions on its unruly neighbor, reducing its total imports from North Korea in the first two months this year by 78.5 and 86.1 percent in value — a decline that began in late 2017, according to the latest trade data from China. Its exports to the North also dropped by 33 percent to 34 percent both months.

The figures suggest that instead of being sidelined while North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made his surprising diplomatic overtures to Seoul and Washington, China's sustained game of hardball on trade with Pyongyang going back at least five months may have been the decisive factor in forcing Kim's hand.

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Trade with China is absolutely crucial to North Korea's survival.

It accounts for the largest share of the North's dealings with the outside world and provides a lifeline to many of the necessities Pyongyang relies on to keep its nation fed and its economy from breaking down. Estimates vary, but it is believed that roughly half of all transactions in the North Korean economy are made in foreign currencies, with the Chinese yuan being the most common.

That gives Beijing tremendous leverage, though for political and national security reasons it has generally been reluctant to exert too much pressure on Pyongyang.

That reluctance is clearly wearing thin.

The statistics need to be taken with a dose of caution. Neither country is known for its commitment to transparency. Even so, more specific data reveal an even tougher, targeted crackdown, according to Alex Wolf, a senior emerging markets economist with Aberdeen Standard Investments:

— China's exports of refined petroleum have collapsed over the past five months — to an annual rate of less than 4 percent of what it exported last year. With the pace on a downward trend, he believes, total exports could actually fall further.

— North Korean steel imports from China have also collapsed in 2018, and the same goes for cars. Wolf notes that it's unclear if China is blocking such exports or North Korea simply can't afford them. But either one, he wrote in a recent report for the company, would be a clear signal the North's economy is "under a great deal of stress."

"While China's role over the past few months has often been overlooked or little understood, it appears a strategy could be emerging: China wants to play a central role in 'resolving' this crisis, but wants to do it on its own terms," he wrote. "It's increasingly clear that Chinese pressure is a driving force and China will play a central role in any future talks."

Kim announced in his New Year's address he would reach out to the South to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. He then agreed to hold a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in on April 27 and with Trump after that. But to the surprise of many, Kim suddenly showed up in Beijing first for a summit with President Xi Jinping last month, underscoring the continued primacy of China in North Korea's foreign relationships.

Lu Chao, director of the Border Study Institute at the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences, noted that China accounts for almost 80 percent of the North's total trade, meaning the onus for implementing U.N. sanctions has been mainly borne by Beijing, whose enforcement has created "huge pressure on North Korea."

"There is no doubt China is doing more than ever when it comes to sanctions," he said, adding restrictions on sales of textile and seafood products to North Korea imposed by China last autumn "have dealt a huge blow to the country."

"China has played a very important role in promoting the current change of the situation," he said.

The decrease in trade isn't just about politics.

China's economy is also dealing with overproduction in many industries and its demand for North Korean imports is low. Efforts at joint development projects have languished and difficulties suffered by Chinese firms in North Korea — especially problems receiving payment — have soured enthusiasm for cross-border trade.

But the deficit presents an obvious dilemma for the Kim regime: the more it depletes its foreign reserves by buying in excess of what it sells, the less money it has to buy anything at all. Normally, that would lead to inflation — and even hyperinflation — as imported necessities become scarcer and people who can afford to do so dump their holdings in the local currency to buy safer U.S. dollars or Chinese yuan.

Georgetown University economist William Brown said he believes the North's current account deficit has risen dramatically since the strengthening last November of sanctions on North Korean exports by China, which he said are by now "certainly biting."

"Why is Kim venturing his offer now? My impression is he is feeling very strong pressure from China's virtual embargo on North Korea's exports, and what he must see as a gradual ratcheting down of needed imports, even petroleum," Brown wrote in a recent blog post. "This is an enormous economic hit of a sort

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the country has never had to deal with on this scale.”

Brown believes an important indicator of the North’s economic health will be movement of the unofficial but widely used exchange rate for the North Korean currency, which has been surprisingly stable at around 8,000 to the U.S. dollar for years but should now be under intense inflationary pressure.

“China is giving us the chance, and (we should) use it cleverly to get what we want out of the nuclear program and systemic reform,” he added. “It’s not so impossible if you realize everyone, even young Kim, can benefit.”

Associated Press researcher Yu Bing in Beijing contributed to this report. Talmadge is the AP’s Pyongyang bureau chief. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram: @EricTalmadge.

Northern California rains raise rivers, and flood concerns

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Tourists streamed out of Yosemite National Park, San Francisco baseball fans had a game cancelled by rain for the first time in a dozen years, and authorities kept a close eye on swelling rivers and rising water at a damaged dam as a “Pineapple Express” storm drenched Northern California.

San Francisco had record rainfall on Friday as an “atmospheric river” of subtropical moisture streaming from Hawaii pounded the north while leaving Southern California high and dry.

No major problems were reported but flood warnings and watches remained in effect Saturday for the Sierra Nevada, the Santa Cruz Mountains south of San Francisco and other areas while authorities warned that flash floods, mudflows and rockslides were possible in heavy rain, especially in the wine country north of San Francisco where wildfires last October stripped the ground bare of soil-gripping plant life.

Runoff from melting snow could add to the chance of rapidly rising mountain streams and rivers in the Sierra, the National Weather Service warned.

Yosemite National Park closed campgrounds and lodging in its busy Yosemite Valley because of flooding concerns, with the Merced River there expected to peak 5 feet (1.5 meters) above flood stage on Saturday.

Downtown San Francisco saw nearly 2 inches (5 centimeters) of rain Friday, making it the fourth-wettest April day since records began.

San Francisco International Airport reported about 150 cancelled flights because of the weather and others were delayed an hour or more.

A cancelled flight stranded Santa Rosa native Lydia Smith who was trying to reach Oregon for a baby shower.

“I’m like on the verge of tears,” she told KGO-TV.

The opener of the San Francisco Giants-Los Angeles Dodgers weekend series was rained out, the first at the Giants ballpark in 12 years. Saturday’s game was also pushed back by two hours to 3:05 PDT.

Sacramento broke its record for the day with well over an inch (2.5 centimeters).

Some areas got much more rain, however.

In Sonoma County on Friday, rescuers pulled two people and two dogs from a car that became swamped to the door handles on a flooded road. Bodega Bay in the county received nearly 6 inches (15.2 centimeters) of rain for the day — more than the entire rainfall total for March, according to the weather service.

The big concern wasn’t the amount of rain but how fast it might fall.

“When we start talking about half an inch of rain or more an hour, that’s where we’re more susceptible to mudslides and debris flow in and around our burn zones,” said Paul Lowenthal of the Santa Rosa Fire Department.

The wine country city, which was one of the hardest-hit burn areas last fall, brought in extra firefighters and emergency personnel.

To the north, state officials warned this week that they may have to use the partially rebuilt spillway at Oroville Dam for the first time since repairs began on the badly damaged structure last summer.

Behind the dam, Lake Oroville has been filling up all winter, and more water was coming in than flowing out Friday. The water level Friday night had topped 793 feet (242 meters). If it reaches about 830 feet

(253 meters), water managers said they may open the gates to the spillway.

In February 2017, a massive crater opened up in the 3,000-foot (914-meter) concrete chute that releases water from Lake Oroville, California's second-largest reservoir.

Crews shut down the spillway for inspections just as a major storm dumped a torrent of rain. The lake quickly filled, and water began flowing over an emergency spillway that had never been used.

The water eroded the barren hillside beneath the spillway, leading to fears it would collapse and release a wall of water that could swamp communities downstream. Authorities ordered nearly 200,000 people to flee, but the crisis was averted.

California officials say they hope to avoid using the main spillway but are confident it can safely function.

EPA chief fights for his job in meeting with Trump

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Environmental Protection Agency administrator Scott Pruitt has met with President Donald Trump to make his case for why he should remain in his post amid a stream of questions about his ethical standing.

Pruitt visited the White House Friday to discuss his agency's recent steps to roll back Obama-era fuel efficiency standards for cars. But administration officials say he also fought for his job in his meeting with the president.

While some White House aides are increasingly fed up with Pruitt and chief of staff John Kelly has advocated firing him, Trump remains less certain. Pruitt is one of the most effective members of his Cabinet in undermining his predecessor's regulatory agenda, and Trump enjoys his hard-charging style.

9 killed, scores wounded by Israeli fire in Gaza protest

By FARES AKRAM and MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH, Associated Press

KHUZAA, Gaza Strip (AP) — Thousands of Palestinians protested along Gaza's sealed border with Israel on Friday, engulfing the volatile area in black smoke from burning tires to try to block the view of Israeli snipers and cheering a Hamas strongman who pledged that the border fence will eventually fall.

Israeli troops opened fire from across the border, killing at least nine Palestinians and wounding 491 others — 33 of them seriously — in the second mass border protest in a week, Gaza health officials said. A well-known Palestinian journalist was among the dead, and hundreds of others suffered other injuries, including tear gas inhalation, the officials said.

The deaths brought to at least 31 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli fire since last week.

Early Saturday, Palestinian health officials confirmed that Yasser Murtaga had died from a gunshot wound sustained while covering demonstrations near the Israeli border in Khuzaa. The area was the scene of large protests Friday, and was covered in thick black smoke.

Murtaga was over 100 meters (yards) from the border, wearing a flak jacket marked "press" and holding his camera when he was shot in an exposed area just below the armpit. Journalists were in the area as protesters were setting tires on fire.

The Israeli military has said it fired only at "instigators" involved in attacks on soldiers or the border fence. It had no immediate comment.

Murtaga worked for Ain media, a local TV production company that has done projects, including aerial drone video, for foreign media. He was not affiliated with Hamas or any other militant group.

The latest casualties were bound to draw new criticism from rights groups that have branded Israel's open-fire orders on the border as unlawful, after Israel's defense minister warned that those approaching the fence were risking their lives.

The U.N. human rights office said Friday that it has indications that Israeli forces used "excessive force" against protesters last week, when 15 Palestinians were killed or later died of wounds sustained near the border.

An Israeli military spokesman defended the rules of engagement.

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"If they are actively attacking the fence, if they are throwing a molotov cocktail that is within striking distance of Israeli troops or similar activities, then those persons, those rioters, become, may become, a target," said Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus.

Friday's large crowds suggested that Hamas, the Islamic militant group that has ruled Gaza since a 2007 takeover, might be able to keep the momentum going in the next few weeks. Hamas has called for a series of protests until May 15, the anniversary of Israel's founding when Palestinians commemorate their mass uprooting during the 1948 war over Israel's creation.

Israel has alleged that Hamas is using the mass marches as a cover for attacking the border fence, and has vowed to prevent a breach at all costs.

The military said that on Friday, protesters hurled several explosive devices and firebombs, using the thick plumes of smoke from burning tires as a cover, and that several attempts to cross the fence were thwarted.

Gaza's shadowy Hamas strongman, Yehiyeh Sinwar, told a cheering crowd in one of the protest camps Friday that a border breach is coming.

The world should "wait for our great move, when we penetrate the borders and pray at Al-Aqsa," Sinwar said, referring to the major Muslim shrine in Jerusalem.

He was interrupted several times by the crowd, who chanted, "We are going to Jerusalem, millions of martyrs!" and "God bless you Sinwar!"

