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Scholarship

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Sutton Steps Down From Board of Regents

PIERRE, S.D. – The Board of Regents announced today that Bob Sutton of Sioux Falls has resigned from his position on the South Dakota Board of Regents. On May 31st Sutton was named president and CEO of Avera Health.

“It has been a true pleasure serving on the Board of Regents. I put great value on higher education and am pleased that during my time on the board I was able to help shape it here in South Dakota,” said Sutton.

“I thank Bob Sutton for his leadership of the university system over the past five years. Bob has been a great advocate for our state universities and their students, and I wish him all the best in his new role,” said Gov. Daugaard.

Sutton’s resignation from the Board of Regents is effective Monday, June 4th. The Governor will name a successor as soon as possible to complete Sutton’s term, which ends in 2019.

“Bob has been an excellent and irreplaceable leader for the regents and a great champion for public higher education in South Dakota,” said Regents Vice President Kevin Schieffer. “We understand Bob’s need to concentrate all his time on this huge CEO position, which is also incredibly important for our state, but as a friend and leader on this Board he will be sorely missed. Our great loss is Avera’s gain. On behalf of everyone on the Board, our congratulations and best wishes go to President Sutton.”

Sutton has served on the Board of Regents, the constitutional governing body for South Dakota’s six public universities and two special K-12 schools serving deaf and blind students, since April 2013. He served as the board’s president from March 2017 to present.

Robert Whitmyre

Democrat for District 1
House of Representatives



I would like to be a new voice in Pierre to work for our rural areas, the needs and rights of our citizens, and improve the opportunities for our young people that want to make South Dakota their home.

I ask for your vote in the June 5th primary.

- Lifelong Day County Ag Producer
- 30 Years in Manufacturing Industry
- WEB Water Board of Directors
- National Farmers Union Policy Committee
- Odin Lodge Sons of Norway President
- Webster High School Graduate
- BS in Mechanical Engineering from SDSU

Authorized and Paid for by
Whitmyre for District 1 House Committee, |
David Sigdestad Treasurer - 42449 133rd St. -
Pierpont, SD 57468

Groton Job Opportunities

C.N.A.s ~ Nurses

Part-Time Cook

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

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



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton

GFP Clarifies Rules for Bringing Wood into Quarantined Parks

PIERRE, S.D. - With the emerald ash borer emergency quarantine restricting the movement of wood from the Sioux Falls area, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks has clarified the rules for bringing outside firewood into state parks.

South Dakota state parks located within the quarantine area will now allow outside wood if it has a label affixed to certify it as emerald ash borer treated and safe to move. At all other state park areas, outside wood is allowed as long as it has never been within the quarantine area or if it has the certification label. At all parks, campers can burn wood that has been purchased from the park itself. The out-of-state firewood ban is also still in effect, which was put into place when neighboring states reported infestations of the invasive insect.

"Visitors have been great about following the quarantine," said State Park Director Katie Ceroll. "They really seem to understand and appreciate the devastating impact an emerald ash borer infestation would have on our state parks."

Ceroll said that over the past decade, knowing an infestation was imminent, the parks have been diversifying woodlands and reducing reliance on ash trees.

"Every year we can put off an emerald ash borer infestation in state parks is another year that our alternate species trees can grow larger and fill in the gaps."

An infestation of emerald ash borer was confirmed in northern Sioux Falls in early May. While it is the first confirmed infestation in South Dakota, the invasive insect has killed tens of millions of ash trees in at least 32 states.

For more information about the quarantine and the emerald ash borer, visit <http://emeraldashborersouthdakota.sd.gov>.

80th Birthday . . .



Joan Kjellsen

Joan will be celebrating her 80th Birthday on Tuesday, June 12, 2018. Her family requests a card shower in her honor.

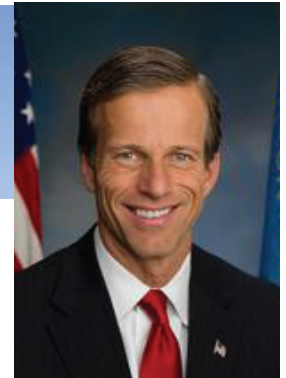
Greetings may be sent to:

Joan Kjellsen

208 Hillview Rd

Sisseton, SD 57262

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



South Dakota is the Best Place to Be

In politics, a lot of the attention is often on Washington, D.C., but as your U.S. senator, I've always believed that some of my most important work happens when I'm home in South Dakota with you. And while I'm fortunate to have the most talented and dedicated public servants that exist working in my South Dakota and Washington offices, there's no advisor's opinion that I value more than yours.

It's why after a long week in Washington, I'm always eager to get home and hit the road. Along the way, I really enjoy meeting new people and seeing old friends. It keeps me energized and focused on my top priority, which is delivering for the people of South Dakota.

On a recent trip around the state, I attended Memorial Day services at the Black Hills National Cemetery (BHNC) near Sturgis. Being there, surrounded by America's war heroes, gave greater context to what it means to serve and sacrifice. These men and women deserve a place like the BHNC, and by recently sending a bill to the president that will nearly double the cemetery's size, I was glad to have played a small role in ensuring its legacy will live on for generations to come.

While I was home, I also had the chance to connect with the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce's Agribusiness Committee to discuss the farm bill. The current bill expires this fall, and it's one of my top priorities to see that a pro-agriculture farm bill lands on the president's desk as soon as possible. I've introduced nearly a dozen farm bill-related bills over the last 15 months, and I'm working hard to ensure as many of them as possible are included in the final bill.

I wouldn't miss the opportunity to stop by the annual Boys State and Girls State programs in Aberdeen and Vermillion, which is why I was glad to have been invited to attend again this year. It's so refreshing to see the next generation of leaders hard at work, eager to learn and lay the groundwork for their future. I can say with confidence, the future of South Dakota is bright, and it's in good hands.