The mass protests are perhaps Hamas' last chance to break a border blockade enforced by Israel and Egypt since 2007, without having to succumb to demands that it disarm. The blockade has made it increasingly difficult for Hamas to govern. It has also devastated Gaza's economy, made it virtually impossible for people to enter and exit the territory, and left residents with just a few hours of electricity a day.

Israel argues that Hamas could have ended the suffering of Gaza's 2 million people by disarming and renouncing violence.

Friday's marches began before Muslim noon prayers when thousands of Palestinians streamed to five tent encampments that organizers had set up several hundred meters (yards) from the border fence.

In one camp near the border community of Khuzaa, smaller groups of activists moved closer to the fence after the prayers. Demonstrators torched large piles of tires, engulfing the area in black smoke meant to shield them from Israeli snipers; the faces of some of the activists were covered in black soot.

Israeli troops on the other side of the fence responded with live fire, tear gas, rubber-coated steel pellets and water cannons.

After the first tires started burning, several young men with gunshot wounds began arriving at a field clinic at the camp.

Mohammed Ashour, 20, who had been among the first to set tires on fire, was shot in the right arm.

"We came here because we want dignity," he said resting on a stretcher before paramedics transported him to the strip's main hospital.

Yehia Abu Daqqa, a 20-year-old student, said he had come to honor those killed in previous protests.

"Yes, there is fear," he said of the risks of advancing toward the fence. "We are here to tell the occupation that we are not weak."

The death toll since last week includes at least 24 people killed during the two Friday protests at the border, as well as one killed during a protest on Tuesday. The six other deaths include three Palestinian gunmen killed in what Israel said were attempts to attack the border fence and three men who were struck by Israeli tank fire.

Speaking at U.N. headquarters in New York, Palestinian U.N. Ambassador Riyad Mansour put the death toll for Friday's protest at nine; the discrepancy between that figure and the death toll provided by the Gaza Health Ministry could not immediately be explained.

More than 1,000 people suffered a range of injuries on Friday, including those hit by live fire and those overcome by tear gas, the Gaza health ministry said. Twelve women and 48 minors were among those hurt, the officials said.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged all parties to exercise maximum re-

straint, said U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

He said U.N. Mideast envoy Nickolay Mladenov had been in touch with Israeli and Palestinian officials to reinforce "the need to allow people to demonstrate peacefully." Mladenov stressed the need to ensure that "excessive force is not used, and the need to ensure that children are not deliberately put in harm's way," Dujarric said.

For a second week in a row, the United States blocked a U.N. Security Council statement supporting the right of Palestinians to demonstrate peacefully and endorsing Guterres' call for an independent investigation into the deadly protests in Gaza.

Palestinian U.N. Ambassador Riyad Mansour told reporters at U.N. headquarters in New York Friday evening that 14 of the 15 council nations agreed to the statement, but the U.S., Israel's closest ally, objected.

A White House envoy urged Palestinians to stay away from the fence. Jason Greenblatt said the United States condemns "leaders and protesters who call for violence or who send protesters — including children — to the fence, knowing that they may be injured or killed."

Hamas has billed the final protest, set for May 15, as the "Great March of Return" of Palestinian refugees and their descendants, implying they would try to enter Israel. Two-thirds of Gaza's residents are descendants of refugees.

Palestinians commemorate May 15 as their "nakba," or catastrophe, when hundreds of thousands were uprooted from homes in what is now Israel.

Daraghmeh reported from Ramallah, West Bank. Associated Press writers Karin Laub in Ramallah, Ian Deitch in Jerusalem, Josef Federman on the Gaza border and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

House's No. 2 Dem searches for a last shot at the top spot

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi is not welcome in Trump country, which was probably one reason another top Democrat — her long-term rival Steny Hoyer — was zipping through Republican-friendly corners of western Wisconsin this week.

Hoyer, the Maryland centrist and perpetual leader-in-waiting in the House of Representatives, was on a mission to woo blue-collar voters and help his party win back control of the House.

He was also looking for what could be his last shot.

"Would I like to be speaker? Of course. Would I be disappointed if it doesn't happen? No," the No. 2 House Democrat said by phone, reflecting on his long career as he cut through snow-covered rolling hills, a world away from his Chesapeake Bay home turf.

Hoyer has been eying the top spot for more than a decade, living in the shadow of a San Francisco Democrat who has a white-knuckle grip on power. Now, as the party wrestles with its ideological impulses and younger lawmakers push for a generational shift — both he and Pelosi are 78 years old — Hoyer may be looking for one more play.

Replacing one longtime leader with another is not what many Democrats have in mind. Still, Hoyer is actively, if quietly, seeking lawmakers' support. His allies put him forward as a possible "bridge" leader, who might ease a transition to a next generation — if Pelosi ever steps aside. Others find far-fetched the notion that a white, male centrist from blue Maryland would be the new face of the Democratic Party.

Those questions, Hoyer insisted, are for another day. On Thursday, he was dashing to keep a lunch date at the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce in Wisconsin to listen to a crowd of Midwestern voters, including those who backed Trump.

"I'm going in to talk to Americans," he said. "It's not Trump country or Hoyer country. These are Americans."

As Democrats battle to win back some two dozen House seats, the fight for majority control is also a struggle between the liberal and centrist wings over how best to frame the party's image and priorities

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in the age of Trump.

Several House candidates face bruising primary contests this spring that will showcase the divide. But perhaps nowhere is it more apparent than in the simmering saga of House Democratic leadership.

Younger lawmakers talk about sweeping all the top leaders from office as they hunger for fresh faces. New York Rep. Joe Crowley is among those often mentioned among up-and-comers, but others are in the wings, and a person close to him said he is focused right now on helping Democrats win the House.

Pelosi meanwhile shows no signs of retiring, especially as she has the chance to wield the speaker's gavel if Democrats regain the House. Nearly a year younger than Hoyer — they were on staff together in the Capitol decades ago — Pelosi is undeterred by the constant chatter or year-round GOP attack ads pillorying her leadership.

Asked recently how she felt about no-votes from Democratic candidates like Conor Lamb, who won a special election in a Trump-district in Pennsylvania but said he wouldn't back Pelosi, she quipped it's just not as important as winning the seat and the House majority.

That leaves Hoyer's allies floating the unusual idea of him becoming a short-term leader — someone who could temporarily take the helm, if and when Pelosi steps down, to ease the transition.

It's a hard sell.

While few lawmakers or aides will talk openly about what's to come, some dismissed the idea as setting up a lame-duck leader who would have little control over the caucus and only prolong the day when younger members could rise.

Republicans scoff at Hoyer's attempt influence the fall midterms by swooping in to Trump districts to drum up support for Democrats.

"It's not like... 'Ladies and Gentlemen, the Majority Whip!' and he comes out to strobe lights," said Matt Gorman, a spokesman for the GOP's campaign committee in the House. "People don't know who Steny Hoyer is."

Then again, Hoyer's ability to show up with his "Make it in America" listening tour can't hurt. He has stopped in Pittsburgh; Toledo, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri, and other places this election cycle, and while he may not move masses, lawmakers welcome his ability to make inroads in places where Democrats don't always tread.

"Steny Hoyer went to Peoria, Illinois, it's sort of the epicenter of America," said Rep. Cheri Bustos, who represents a Trump-won district in the northwestern part of the state and is also often mentioned for a future party leadership role.

"We have to pick up 23 seats to win back the majority, and most of those are right here in the heartland of America. This is where we need to pay attention."

As Hoyer made his way to Eau Claire this week, he spotted an outbuilding on the landscape that reminded him of the tobacco barn on his own property back home in Mechanicsville, Maryland, in the southern part of the state where he is seeking re-election to a 20th term in office.

"I'm glad that people welcome me to our districts," he said. "We are the party of the people, we are the party of workers... men and women in this country who are the reason this country is great — historically, and now."

Hosting his arrival was Rep. Ron Kind, one of four Democrats who voted against Pelosi during the last leadership race, at the Chamber luncheon.

"Steny's been at the forefront of this, the message works incredibly well around here," Kind said in an interview. "Showing up, being respectful and listening."

Follow Mascaro on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/LisaMascaro>

Arizona, Texas send 400 troops to border after Trump's call

By **PAUL J. WEBER and NOMAAN MERCHANT, Associated Press**

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Arizona and Texas announced Friday that they would send 400 National Guard members to the U.S.-Mexico border by next week in response to President Donald Trump's call for troops to fight drug trafficking and illegal immigration.

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey said about 150 Guard members would deploy next week. And the Texas National Guard said it was already sending Guardsmen to the border, with plans to place 250 troops there in the next 72 hours as an "initial surge," according to a Guard spokesman. Two helicopters lifted off Friday night from Austin, the state capital, to head south.

The total so far remains well short of the 2,000 to 4,000 National Guard members that Trump told reporters he wants to send. New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez's office said Friday that it had not yet deployed any Guard members. The office of California Gov. Jerry Brown did not respond to questions about whether it would deploy troops.

Trump's proclamation Wednesday directing the use of National Guard troops refers to Title 32, a federal law under which Guard members remain under the command and control of their state's governor. This leaves open the possibility that California's Brown could turn him down.

Defense Secretary James Mattis Friday night approved paying for up to 4,000 National Guard personnel from the Pentagon budget through the end of September. A Defense Department memo says the National Guard personnel will not perform law enforcement functions or "interact with migrants or other persons detained" without Mattis's approval. It said "arming will be limited to circumstances that might require self-defense," but it did not further define that.

Deployments to the border under former presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama both occurred under Title 32. Bush sent around 6,000 troops in 2006, and Obama sent 1,200 Guard members in 2010.

Trump's proclamation blamed "the lawlessness that continues at our southern border." Trump has suggested he wants to use the military on the border until progress is made on his proposed border wall, which has mostly stalled in Congress.

After plunging at the start of Trump's presidency, the numbers of migrants apprehended at the southwest border have started to rise in line with historical trends. The Border Patrol said it caught around 50,000 people in March, more than three times the number in March 2017. That's erased a decline for which Trump repeatedly took credit. Border apprehensions still remain well below the numbers when Bush and Obama deployed the Guard to the border.

News reports of a caravan of Central American migrants passing through southern Mexico also sparked angry tweets from the president. The caravan of largely Central American migrants never intended to reach the U.S. border, according to organizer Irineo Mujica. But Trump has repeatedly cited it as an example of what he called America's weak immigration laws.

Department of Homeland Security officials have said Guard members could support Border Patrol agents and other law enforcement agencies. DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said this week that guard members could "help look at the technology, the surveillance," and that the department might ask for fleet mechanics. Federal law restricts the military from carrying out law enforcement duties.

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.

Leaders in both Arizona and Texas said Friday that they were working with federal planners to define the Guard members' mission.

The Arizona National Guard said in a statement Friday that it would "provide air, reconnaissance, operational and logistics support and construct border infrastructure."

As the helicopters were taking off Friday in Texas, Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Travis Walters said that the 250 troops going "is what our initial surge is so that we can then very quickly roll in a larger amount of forces as needed." Walters did not specify where the first round of troops would be stationed.

About 100 Guardsmen remain deployed as part of the existing state mission in Texas' Rio Grande Valley,

the busiest corridor for unauthorized crossings on the southwest border.

Former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, now Trump's energy secretary, originally sent about 1,000 Guard members to the border in 2014 in response to a surge in the number of unaccompanied immigrant children crossing the Rio Grande.

Associated Press writers Bob Christie in Phoenix and Susan Montoya Bryan in Albuquerque contributed to this report. Nomaan Merchant reported from Houston.

AP sources: EPA chief spent millions on security and travel

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt's concern with his safety came at a steep cost to taxpayers as his swollen security detail blew through overtime budgets and at times diverted officers away from investigating environmental crimes.

Altogether, the agency spent millions of dollars for a 20-member full-time detail that is more than three times the size of his predecessor's part-time security contingent.

New details in Pruitt's expansive spending for security and travel emerged from agency sources and documents reviewed by The Associated Press. They come as the embattled EPA leader fends off allegations of profligate spending and ethical missteps that have imperiled his job.

Shortly after arriving in Washington, Pruitt demoted the career staff member heading his security detail and replaced him with EPA Senior Special Agent Pasquale "Nino" Perrotta, a former Secret Service agent who operates a private security company.

An EPA official with direct knowledge of Pruitt's security spending says Perrotta oversaw a rapid expansion of the EPA chief's security detail to accommodate guarding him day and night, even on family vacations and when Pruitt was home in Oklahoma. The EPA official spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

Perrotta also signed off on new procedures that let Pruitt fly first-class on commercial airliners, with the security chief typically sitting next to him with other security staff farther back in the plane. Pruitt's premium status gave him and his security chief access to VIP airport lounges.

The EPA official said there are legitimate concerns about Pruitt's safety, given public opposition to his rollbacks of anti-pollution measures.

But Pruitt's ambitious domestic and international travel led to rapidly escalating costs, with the security detail racking up so much overtime that many hit annual salary caps of about \$160,000. The demands of providing 24-hour coverage even meant taking some investigators away from field work, such as when Pruitt traveled to California for a family vacation.

The EPA official said total security costs approached \$3 million when pay is added to travel expenses.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said late Friday that Pruitt has faced an "unprecedented" amount of death threats against him and his family.

"Americans should all agree that members of the President's cabinet should be kept safe from these violent threats," Wilcox said.

A nationwide search of state and federal court records by AP found no case where anyone has been arrested or charged with threatening Pruitt. EPA's press office did not respond Friday to provide details of any specific threats or arrests.

Pruitt has said his use of first-class airfare was initiated following unpleasant interactions with other travelers. In one incident, someone yelled a profanity as he walked through the airport.

The EPA administrator has come under intense scrutiny for ethics issues and outsized spending. Among the concerns: massive raises for two of closest aides and his rental of a Capitol Hill condo tied to a lobbyist who represents fossil fuel clients.

At least three congressional Republicans and a chorus of Democrats have called for Pruitt's ouster. But President Donald Trump is so far standing by him.

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A review of Pruitt's ethical conduct by White House officials is underway, adding to probes by congressional oversight committees and EPA's inspector general.

Pruitt, 49, was closely aligned with the oil and gas industry as Oklahoma's state attorney general before being tapped by Trump. Trump has praised Pruitt's relentless efforts to scrap, delay or rewrite Obama-era environmental regulations. He also has championed budget cuts and staff reductions at the agency so deep that even Republican budget hawks in Congress refused to implement them.

EPA's press office has refused to disclose the cost of Pruitt's security or the size of his protective detail, saying doing so could imperil his personal safety.

But other sources within EPA and documents released through public information requests help provide a window into the ballooning costs.

In his first three months in office, before pricey overseas trips to Italy and Morocco, the price tag for Pruitt's security detail hit more than \$832,000, according to EPA documents released through a public information request.

Nearly three dozen EPA security and law enforcement agents were assigned to Pruitt, according to a summary of six weeks of weekly schedules obtained by Democratic Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island.

Those schedules show multiple EPA security agents accompanied Pruitt on a family vacation to California that featured a day at Disneyland and a New Year's Day football game where his home state Oklahoma Sooners were playing in the Rose Bowl. Multiple agents also accompanied Pruitt to a baseball game at the University of Kentucky and at his house outside Tulsa, during which no official EPA events were scheduled.

On weekend trips home for Sooners football games, when taxpayers weren't paying for his ticket, the EPA official said Pruitt flew coach. He sometimes used a companion pass obtained with frequent flyer miles accumulated by Ken Wagner, a former law partner whom Pruitt hired as a senior adviser at EPA at a salary of more than \$172,000. Taxpayers still covered the airfare for the administrator's security detail.

Pruitt's predecessor, Gina McCarthy, had a security detail that numbered about a half dozen, less than a third the size of Pruitt's. She flew coach and was not accompanied by security during her off hours, like on weekend trips home to Boston.

Pruitt was accompanied by nine aides and a security detail during a trip to Italy in June that cost more than \$120,000. He visited the U.S. Embassy in Rome and took a private tour of the Vatican before briefly attending a meeting of G-7 environmental ministers in Bologna.

Private Italian security guards hired by Perrotta helped arrange an expansive motorcade for Pruitt and his entourage, according to the EPA official with direct knowledge of the trip. The source described the Italian additions as personal friends of Perrotta, who joined Pruitt and his EPA staff for an hours-long dinner at an upscale restaurant.

Perrotta's biography, on the website of his company, Sequoia Security Group, says that during his earlier stint with the Secret Service he worked with the Guardia di Finanza, the Italian finance police.

The EPA spent nearly \$9,000 last year on increased counter-surveillance precautions for Pruitt, including hiring a private contractor to sweep his office for hidden listening devices and installing sophisticated biometric locks for the doors. The payment for the bug sweep went to a vice president at Perrotta's security company.

The EPA official who spoke to AP said Perrotta also arranged the installation of a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth for Pruitt's office.

At least five EPA officials were placed on leave, reassigned or demoted after pushing back against spending requests such as a \$100,000-a-month private jet membership, a bulletproof vehicle and \$70,000 for furniture such as a bulletproof desk for the armed security officer always stationed inside the administrator's office suite.

Those purchases were not approved. But Pruitt got an ornate refurbished desk comparable in grandeur to the one in the Oval Office.

Among the officials who faced consequences for resisting such spending was EPA Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations Kevin Chmielewski, a former Trump campaign staffer who was placed on unpaid adminis-

trative leave this year.

The prior head of Pruitt's security detail, Eric Weese, was demoted last year after he refused Pruitt's demand to use the lights and sirens on his government-owned SUV to get him through Washington traffic to the airport and dinner reservations.

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

Rain shuts Yosemite, threatens problems at tallest US dam

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A fierce Northern California storm Friday shut down Yosemite National Park, threatened mudslides in wildfire-ravaged wine country and could present the first test of a partially repaired offshoot of the nation's tallest dam that nearly collapsed last year.

Recent heavy rainfall has led to problems for a state recovering from devastating wildfires, forcing people to flee their homes repeatedly for fear of debris flows tearing down hillsides stripped bare by flames. But the downpours also have provided relief as parts of California plunged back into drought less than a year after a historic dry stretch.

The so-called "Pineapple Express" carrying moisture from Hawaii had dumped around 2 inches (5 centimeters) of rain in many areas and as much as 5 inches (12 centimeters) in Sonoma County by Friday evening, according to the National Weather Service.

Some places in the Santa Cruz Mountains south of San Francisco could see up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain over a three-day period, leading forecasters to warn of possible flooding, mudslides and rockslides.

San Francisco International Airport reported about 150 flights — 10 percent of the flight schedule — were cancelled because of the weather and others were delayed an hour or more.

A cancelled flight stranded Santa Rosa native Lydia Smith who was trying to reach Oregon for a baby shower.

"I'm like on the verge of tears," she told KGO-TV.

Yosemite National Park closed campgrounds and lodging in its busy Yosemite Valley because of flooding concerns, with the Merced River there expected to peak 5 feet above flood stage on Saturday.

The opener of the San Francisco Giants-Los Angeles Dodgers weekend series was rained out, the first at the Giants ballpark in 12 years.

About 50 miles north in wine country scorched during October wildfires, the National Weather Service predicted 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 centimeters) of rainfall through Sunday.

The city of Santa Rosa, one of the hardest-hit burn areas, brought in extra firefighters and emergency personnel, fire department spokesman Paul Lowenthal said.

It's not the amount of rainfall worrying city officials but the rate at which it falls, he said. Workers have been monitoring hundreds of storm drains, especially those protecting neighborhoods destroyed by fire.

"When we start talking about half an inch of rain or more an hour, that's where we're more susceptible to mudslides and debris flow in and around our burn zones," Lowenthal said.

The weather service issued several flood warnings throughout Northern California ahead of the expected "atmospheric river," a long plume of subtropical moisture stretching to areas near Lake Tahoe.

To the north, state officials warned this week that they may have to use the partially rebuilt spillway at Oroville Dam for the first time since repairs began on the badly damaged structure last summer.

Behind the dam, Lake Oroville has been filling up all winter, and more water was coming in than flowing out Friday. The water level was last at 793 feet (242 meters) and dropping. If it reaches about 830 feet (253 meters), water managers say they will open the gates to the spillway.

In February 2017, a massive crater opened up in the 3,000-foot (914-meter) concrete chute that releases water from Lake Oroville, California's second-largest reservoir.

Crews shut down the spillway for inspections just as a major storm dumped a torrent of rain. The lake quickly filled, and water began flowing over an emergency spillway that had never been used.

The water eroded the barren hillside beneath the spillway, leading to fears it would collapse and release

a wall of water that could swamp communities downstream. Authorities ordered nearly 200,000 people to flee, but the crisis was averted.

California officials say they hope to avoid using the main spillway but are confident it can safely function.

News that the spillway may be needed has concerned some people in the city of Oroville, said Genoa Widener, a vocal critic of the water agency.

While some of her friends have decided to leave for the weekend to be safe, Widener said she's not concerned the storm will pose a threat. Still, she's frustrated there's even a question about it.

"They have the lake rise so much in the last month to try to have some kind of water stored going into the summer," she said. "So they've kind of put us in this position again."

Leroy Mudrick said he's not worried because the water level is much lower than it was before last year's storm.

"The lake is still way down," Mudrick said.

Reed takes lead as Masters takes shape without Tiger in mix

By DOUG FERGUSON, AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Patrick Reed is leading a major championship for the first time, and his confidence is so high that he can only see what's ahead of him.

Maybe that's just as well at this Masters.

Reed started and finished the front nine with three straight birdies. He answered Marc Leishman's bold shot for an eagle by polishing off another run of three straight birdies. It added to a 6-under 66 and a two-shot lead over Leishman going into the weekend at Augusta National.

Right behind them are five major champions.

Nowhere near him are Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson, the two names that generated so much of the buzz for a Masters that otherwise is living up to expectations.

None of it matters to Reed, who is going after his first major.

"Everyone wants to win, and if you don't believe you can win them, then you probably shouldn't be playing in them," Reed said. "I believe that if I play the golf that I know how to play that I can win majors. ... There's a lot of holes left, and I just need to go out and keep to my game plan, play some solid golf and just go out and continue shooting in the 60s and see if it gets the job done."

Dustin Johnson, Justin Thomas, Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy and Henrik Stenson still have a say in that.

Woods and Mickelson probably don't.

Woods hit one shot into a cluster of magnolia trees and another into Rae's Creek. He didn't make a birdie until the 13th hole and had to settle for a 3-over 75, leaving him 13 shots behind. No one has ever won the Masters when trailing by more than eight shots going into the weekend.

"I'm going to have to shoot a special weekend and I need help," Woods said. "I'm not in control of my own destiny."

Mickelson smacked a shot into the trees trying to escape a forest and made triple bogey, deposited a tee shot into Rae's Creek on No. 12 for a double bogey and shot a 79, matching his worst score at Augusta National. He started the day four shots out of the lead. He ended the day making the cut on the number.

Even without them, the show is just getting started.

Reed was a runner-up at the PGA Championship last summer, though he played the final hole without a chance to win. His best performance on the big stage has been in the Ryder Cup.

"Going to treat it just like another day, go out and try to do what I've been doing and stick to my game plan and try to make some more birdies," Reed said.

He was at 9-under 135.

Leishman seized on his moment with the best shot of the day. His tee shot on the 15th was too far left, leaving trees between him and the flag. Instead of laying up from 210 yards, he closed with the face of a 5-iron, aimed toward the right bunker.

"I meant to hook it 30 yards, and I put 40 yards of hook on it," Leishman said with a smile.

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The ball narrowly cleared the mound at the front of the green, caught the slope and settled 6 feet away for an eagle.

"We're not here to lay up," Leishman said. "It's a major. You're going to have to take some chances at some point during the week if you want to win, and that was a time where I thought I had to take a chance. I've been hitting that shot well on the range and I thought it was a prime opportunity to give it a test. And it came off."

Stenson (70) was four shots behind. McIlroy (71) is off to his best 36-hole start in seven years and is looking as poised as ever to capture the fourth leg of the career Grand Slam. Spieth lost his two-shot lead on the first hole and was on the verge of getting left behind until he made a key par putt to close out the front nine with a 40, and then salvaged a 74 to join McIlroy just five shots behind.

"I've always been comfortable around the lead," McIlroy said. "It's a place that I'm thankfully quite familiar with and know how to deal with."

Looming was Johnson, the No. 1 player in the world, who made a 45-foot par putt on the 16th to atone for several birdie putts in the 10-foot range he missed. Johnson had a 68 and was six shots behind, along with Thomas, who had a 67.

Eleven of the 17 players still under par at the halfway point can be found among the top 20 in the world.

Spieth was happy to be near the top after the way he started — a tee shot into the trees on the right and a three putts for a double bogey, and then a drive to the left and three more putts for a bogey. Just like that he was behind, and it kept getting worse. He made bogey from the middle of the fairway on No. 7. He three-putted from long range on the par-5 eighth. And he was headed for a 41 on the front nine until he made a 10-foot par putt.

"I'm still in this golf tournament," Spieth said. "With the way the back nine was playing today, the wheels could have come off there. But I made some nice par saves and was able to grind out some phenomenal second-shot iron shots and good two-putt birdies."

Woods made bogey on the opening hole with a sand wedge from the fairway. He really came undone when his second shot to the fifth bounded over the green and into a grove of magnolia trees. He took a penalty drop to clear room through the branches, put that in the bunker and made double bogey. Very little went right except for a pair of birdies on the par 5s on the back nine.

Looking at the white leaderboards only made him feel worse. The cut is for the top 50 and ties and anyone within 10 shots of the lead. Woods kept seeing Reed make birdies, and he knew he was well outside the 10 shots.

"I was hoping to keep it within 10. I didn't know what my position was, but I think I'm in," he said after his round.

He was tied for 40th.

For more AP golf coverage: <https://apnews.com/tag/apf-Golf> and <https://apnews.com/tag/TheMasters>

Brazil's ex-President 'Lula' defies court, hunkers down

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and PETER PRENGAMAN, Associated Press

SAO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, Brazil (AP) — Former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva defied an order to turn himself in to police on Friday, instead hunkering down with supporters at a metallurgical union that was the spiritual birthplace of his rise to power.

The once wildly popular leader, who rose from poverty to lead Latin America's largest nation, had until 5 p.m. local time to present himself to police in the city of Curitiba to begin serving a sentence of 12 years and one month for a corruption conviction.

Hours after the deadline, however, da Silva remained inside the union building in the Sao Paulo suburb of Sao Bernardo do Campo, about 260 miles (417 kilometers) northeast of Curitiba. Party leaders initially said he would speak in the late afternoon, but later said he would not.

Two sources close to da Silva told The Associated Press the former leader would not go to Curitiba,

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but instead was considering either waiting for police at the union or presenting himself in Sao Paulo on Saturday. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to share internal deliberations being discussed.

Forcing da Silva out of the union building on a Friday night would be a logistical nightmare given the thousands of supporters outside — clashes would be a possibility — and heavy Friday traffic in Sao Paulo.

"The intention is not to force compliance at any cost, but rather follow the order the best way possible, with tranquility and without a media show," Luis Antonio Boudens, president of the federal police, said in a statement.

Sen. Roberto Requiao told reporters that da Silva planned to attend a commemoration Saturday morning for his late wife, to be held at the union.

Anna Julia Menezes Rodrigues, a specialist in criminal law at Braga Nascimento e Zilio, said da Silva's defiance did not turn him into a fugitive. It just meant that it was now up to federal police to carry out the warrant, she said.

Federal judge Sergio Moro, seen by many in Brazil as a crusader against endemic graft, on Thursday gave da Silva 24 hours to present himself to authorities.

The arrest warrant came hours 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.

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 former president denies any wrongdoing in that case or in several other corruption cases that have yet to be tried.

Friday night, thousands listened to music and speeches outside the metallurgical union in Sao Bernardo do Campo where the ex-president universally known as "Lula" got his start as a union organizer.

However it happens, the jailing of da Silva will mark a colossal fall from grace for a man who rose to power against steep odds in one of the world's most unequal countries.

Born in the hardscrabble northeast, da Silva rose through the ranks of the union in the country's industrial south. In 1980, during the military dictatorship, da Silva was arrested in Sao Bernardo do Campo for organizing strikes. He would spend more than a month in jail.

After running for president several times, in 2002 da Silva finally won. He governed from 2003 to 2010, leaving office an international celebrity and with approval ratings in the high 80s.

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 the leader, 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.

"This has always been Lula: a crook and a radical who doesn't respect the law," said Edson Soares, a 70-year-old retiree at a shopping mall near the union building. "It will feel so much better to have him in prison."

Antonio Ferreira dos Santos, a 43-year-old bricklayer who was keeping vigil outside the union, had a different take.

"Lula is one of us. He knows what it is like to have a tough life and loves the poor more than the rich," said dos Santos.

Workers' Party leaders insist that da Silva, 72, would still be the party's candidate in October. 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.

Peter Prengaman reported from Rio de Janeiro. Associated Press reporter Jill Langlois in Sao Paulo contributed to this report.

Mauricio Savarese on Twitter: twitter.com/MSavarese

Peter Prengaman on Twitter: twitter.com/peterprengaman

EPA head fights for his job in meeting with Trump

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Embattled Environmental Protection Agency administrator Scott Pruitt met with President Donald Trump on Friday to lay out his case for why he should remain in his post amid a stream of questions about his ethical standing.

Pruitt visited the White House to discuss his agency's recent steps to roll back Obama-era fuel efficiency standards for cars, but he also fought for his job in his meeting with the president, according to two administration officials. While White House aides are increasingly fed up with Pruitt and chief of staff John Kelly has advocated firing him, Trump remains less certain. Pruitt is one of the most effective members of his Cabinet in undermining his predecessor's regulatory agenda, and Trump enjoys his hard-charging style.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe sensitive internal discussions.

Kelly and other White House aides are frustrated by the steady drip of negative press Pruitt is attracting over a seemingly below-market lease on an apartment owned by the wife of a leading lobbyist, reports that he instructed his security detail to use emergency lights and sirens to beat traffic, and the continuing fallout from using private and first-class air travel last year. Pruitt has vigorously denied any wrongdoing and blamed the accusations on political opponents of the policies he is enacting.

Agency sources and documents reviewed by The Associated Press found the EPA spent millions of dollars for a 20-member full-time security detail that is three times the size of his predecessor's part-time security contingent. An EPA official said that total security costs for Pruitt approached \$3 million when pay was added to travel expenses.

Though Pruitt has few allies in the White House, his team has activated a network of conservative activists and lawmakers to rally behind him. Pruitt has also sat for a series of interviews with largely conservative news outlets to defend himself — though even supporters acknowledge he did himself no favors with a Fox News interview this week in which he seemed unable to fend off some of the allegations.

As the White House looks into the claims against Pruitt, administration officials say they have felt blindsided by the news reports, believing Pruitt hasn't "come clean." Earlier this week, two administration officials touted a pair of supposedly laudatory calls to Pruitt from Trump and Kelly, including the encouragement that he "keep fighting." But two other officials said the praise had to do with Pruitt's work and not the ethical cloud surrounding him — and that Kelly took a far sterner tone with Pruitt than initially reported, warning that the EPA job was in jeopardy if he couldn't put an end to the distracting coverage.

"We're continuing to review any of the concerns we have," said White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders. She declined to engage on the specific accusations against Pruitt, calling them "hypotheticals."

"The president feels that the administrator has done a good job at EPA," she added. "He's restored it back to its original purpose of protecting the environment. It's gotten unnecessary regulations out of the way."

The scrutiny surrounding Pruitt comes just a week after another Cabinet member, Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, was ousted amid ethical questions. White House aides believed that Shulkin had misrepresented the coming findings of a critical inspector general report, but an official said that, at least so far, Trump had not equated that with Pruitt's omissions of his own alleged transgressions.

Several other Trump appointees, including Housing and Urban Development head Ben Carson and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, have also faced questions about their expenditures and behavior.

On Capitol Hill, where some Republican lawmakers have already called for Pruitt's firing or resignation, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said Pruitt must go.

Pruitt's tenure, she said, has been "part of the Trump administration's culture of corruption, cronyism and incompetence."

Associated Press writers Michael Biesecker and Catherine Lucey contributed reporting.

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Trump troop request creates opening for governors to say no

By **ANDREW SELSKY** and **TOM JAMES**, Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — President Donald Trump's plan to deploy National Guard troops to the Mexico border has drawn resistance from some governors, most of them Democrats, and the law he invoked creates an opening for them to turn him down, officials said Friday.

But so far, three of the border states with Republican governors have endorsed the plan, and two, Arizona and Texas, quickly announced troop deployments. The Democratic governor of the fourth border state, California, has been silent on the issue.

Trump's order invoked a federal law called Title 32, under which governors retain command and control of Guard members from their state, with the federal government paying for the deployment.

Another statute, known as Title 10, establishes that National Guard personnel operate under the president's control and receive federal pay and benefits. The law also forbids them from performing tasks of civilian law enforcement unless explicitly authorized, according to the Congressional Research Service. Trump's order issued Wednesday did not mention Title 10.

Arizona's Republican Gov. Doug Ducey said about 150 Guard members will deploy next week. The GOP governors of New Mexico and Texas also back the plan. The Texas Army National Guard planned to deploy 250 people to the border within three days.

Trump said Thursday that he wants to send 2,000 to 4,000 Guard members to the border to help federal officials fight illegal immigration and drug trafficking. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said on Twitter that she had a "productive conversation" about the deployment with governors of the Southwest border states.

It's unclear if Trump will ask for troops from states other than those along the border.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders described the deployment as "a good first step." If the administration determines that more troops are needed, "we'll make that decision at that time."

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, also a Republican, on Friday became one of the latest leaders to oppose Trump's plan. His spokeswoman, Mary-Sarah Kinner, said in an email that Sandoval does not believe the mission would be "an appropriate use" of the Nevada Guard.

But North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum said his state would "answer the call," just as it has done in other times of need, like historic floods.

"We North Dakotans know from experience how critical it is for states to support each other in times of need," Burgum said.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has said she would deny Trump's request.

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"As commander of Oregon's Guard, I'm deeply troubled by Trump's plan to militarize our border," Brown tweeted.

Her spokesman, Bryan Hockaday, said that if Trump invoked Title 10, the president "can federalize the National Guard forces, and there's not much the governor can do to prevent that."

However, under Title 32, a governor could try to reject a request for troops or order Guard members to remain in rear staging areas and not participate.

"If the president were to deploy under Title 32, he'd obviously have to have the approval of the governor," Hockaday said, citing an assessment from the governor's attorney. Lawyers reviewed all the pertinent legal provisions as soon as Brown's office heard the announcement about the deployment plan, he added.

While California Gov. Jerry Brown has not spoken publicly about Trump's plan, California National Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Tom Keegan said any request "will be promptly reviewed to determine how best we can assist our federal partners."

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey, a Republican, said Friday that she will consult with the head of the Alabama Guard to see what resources are available.

The deployments will not be the first time the National Guard has gone to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Almost every U.S. state and territory contributed Guard members to Operation Jump Start, announced by President George W. Bush in 2006. Around 30,000 Guard members eventually participated, according to a 2008 National Guard analysis, including more than 1,000 each from Kentucky, North Carolina and South Carolina.

During Operation Phalanx, ordered by President Barack Obama in 2010, 1,200 Guard members deployed to the border, most of them from Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas.

In the mid-1980s, National Guard troops were deployed even farther south, in Honduras, where they carried out military maneuvers. The missions happened as Sandinista forces in neighboring Nicaragua battled Contra rebels who were backed by Washington and had clandestine bases in Honduras.

Associated Press writers Bob Christie in Phoenix, Doug Glass in Minneapolis, Nomaan Merchant in Dallas and Jonathan Cooper in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

Follow Andrew Selsky on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/andrewselsky> .

GOP Rep. Farenthold resigns after sexual harassment claims

By MATTHEW DALY and WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Texas Republican Rep. Blake Farenthold abruptly resigned Friday, four months after announcing he wouldn't seek re-election amid sexual harassment allegations.

"While I planned on serving out the remainder of my term in Congress, I know in my heart it's time for me to move along and look for new ways to serve," Farenthold said in a video statement, adding that his action was effective as of 5 p.m.

In December, Farenthold had posted another video denying a former aide's 2014 accusations, including that he'd subjected her to sexually suggestive comments and behavior and then fired her after she complained. Still, the congressman apologized in that video for an office atmosphere he said included "destructive gossip, offhand comments, off-color jokes and behavior that, in general, was less than professional."

Capitol Hill has found itself in the center of a national reckoning over sexual misconduct and gender discrimination in the workplace. Since October, eight lawmakers have either resigned or abandoned re-election bids amid allegations of sexual misconduct. Some members and aides have complained about a patchwork system for reporting offenses and secrecy around settlements paid by lawmakers' offices.

A ninth lawmaker, Rep. Elizabeth Esty, announced on Monday she will not seek re-election this year amid calls for her resignation over her handling of the firing of a former chief of staff accused of harassment, threats and violence against female staffers in her congressional office.

Esty, a Democrat from Connecticut and an outspoken #MeToo advocate, made the announcement not

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to seek a fourth term in the November election days after apologizing for not protecting her employees from the male ex-chief of staff.

The lawsuit by former Farenthold aide Lauren Greene alleged that the congressman had discussed his sexual fantasies about her and said at a staff meeting that a lobbyist had propositioned him for a threesome. It accused Farenthold of repeatedly complimenting her appearance, then joking that he hoped the comments wouldn't be construed as sexual harassment.

Farenthold, a seven-year House veteran from Corpus Christi, had said he'd engaged in no wrongdoing when he settled the case in 2015. But after congressional sources said he'd paid the \$84,000 settlement using taxpayer money, public focus intensified. Farenthold has promised to reimburse the Treasury Department for the cost of the settlement, but hasn't done so yet.

In an ominous sign for Farenthold, the head of the House GOP's campaign committee said in a statement Friday that he hopes Farenthold is "true to his word and pays back the \$84,000 of taxpayer money he used as a settlement."

Rep. Steve Stivers of Ohio, the GOP campaign chief, added that "Congress must hold ourselves to a higher standard and regain the trust of the American people."

Two Republicans, former Texas Water Board official Bech Bruun and ex-Victoria County Republican Party Chairman Michael Cloud, are squaring off in a May 22 primary runoff to succeed him.

A businessman and self-described radio sidekick who was new to politics, Farenthold upset long-serving Democratic U.S. Rep. Solomon Ortiz during the tea party wave of 2010. But his district has since been redrawn to make it more reliably Republican — including removing many areas along the Texas-Mexico border which had favored Democrats.

In Friday's video, Farenthold thanked his staff for its hard work and his family for its support while saying: "Leaving my service in the House, I'm able to look back on the entirety of my career in public service and say it was well worthwhile."

"I look forward to staying in touch with everyone," Farenthold said. "It's been an honor and a privilege to serve."

Weissert reported from Austin, Texas.

FEMA: Puerto Rico running out of time as storm season nears

By DANICA COTO, Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The administrator of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency said Friday it will take up to an estimated \$50 billion to help rebuild Puerto Rico from Hurricane Maria and warned that the U.S. territory is not ready for another disaster.

Brock Long said his agency aims to make the island's roads, homes, bridges and electrical grid as strong as possible but noted that the next hurricane season starts June 1.

"We're running out of time," he said during a visit to Puerto Rico, adding that much of the island's infrastructure collapsed. "We have a long way to go."

Long said his agency also is coordinating a June 14 planning and training exercise with Puerto Rico's government in which life-saving supplies will be delivered to the island's 78 municipalities to ensure better response times for any upcoming storms. Cities and towns will be allowed to store those supplies for future disasters.

FEMA and local government officials already have stockpiled more than 15.6 million liters of water and more than 2.8 million meals in five warehouses across the island in the event of another disaster. Gov. Ricardo Rossello said late Friday that FEMA also approved more than \$53 million in community disaster loans for 12 of the island's 78 municipalities.

Long stressed that Puerto Rico's public and private sectors have to build a strong emergency response network and establish unified plans.

"FEMA cannot be directly responsible for all of the response and recovery," he said.

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He also said the private sector should ensure that communication systems become more resistant. Maria left nearly all of Puerto Rico without phone service after the Category 4 storm hit on Sept. 20.

Long defended his agency from ongoing criticism that it did not respond quickly enough to the hurricane or dedicate the same amount of resources compared with other natural disasters in the U.S. mainland.

"(That's) completely false," he said, adding that in the first six months since Maria hit, FEMA invested \$10 billion in Puerto Rico, in contrast to the \$6 billion invested in the six months after Hurricane Katrina.

He said his agency is working to reduce bureaucracy but needs to ensure that federal funds will be spent appropriately.

"Recovery never moves as fast as people want it to be," he said. "And in this case, moving faster can be detrimental from the standpoint of putting this money to work in a manner that truly makes Puerto Rico stronger and more resilient."

Mike Byrne, FEMA's federal coordinating officer in Puerto Rico, said he is working with the U.S. territory's government to determine how federal funds will be used to identify priorities and rebuild damaged infrastructure.

Byrne said some of the money will go toward strengthening the island's power grid since the storm destroyed two-thirds of its distribution system. More than 50,000 power customers remain in the dark, but he said 96 percent of all customers now have electricity.

"We've done the Band-Aid," he said. "We've patched the system back together."

Long said the recovery process has been slow in part because supplies ranging from construction equipment to power poles have been scarce in light of the natural disasters that hit the U.S. mainland, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands last year.

Officials said FEMA will have a presence in Puerto Rico for several years to help it rebuild.

Trump, China escalate trade dispute as markets tumble

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unwilling to yield, President Donald Trump and China's government escalated their trade clash Friday, with Beijing vowing to "counterattack with great strength" if Trump follows through on threats to impose tariffs on an additional \$100 billion in Chinese goods.

Trump made his out-of-the-blue move when China threatened to retaliate for the first round of tariffs planned by the United States. But for someone who has long fashioned himself as a master negotiator, Trump left it unclear whether he was bluffing or willing to enter a protracted trade war pitting the world's two biggest economies against each other, with steep consequences for consumers, businesses and an already shaken stock market.

"They aren't going to bully him into backing down," said Stephen Moore, a former Trump campaign adviser who is now a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation. He said the Chinese "are going to have to make concessions — period."

The White House sent mixed signals on Friday as financial markets slid from investor concern about a significant trade fight. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told CNBC he was "cautiously optimistic" that the U.S. and China could reach an agreement before any tariffs are implemented but added, "there is the potential of a trade war."

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow told reporters the U.S. was "not in a trade war," adding, "China is the problem. Blame China, not Trump."

Trump's latest proposal intensified what was already shaping up to be the biggest trade battle for more than a half century. The U.S. bought more than \$500 billion in goods from China last year and now is planning or considering penalties on some \$150 billion of those imports. The U.S. sold about \$130 billion in goods to China in 2017 and faces a potentially devastating hit to its market there if China responds in kind.

Global financial markets have fallen sharply as the world's two biggest economies squared off — the Dow Jones industrial average sank 572 points Friday.

Trump told advisers Thursday he was unhappy with China's decision to tax \$50 billion in American prod-

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ucts, including soybeans and small aircraft, in response to a U.S. move this week to impose tariffs on \$50 billion in Chinese goods.

Rather than waiting weeks for the U.S. tariffs to be implemented, Trump backed a plan by Robert Lighthizer, his trade representative, and was encouraged by Peter Navarro, a top White House trade adviser, to seek the enhanced tariffs, upping the ante.

White House chief of staff John Kelly and Mnuchin concurred with the move, as did Kudlow, who traveled with the president to West Virginia.

China said negotiations were impossible under the circumstances but Trump officials said the president and his team remained in contact with President Xi Jinping and expressed hope to him of resolving the dispute through talks. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the two sides remained in "routine contact."

In Beijing, a Commerce Ministry spokesman said China doesn't want a trade war — but isn't afraid to fight one.

"If the U.S. side announces the list of products for \$100 billion in tariffs, the Chinese side has fully prepared and will without hesitation counterattack with great strength," spokesman Gao Feng said. He gave no indication what measures Beijing might take.

Trump has also pushed for a crackdown on China's theft of U.S. intellectual property, and he criticized the World Trade Organization, an arbiter of trade disputes, in a tweet Friday for allegedly favoring China. Trump asserted the WTO gives the Asian superpower "tremendous perks and advantages, especially over the U.S."

U.S. officials have played down 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 keep growing. Worry is intensifying among Republicans, who traditionally have favored liberalized trade.

"The administration needs to be thinking about the unintended consequences and what are those ripple effects, those domino effects, and what are the retaliatory actions that are likely to be taken," said South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the Senate's No. 3 Republican, in an interview with KDLT-TV in Sioux Falls.

The standoff over the trade penalties began last month when the U.S. slapped tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. China countered by announcing tariffs on \$3 billion worth of U.S. products. The next day, the United States proposed the \$50 billion in duties on Chinese imports, and Beijing lashed back within hours with a threat of further tariffs of its own.

Further escalation could be in the offing. The U.S. Treasury is working on plans to restrict Chinese technology investments in the United States. And there's talk that the U.S. could also put limits on visas for Chinese who want to visit or study in this country.

Kudlow told reporters the U.S. may provide a list of suggestions to China "as to what we would like to have come out of this," and those issues were under discussion.

"Negotiations are better than tariffs," Kudlow said. "A solution in the next three months would be better than anything. I think that's eminently doable." He added: "But Trump is not just using tariffs as a negotiating card. He said that to me."

For Trump, the dispute runs the risk of blunting the economic benefits of his tax overhaul, which is at the center of congressional Republicans' case for voters to keep them in power in the 2018 mid-term elections. China's retaliation so far has targeted Midwest farmers, including growers of soybeans, corn and wheat. That could specifically harm core Trump supporters.

"With respect to the Trump administration, its political success will rise and fall with the economy," Kudlow said. "And the economy is doing rather well now and I expect it to do even better."

Associated Press writers Gillian Wong and Henry Hou in Beijing, and Jill Colvin, Paul Wiseman and Josh Boak in Washington contributed to this report.

On Twitter follow Ken Thomas at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC>

Stocks dive as US proposes more China tariffs; Dow falls 572

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks ended the week the way they began it: tumbling as investors worry that tariffs and harsh words between the U.S. and China will touch off a trade war that derails the global economy. The latest drop came as the White House proposed tripling the amount of goods from China that will be subject to tariffs.

The stock market changed direction again and again this week as investors tried to get a sense of whether the trade dispute between the world's two largest economies will escalate. On Friday technology companies, banks, industrial and health care stocks sank. The market didn't get any help from a March jobs report that was weaker than expected.

With administration officials sounding conciliatory one day and hostile the next and the president quick to fire off yet another tweet, investors simply don't know what the U.S. wants to achieve in its talks with China, said Katie Nixon, chief investment officer for Northern Trust Wealth Management.

"The process itself seems to be quite chaotic," she said. "We're not quite sure what the long-term strategy is."

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 572.46 points, or 2.3 percent, to 23,932.76. It's down 10 percent from its record high in late January.

The S&P 500, which many index funds track, lost 58.37 points, or 2.2 percent, to 2,604.47. The Nasdaq composite slid 161.44 points, or 2.3 percent, to 6,915.11. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks dipped 29.63 points, or 1.9 percent, to 1,513.30.

President Donald Trump's administration spent the past few days reassuring investors that it's not rushing into a trade war, and China's government has done the same. But late Thursday, Trump ordered the U.S. Trade Representative to consider tariffs on another \$100 billion in Chinese imports. China said it would "counterattack with great strength" if that happens.

Each nation proposed tariffs \$50 billion in imports from the other at the start of this week. Stocks plunged on Monday, but they rallied over the next few days as officials from both countries said they were open to talks and that the tariffs might never go into effect.

The Dow average, which contains numerous multinational companies including industrial powerhouses Boeing and Caterpillar, swung dramatically this week, with almost 1,300 points separating its lowest point Monday afternoon from its high late Thursday. It fell 0.7 percent for the week.

On Friday Caterpillar, a construction equipment maker, slid \$5.14, or 3.5 percent, to \$142.99 and Boeing, an aerospace company, lost \$10.28, or 3.1 percent, to \$326.12. Among technology companies, Apple gave up \$4.42, or 2.6 percent, to \$168.378 and PayPal shed \$3.09, or 4 percent, to \$73.86.

Jason Pride, chief investment officer for Glenmede's private client business, said Trump's latest order caught investors off guard.

"It shows a willingness to go to the mat on this and fight it out," he said. Still, Pride said all of the proposed tariffs add up to a pretty small fraction of trade between the U.S. and China, and overall, they wouldn't affect the nation's economy that much if they do go into effect.

Nixon, of Northern Trust, said businesses also support the idea of making changes in America's trade relationship with China. Even though investors are optimistic about the state of the global economy and company profits continue to grow, Nixon said the administration is creating the thing investors hate the most: uncertainty.

The government reported that U.S. employers added 103,000 jobs in March, a weaker pace than the last few months. The Labor Department also said fewer jobs were added in January and February than it initially estimated. The unemployment rate remained low and the job market looks fundamentally healthy, but it's possible some employers are struggling to find workers.

Benchmark U.S. crude dropped \$1.48, or 2.3 percent, to \$62.06 a barrel in New York while Brent crude, used to price international oils, lost \$1.22, or 1.8 percent, to \$67.11 per barrel in London. Oil prices fell

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almost 5 percent this week as investors wondered if an increase in trade tensions will reduce demand for oil by slowing down the global economy.

Bond prices rose, sending yields lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 2.77 percent from 2.83 percent. The lower yields mean banks can't make as much money from lending, and that sent bank stocks lower.

In other energy trading, wholesale gasoline dipped 3 cents to \$1.95 a gallon. Heating oil lost 2 cents to \$1.96 a gallon. Natural gas rose 3 cents to \$2.70 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold rose \$7.60 to \$1,336.10 an ounce. Silver edged up 1 cent to \$16.36 an ounce. Copper fell 2 cents to \$3.06 a pound.

The dollar fell to 106.85 yen from 107.12 yen. The euro rose to \$1.2285 from \$1.2256.

Germany's DAX was down 0.5 percent while France's CAC-40 fell 0.3 percent lower. The FTSE 100 in Britain lost 0.2 percent.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index dipped 0.4 percent while South Korea's Kospi slipped 0.3 percent but Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 1.1 percent after trading resumed following a holiday as investors caught up with the previous day's global gains.

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Workers benefit as US businesses struggle to fill jobs

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. workers are increasingly benefiting as employers struggle to fill millions of open jobs.

More people who had given up looking for work are renewing their job hunts, more employees are confident enough to quit to look for other jobs and pay is gradually picking up.

U.S. employers added just 103,000 jobs in March, the Labor Department said Friday, the fewest in six months. And job growth in January and February was revised down by a combined 50,000.

But the unemployment rate remained 4.1 percent, a 17-year low, the government said. And the government's overall jobs report suggested that the labor market remains fundamentally healthy.

The pullback in hiring in March was likely payback in part for an explosive gain in February, economists said. Employers added 326,000 jobs that month — the largest monthly haul in two years.

"Overall, looking through the volatility, employment growth is trending higher and wage growth is starting to heat up," said Paul Ashworth, an economist at Capital Economics.

The government's report also suggested that employers are trying harder to fill jobs by hiring people they might have overlooked before. That's helping people who were previously left behind.

For example, the number of long-term unemployed — people out of work for six months or longer — has fallen sharply in the past two years, to just 1.3 million. That's down from a peak of 6.8 million not long after the Great Recession ended.

For years after the recession, economists worried that long-term unemployment would leave millions of Americans without up-to-date skills, potentially unable to find work again.

More Americans are also encouraged about their job-finding prospects and have come off the sidelines to look for work. The government counts people who are out of work as unemployed only if they're actively searching for jobs.

The proportion of adults in their prime working years — defined as ages 25 to 54 — who are either working or looking for jobs reached the highest level in nearly seven years in February, before declining slightly last month.

Jerome Powell, chairman of the Federal Reserve, said Friday that such measures "suggest a labor market that is in the neighborhood of maximum employment," meaning that few workers are still on the sidelines and a further decline in the unemployment rate could raise inflation.

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But he also noted that "other measures continue to suggest" that there are more workers available than the unemployment rate might indicate.

Most economists still expect Fed policymakers to raise short-term interest rates twice more this year to try to keep inflation under control. Last month, the Fed modestly raised its benchmark rate to a still-low range of 1.5 percent to 1.75 percent.

Workers are increasingly capitalizing on employers' need to hire people by quitting and looking for new jobs. The proportion of unemployed workers who had quit their jobs reached 13 percent last month, the highest since 2001. Quitting without a job lined up is a sign that workers are confident they can find a new one.

Roughly half the unemployed were fired or laid off. The rest are people who have re-entered the job market after a break, perhaps to raise children, or those who have started looking for the first time after finishing school.

Many who are laid off are rapidly finding new jobs. One of them, Mike Kulbieda, 63, lost his job as an auditor at financial services firm AIG in January. But within a week, he had found a new contract job through Robert Half International, a staffing firm.

That's a much smoother experience than in 2013, when he was unemployed for four months after a layoff.

Many employers are being forced to offer higher pay to keep and attract workers. Average hourly pay rose 2.7 percent in March compared with a year earlier, a slight pickup from February.

Michael Feroli, chief U.S. economist at JPMorgan, calculates that wages grew 3.2 percent in the first three months of the year, the biggest such gain since the recession.

Edward Daniel, chief executive of Metropolitan Health Services, says he's raised pay and sweetened benefits to try to fill his 740-person company's roughly 80 open jobs. Daniel's firm, based in Herndon, Virginia, provides services to hospitals, such as valet parking and "sitters," who stay with elderly or mentally ill patients after they've been sent home from operations.

"Across the board, hiring is a challenge," Daniel said.

His pay for sitters has increased from \$10 to \$12 an hour, mostly to keep up with raises at retailers and fast food restaurants.

The company now offers a 401(k) to all employees and provides a prescription drug discount card. By June next year, it plans to pay half its employees' educational costs.

It's a big change, Daniel said, from a decade ago, when the company offered no benefits at all.

Some of the drop-off in hiring for March was likely weather-related, with late spring snowstorms blanketing the Northeast, closing construction sites and potentially postponing shopping trips.

Construction companies cut 15,000 jobs, the sharpest monthly drop in three years, after five months of gains. Retailers shed 4,400. Hotels and restaurants added just 4,300 workers, the fewest in six months.

Some higher-paying sectors posted solid gains: Manufacturers added 22,000 jobs. Professional and business services, which includes such fields as accounting and architecture, gained 33,000 positions.

US takes aim at Putin's allies in Russia with new sanctions

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States punished dozens of Russian oligarchs and government officials on Friday with sanctions that took direct aim at President Vladimir Putin's inner circle, as President Donald Trump's administration tried to show he's not afraid to take tough action against Moscow.

Seven Russian tycoons, including aluminum magnate Oleg Deripaska, were targeted, along with 17 officials and a dozen Russian companies, the Treasury Department said. Senior Trump administration officials cast it as part of a concerted, ongoing effort to push back on Putin, emphasizing that since Trump took office last year, the U.S. has punished 189 Russia-related people and entities with sanctions.

Rather than punishing Russia for one specific action, the new sanctions hit back at the Kremlin for its "ongoing and increasingly brazen pattern" of bad behavior, said the officials, who weren't authorized to comment by name and briefed reporters on condition of anonymity. The officials ticked through a list of

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complaints about Russia's actions beyond its borders, including its annexation of Crimea, backing of separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine, support for Syrian President Bashar Assad, and cyber-hacking.

Above all else, Russia's attempts to subvert Western democracy prompted the U.S. sanctions, officials said, in a direct nod to concerns that the U.S. president has failed to challenge Putin for alleged interference in the 2016 election that brought Trump to power.

Deripaska, whose business conglomerate controls assets from agriculture to machinery, has been a prominent figure in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation over his ties to former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort. The Treasury Department said Deripaska was accused of illegal wire-taps, extortion, racketeering, money laundering and even death threats against business rivals.

On the London Stock Exchange, global depositary receipts of En+, an energy company majority-owned by Deripaska, dropped by 19 percent on news of the sanctions. Deripaska's conglomerate, Basic Element, said it regretted the sanctions and was analyzing them with its lawyers.

Putin's government dismissed the sanctions as "absurdity," arguing that the U.S. was punishing companies that have longstanding business ties to the U.S. The Russian Foreign Ministry said the U.S. was "striking at ordinary Americans" by jeopardizing "thousands of jobs."

"American democracy is clearly degrading," the ministry said. "Of course, we will not leave the current and any new anti-Russian attack without a tough response."

To the dismay of Trump's critics and of Russia hawks, the president has continued to avoid directly criticizing Putin himself and recently invited the Russian leader to meet with him, possibly at the White House. Yet in recent weeks Trump's administration has rolled out a series of actions — including several economic and diplomatic steps — to increase pressure on Putin and those presumed to benefit from his power.

"Nobody has been tougher on Russia than I have," Trump said at a news conference on Tuesday.

Yet even as it rolled out the new penalties, Trump's administration left open the possibility of "a good relationship with Russia" in the future. And at the White House, spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said discussions with Moscow about a Trump-Putin summit would not be called off.

"Not at all," Sanders said. "We'll continue."

Those being punished aren't necessarily involved in the Russian actions in Syria, Ukraine or elsewhere that have drawn consternation from the West. But officials said the goal was to put pressure on Putin by showing that those who have benefited financially from his position of power are fair game.

The target list includes some who are closely tied to Putin himself, including top-tier officials involved in Kremlin decision-making and heads of the top state-controlled business entities. Yet others on the list are far from the Kremlin's orbit, including some who long have fallen out of favor or hold technical positions.

Targets include:

—Kirill Shamalov, who is reportedly Putin's son-in-law, married to his daughter Katerina Tikhonova, although neither Putin nor the Kremlin have acknowledged that she is his daughter.

—Igor Rotenberg, the son of Arkady Rotenberg, a friend of Putin's since they were teenagers.

—Andrey Kostin, named among government officials, heads the nation's second-largest bank, VTB, which is controlled by the state.

—Alexei Miller, the longtime head of Gazprom, the state-controlled natural gas giant. Both Miller and Kostin are longtime key members of Putin's team.

A state-owned arms-dealing company, accused by the U.S. of selling to Assad, was also targeted, along with a subsidiary bank. Many other targets were associated with Russia's energy sector, including parts of Gazprom.

The sanctions freeze any assets that those targeted have in U.S. jurisdictions and bar Americans from doing business with them. But the administration said it would give guidance to Americans who may currently have business with them about how to wind down that business and avoid running afoul of the sanctions. Some, but not all, of the individuals sanctioned will also be prohibited from entering the United States.

It was not clear whether any of those hit have significant holdings in the U.S. that could be seized, and if they did previously, they may have already moved their money elsewhere in anticipation of the sanctions. In January, lists of Russian officials and oligarchs were published by the State Department and Treasury.

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The lists, required under a law passed last year, were informally seen as lists of potential future sanctions targets, even though the public version of the oligarchs list was merely a reprint of Forbes' list of billionaires in Russia.

The U.S. also has punished Russia for other troubling activity, including its alleged involvement in the poisoning an ex-spy with a military-grade nerve agent in Britain. In tandem with European allies, the Trump administration expelled dozens of Russian diplomats and shut down the Russian consulate in Seattle. And last month, the U.S. targeted 19 Russians and five Russian entities with sanctions in the first use of the new sanctions powers Congress passed last year in response to the election meddling.

Associated Press writers Matthew Lee and Catherine Lucey in Washington and Vladimir Isachenkov, Nataliya Vasilyeva and Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed.

Facebook says it should have audited Cambridge Analytica

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook's No. 2 executive says the company should have conducted an audit after learning that a political consultancy improperly accessed user data nearly three years ago.

Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg told NBC's "Today" show that at the time, Facebook received legal assurances that Cambridge Analytica had deleted the improperly obtained information.

"What we didn't do is the next step of an audit and we're trying to that now," she said.

The audit of Cambridge Analytica is on hold, in deference to a U.K. investigation. But Facebook has been conducting a broader review of its own practices and how other third-party apps use data.

In addition, Facebook announced on Friday that it will require advertisers who want to run not just political ads, but also or so called "issue ads" —which may not endorse specific candidates or parties but discuss political topics— to be verified.

Facebook is trying to strengthen its system ahead of this year's U.S. midterm elections as well as upcoming elections around the world. Facebook has already required political ads to verify who is paying for them and where the advertiser is located. The issue ads requirement is new.

Facebook will also require the administrators of pages with a "large number" of followers to also be verified. The company did not say what this number would be. The move is intended to clamp down on fake pages and accounts that were used to disrupt the 2016 presidential elections in the U.S.

Facebook says page administrators and advertisers will be verified by being asked to provide a government-issued ID. To verify addresses, it will mail a postcard with a unique code that the recipient can then enter into Facebook. This is similar to how Airbnb and other services verify addresses.

The company is facing a global backlash over the improper data-sharing scandal. Hearings over the issue are scheduled in the U.S., and the European Union is considering what actions to take against the company.

Sandberg also told NBC that if users were able to opt out of being shown ads, "at the highest level, that would be a paid product." This does not mean the company is planning to let users do this. Zuckerberg has made similar statements in the past, but has added that Facebook remains committed to offering a free service paid for by advertising.

Facebook users can opt out of seeing targeted ads, but can't shut off ads altogether. Neither can they opt entirely out of Facebook's data collection.

Sandberg gave several interviews this week as Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg prepares to testify before Congress next week, where the issue of elections meddling is almost certain to come up.

Facebook is also facing an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission in what's become its worst privacy crisis in its 14-year history.

It started with revelations that Cambridge Analytica, a data-mining firm, improperly accessed the private information of tens of millions of users to try to influence elections around the world. Over the past three weeks the scandal continued to spiral. For one, Facebook executives took nearly five days to respond to the Cambridge Analytica reports.

Then, some users who logged in to Facebook through Android devices discovered that Facebook had

been collecting information about phone calls they made and text messages they sent. Facebook also acknowledged this week that nearly all of its 2.2 billion users may have had their public data scraped by "malicious actors" it did not name.

'Eyes and ears': Past Guard border deployments offer clues

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.

President Donald Trump told reporters 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. That estimate is lower than the 6,400 Guard members that former President George Bush sent to the border.

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 limits military involvement in civilian law enforcement, creating a supporting role for the Guard. The Trump administration and governors haven't said precisely what the 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 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 of whom turn themselves in to authorities and seek asylum or other protection. Mexicans accounted for only about four of every 10 arrests last year, down from about nine of 10 during the Guard's previous deployments.

A shared border means Mexicans can often quickly be 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

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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 ensuring 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."

Did Cambridge Analytica get your data? You'll know soon

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Anyone who's been wondering if their private Facebook data might have been swept up in the Cambridge Analytica scandal will soon get their first clues.

Starting Monday, all 2.2 billion Facebook users will receive a notice on their feeds, titled "Protecting Your Information," with a link to see what apps they use and what information they have shared with those apps. If they want, they can shut off apps individually or turn off third-party access to their apps completely.

In addition, the 87 million users who might have had their data shared with Cambridge Analytica will get a more detailed message informing them of this. Facebook says most of the affected users (more than 70 million) are in the U.S., though there are over a million each in the Philippines, Indonesia and the U.K.

Reeling from its worst privacy crisis in history — allegations that this Trump-affiliated data mining firm may have used ill-gotten user data to try to influence elections — Facebook is in full damage-control mode, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg acknowledging he's made a "huge mistake" in failing to take a broad enough view of what Facebook's responsibility is in the world. He's set to testify before Congress next week.

Cambridge Analytica whistleblower Christopher Wylie previously estimated that more than 50 million people were compromised by a personality quiz that collected data from users and their friends.

That Facebook app, called "This is Your Digital Life," was a personality quiz created in 2014 by an academic researcher named Aleksander Kogan, who paid about 270,000 people to take it. The app vacuumed up not just the data of the people who took it, but also — thanks to Facebook's loose restrictions — data from their friends, too, including details that they hadn't intended to share publicly.

Facebook later limited the data apps can access, but it was too late in this case.

Zuckerberg said Facebook came up with the 87 million figure by calculating the maximum number of friends that users could have had while Kogan's app was collecting data. The company doesn't have logs going back that far, he said, so it can't know exactly how many people may have been affected.

Cambridge Analytica said in a statement Wednesday that it had data for only 30 million people.

A year after Mar-a-Lago summit, US-China ties are tested

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump first tried to disarm Chinese President Xi Jinping at Mar-a-Lago with smooth talk and hospitality. A year later, he's resorted to hardball and found that Xi is willing to throw it back.

The growing acrimony over trade is deepening mistrust between the two governments and roiling global markets. But at least for now, it is unlikely to spill over into sensitive national security issues, former U.S. officials and China experts say.

China has no interest in escalating the dispute over tariffs and wants to reach a trade compromise with the U.S., they say. The White House also says it hopes differences can be mended through negotiations.

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But when Trump on Thursday doubled down on his threat to tax Chinese imports, the path to resolution appeared to narrow. China vowed Friday to "counterattack with great strength" and said negotiations were impossible under current conditions.

So far, both sides have outlined plans for \$50 billion in tariffs on each other's exports. On Thursday, Trump said he had instructed the U.S. trade representative to consider imposing \$100 billion in additional tariffs on Chinese goods, despite opposition from some of his supporters who could be hit hard by a trade war.

"The Chinese have to assume that Trump is willing to go through with this," said Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "but at the same time, a lot of it just seems he's trying to get leverage to force the Chinese to give him a better deal" to dramatically reduce the U.S. trade deficit with China.

The barrage of tough rhetoric belies a personal rapport forged between Trump and Xi when they met at his Florida resort last April 6-7, when Trump sought Xi's help on North Korea and on trade.

China has cooperated to an unexpected degree on North Korea by agreeing to and applying international sanctions to punish its wayward ally for developing nuclear weapons. Trump has often praised Xi for that — rhetoric that is welcomed in China's authoritarian political system, where great importance is vested in leadership ties.

But in recent months, Washington has adopted an increasingly adversarial stance toward Beijing, and not just on trade. That trend could be intensified as Trump replaces moderates in his administration with hawks such as incoming national security adviser John Bolton, who has advocated a tougher approach toward China.

"The relationship is spiraling downwards, and the risk of a miscalculation or accident is only increasing," wrote Elizabeth Economy, director for Asia studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

In December, the Trump administration adopted a national security strategy that identified China, along with Russia, as a "revisionist power" intent on challenging American interests. The U.S. has ruffled Beijing's feathers by stepping up the tempo of naval operations in the South China Sea. And Trump signed legislation last month that calls for Cabinet-level official visits to Taiwan, a self-governing island that Beijing regards as part of Chinese territory.

Doug Paal, who handled Asian affairs at the White House under the Republican administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, said China views this as a gambit by Trump to exact concessions on trade. Speaking earlier this week, Paal said it hasn't undermined China's belief that Trump, who has avoided criticizing China on human rights, is someone they can work with.

But Daniel Russel, who was President Barack Obama's point man on Asia, said Trump's trade gambit was playing into the Chinese perception of the U.S. as a malevolent rival bent on containing China's rise as a world power.

"The Chinese know how to play this game and have had abundant time to prepare a counterstrike strategy. It includes grabbing the moral high ground and getting other countries to look at China as a victim, not the offender, and as the defender of the international trading system," he said. "It is a ridiculous turn of events."

Under Obama, the U.S. exacted an agreement from China that reduced — but did not halt — cybertheft of U.S. commercial secrets. The U.S. failed to narrow the trade deficit with China, which hit a record \$337.2 billion last year.

"We chose not to blow up the relationship," said Russel, now at the New York-based Asia Society Policy Institute. "We chose not to put the global economy at risk through some sort of suicide-vest type of challenge."

Compromise on the trade dispute remains possible. The U.S. tariffs won't take effect for about two months, and China says it is waiting to see what Washington does.

"What we are seeing so far, although it's ugly and it's confrontational, it's still posturing," said Yun Sun, China expert at the Stimson Center think tank. "We have not yet seen the ax falling."

She said the differences go beyond the level of import taxes: It's also about ascendancy in the high-

technology economy, where China seeks global leadership in electric cars, robotics and other fields.

"Trump has made clear he wants to strike deals, but the bar is so high that the Chinese don't know whether they can meet it," Yun said.

Hospital says ex-spy improves, no longer on 'critical' list

By JILL LAWLESS and NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The former Russian spy who was left fighting for his life after exposure to a rare nerve agent is no longer in critical condition, a British health official said Friday, a month after the mysterious poisoning in a quiet English city triggered a diplomatic crisis between Moscow and the West.

Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were found unconscious on a bench March 4 in Salisbury and were hospitalized for weeks in critical condition. British authorities blame Russia for what they say was poisoning with a military-grade Soviet-developed nerve agent called Novichok. Russia denies the accusation.

Dr. Christine Blanshard, the medical director at Salisbury District Hospital, said in a statement that 66-year-old Sergei Skripal "is responding well to treatment, improving rapidly and is no longer in a critical condition."

Yulia Skripal, 33, regained consciousness last week and is now in stable condition, she said.

Russian state television on Thursday played a recording of what they said was a phone call from Yulia to her cousin, Viktoria Skripal, in Russia. In it, Yulia said she would be discharged soon.

Blanshard said Friday that Yulia Skripal could "look forward to the day when she is well enough to leave the hospital," but called any speculation about her release date "just that — speculation."

Scientists said the Skripals' recovery was not unprecedented. Nerve agents work by blocking an enzyme in the body that lets nerves communicate with each other and with the body's organs.

Alastair Hay, professor emeritus of Environmental Toxicology at the University of Leeds, said recovery can happen over time because "eventually the body will restore the enzyme to full capacity, and nerve function will be restored."

The Skripals' long-term prognosis is uncertain, however. Michelle Carlin, senior lecturer in forensic and analytical chemistry at Northumbria University, said there is limited knowledge about the long-term effects of Novichok poisoning, but "neurological damage has been reported in other historic cases."

The poisoning has chilled relations between Russia and the West, producing a wave of diplomatic expulsions unseen even at the height of the Cold War.

Britain, along with the United States and at least two dozen other U.K. allies, have expelled more than 150 Russian diplomats. Russia has sent home the same number of those nations' envoys.

Russia has challenged Britain's allegation that Moscow was behind the attack. Scientists at the U.K.'s Porton Down defense laboratory identified the poison as Novichok but have not pinpointed where it was manufactured. The British government says the scientific findings and other intelligence points to Russia.

At a U.N. Security Council meeting called Thursday by Russia to discuss the Skripal poisonings, the Russian ambassador warned Britain that it was "playing with fire" and claimed that Russia was the victim of a hasty, sloppy and ill-intentioned defamation campaign by London and its allies.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov kept up the offensive Friday, once again urging Britain to show its evidence in the case.

Speaking on a trip to Belarus, he said British officials have engaged in "frantic and convulsive efforts to find arguments to support their indefensible position" instead of producing evidence.

Lavrov said Britain and its Western allies are wrong if they expect Russia to "confess to all deadly sins" it did not commit.

In the phone call recording released by Russian state Rossiya TV, Yulia Skripal said she and her father were both recovering and that her father's health was not irreparably damaged.

Viktoria Skripal, who works as a chief accountant in the city of Yaroslavl, told The Associated Press on Friday that she has no doubt it was Yulia who called and that she has not heard from her since. She said the call was recorded because she has an app on her phone to keep track of all the calls she makes for

work.

"I made this recording, that was Yulia," she said.

Viktorija Skripal said she hoped to travel to Britain to visit Sergei and Yulia, but the British government said Friday it had denied her a visa because her application "did not comply with the immigration rules."

Britain also announced that pets in Skripal's home — two guinea pigs and a cat — were also poisoned. The two rodents were found dead after the home was sealed off by investigators. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said the cat was put down after it was found "in a distressed state."

The Russian Embassy in London claimed the treatment of the pets might amount to animal cruelty and said "it is difficult to avoid the impression that the animals have been disposed of as an inconvenient piece of evidence."

Vasilyeva reported from Moscow. Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow, Danica Kirka in London and Edith Lederer at the United Nations contributed.

Female lion with a mane has died at Oklahoma City Zoo

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The Oklahoma City Zoo says an 18-year-old African lioness that mysteriously sprouted a mane last year has died.

The zoo says the lioness, named Bridget, was euthanized Wednesday after a veterinary team determined she was likely suffering from heart failure or infection. The zoo says Bridget had been lethargic, not eating and appeared to be in pain.

Last month, the zoo said Bridget appeared to be in good health after lab results explained why she had grown a mane, which is usually only seen on male lions.

The testing found that Bridget had an elevated level of androstenedione, a hormone that can contribute to developing male features. The zoo says that suggested a benign tumor in an adrenal gland may have been the cause.

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 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.

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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>

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.

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"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 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

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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

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, April 7, the 97th day of 2018. There are 268 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 7, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower held a news conference in which he spoke of the importance of containing the spread of communism in Indochina, saying, "You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences." (This became known as the "domino theory," although Eisenhower did not use that term.)

On this date:

In 1788, an expedition led by Gen. Rufus Putnam established a settlement at present-day Marietta, Ohio.

In 1798, the Mississippi Territory was created by an act of Congress, with Natchez as the capital.

In 1862, Union forces led by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant defeated the Confederates at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee.

In 1927, the image and voice of Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover were transmitted live from Washington to New York in the first successful long-distance demonstration of television.

In 1939, Italy invaded Albania, which was annexed less than a week later.

In 1948, the World Health Organization was founded in Geneva.

In 1953, the U.N. General Assembly ratified Dag Hammarskjöld (dahg HAWM'-ahr-shoold) of Sweden as the new secretary-general, succeeding Trygve Lie (TRIHG'-vuh lee) of Norway.

In 1962, nearly 1,200 Cuban exiles tried by Cuba for their roles in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion were convicted of treason.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter announced he was deferring development of the neutron bomb, a high-radiation weapon.

In 1983, space shuttle astronauts Story Musgrave and Don Peterson went on the first U.S. spacewalk in almost a decade as they worked in the open cargo bay of Challenger for nearly four hours.

In 1994, civil war erupted in Rwanda, a day after a mysterious plane crash claimed the lives of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi; in the months that followed, hundreds of thousands of minority Tutsi and Hutu moderates were slaughtered by Hutu extremists.

In 1998, British pop star George Michael was arrested on suspicion of committing a lewd act in a restroom at Will Rogers Park in Beverly Hills, California; Michael later pleaded no contest, was fined \$810 and ordered to perform 80 hours of community service.

Ten years ago: Anti-China protesters disrupted the Olympic torch relay in Paris, at times forcing Chinese organizers to put out the flame and take the torch onto a bus to secure it. Kansas won the NCAA championship, defeating Memphis 75-68 in overtime. Coach Pat Riley, Hakeem Olajuwon, Patrick Ewing, Adrian Dantley and broadcaster Dick Vitale were among those selected for Basketball's Hall of Fame.

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Five years ago: A fierce battle between U.S.-backed Afghan forces and Taliban militants in a remote corner of eastern Afghanistan left nearly 20 people dead, including 11 Afghan children killed in an airstrike and an American civilian adviser. In Egypt, Christians angered by the killing of four Christians in sectarian violence clashed with a Muslim mob throwing rocks and firebombs, killing one and turning Cairo's main Coptic cathedral into a battleground.

One year ago: President Donald Trump concluded his two-day summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping (shee jihn-peeng) at Mar-a-Lago in Florida, saying he had developed an "outstanding" relationship with the Chinese leader. A hijacked beer truck plowed into pedestrians at a central Stockholm department store, killing four people in what Sweden's prime minister called a terrorist attack; a 39-year-old suspect was arrested. Gov. Jerry Brown declared an end to California's historic drought emergency imposed in 2014. Pearl Jam, Tupac Shakur, Electric Light Orchestra, Journey, Yes and Joan Baez were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Brooklyn, New York.

Today's Birthdays: Media commentator Hodding Carter III is 83. Country singer Bobby Bare is 83. Rhythm-and-blues singer Charlie Thomas (The Drifters) is 81. California Gov. Jerry Brown is 80. Movie director Francis Ford Coppola is 79. Actress Roberta Shore is 75. Singer Patricia Bennett (The Chiffons) is 71. Singer John Oates is 70. Former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels is 69. Singer Janis Ian is 67. Country musician John Dittrich is 67. Actor Jackie Chan is 64. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Tony Dorsett is 64. Actor Russell Crowe is 54. Christian/jazz singer Mark Kibble (Take 6) is 54. Actor Bill Bellamy is 53. Rock musician Dave "Yorkie" Palmer (Space) is 53. Rock musician Charlie Hall (The War on Drugs) is 44. Former football player-turned-analyst Tiki Barber is 43. Actress Heather Burns is 43. Christian rock singer-musician John Cooper (Skillet) is 43. Actor Kevin Alejandro is 42. Rock musician Ben McKee (Imagine Dragons) is 33. Actor Ed Speleers is 30. Actor Conner Rayburn is 19.

Thought for Today: "Lying is done with words and also with silence." — Adrienne Rich, American poet (1929-2012).