It's always nice to see firsthand the positive effect that policies coming out of Washington have on South Dakotans. For example, Elk Point's AaLadin Industries, which I recently had the opportunity to visit, is passing along expanded benefits, including bonuses and wage increases, to its employees as a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which I helped write. More than 1 million jobs have already been created nationwide in the few short months since this new pro-growth bill became law, a milestone that delivers on a promise Republicans made to the American people.

I closed out my latest trip around South Dakota with Commissioner Brendan Carr of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). He joined me for the ribbon cutting at the new Sioux Falls Tower and Communications office. I appreciate the work Commissioner Carr does at the FCC, under which the Commerce Committee – the committee I chair in Washington – has jurisdiction. The FCC will play a large role in implementing my MOBILE NOW Act, which was signed into law in March 2018 and will help set the stage for the next generation in mobile broadband technology.

To everyone throughout the state who continues to share their advice and ideas with me, I can't say this enough: Thank you. I couldn't do my job without you, and I'm continually humbled by your kindness, generosity, and hard work. There's no question that South Dakota is the best place to live, work, and raise a family, and I've never been more certain of it.



From Great Faces to Great Places

Over Memorial Day weekend, I had the opportunity to show President Trump's Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke our state – and not only the stunning landscapes, but the rich history we celebrate. Nowhere were those two ideas more present than at the Black Hills National Cemetery Memorial Day Service.

Tucked in the hills near Sturgis, the Black Hills National Cemetery commemorates the lives of South Dakota veterans and their service to our country. Each Memorial Day, hundreds join together to honor those buried there. It's a pretty special moment.

To continue serving veterans here in the years to come, President Trump signed legislation I worked on to expand the cemetery by 200 acres – a testament to the number of patriotic veterans that call South Dakota home.

The men and women buried here gave of themselves to serve our nation, a value that's rooted deep in South Dakota's heritage, including at the Minuteman Missile Site near Philip, which Secretary Zinke and I also visited.

Throughout the Cold War, the United States relied on this site to keep roughly 1,000 missiles on constant alert. While some remain today, the site has been designated as a National Historic Site, providing a physical reminder of the value found in peace through strength.

Of course, one of South Dakota's most iconic sites is Mount Rushmore, which stands as an icon of liberty around the world. These great faces attract millions of visitors a year and contribute to South Dakota's robust tourism industry.

From hiking to hunting, tourism helps drive South Dakota's economy. In fact, one in 11 South Dakota jobs are directly generated by tourism. The industry also infuses nearly \$2 billion into the state's economy annually. It's an important element of our economy that we must fight to maintain.

Over the years, I've worked to repeal regulations that make things difficult for South Dakota tourism to thrive. When Secretary Zinke was in the state, he and I were able to announce a new executive order from President Trump that rolls back Obama-era regulations on outfitters and guides. Regulations like the ones Obama implemented are cost prohibitive for businesses and have prevented visitors from fully enjoying all that South Dakota has to offer. I'm grateful President Trump and Secretary Zinke were willing to listen to South Dakota and give folks a break from these unnecessary burdens.

There's something for everyone to enjoy in South Dakota. From our great faces to great places like the Badlands, the Corn Palace, and the childhood home of Laura Ingalls Wilder, I hope you take the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our state this summer.

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

June 4, 2018 – 7:00pm
Groton Community Center

1. Mike Nehls County Commission
2. Minutes
3. Bills
4. Department reports
5. SDML Debit/Credit Workshop – Pierre, SD - June 27th – Hope
 - SDML Budget training – Sioux Falls, SD – July 26th – Hope
6. Pool shelter
7. Revise Resolution #99-45 to correct legal descriptions in former Resolution filed April 16, 1999
8. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
9. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
10. Adjournment

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SOCIAL SECURITY... LIVE

By: Patty Hoffman

Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Social Security engages with the public in a number of ways. From news articles like this to blog posts, and printed publications to tweets, we try to speak to as many people, in as many ways, as we can. Our Facebook Live events give you concise information in an easy-to-follow conversation.

Here are the topics from recent Facebook Live events:

- The Future of Social Security - Part 1. A conversation with Social Security's Chief Actuary, Steve Goss, about the future of Social Security. Mr. Goss discusses the 2017 Trustees Report, explains key facts, and highlights important dates.
- The Future of Social Security – Part 2. Part two of a conversation with Social Security's Chief Actuary, Steve Goss, who answers viewer questions about Social Security's trust funds, benefit programs, the Cost of Living Adjustment, and more.
- How to Protect What's Important to You. National Consumer Protection Week 2018. Learn important consumer protection tips and how to safeguard your identity. The Federal Trade Commission shares information on how to protect yourself and your loved ones from falling victim to scammers.
- 5 Things You Should Know About Retirement. William "BJ" Jarrett, director of Social Security's Office of Public and Employee Communications, and Marietta Jelks, editor in chief of the Consumer Action Handbook, cover several key topics that you need to know before you start receiving Social Security retirement benefits.

You can watch these videos and more on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SocialSecurity, or on our YouTube channel under the "Social Security Live!" playlist at www.youtube.com/SocialSecurity.

These videos present our programs in a way that is easy to access and understand, to help keep you informed. You can share them with friends and family who are curious about preparing for retirement or the many programs Social Security provides.

Patty Hoffman is the Public Affairs Specialist for ND, SD and Western MN. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 4207 Boulder Ridge Road, Ste. 100, Bismarck ND 58503 or via email at patty.hoffman@ssa.gov.

Gov. Dugaard Proclaims June as “Great Outdoors Month”

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Dugaard has proclaimed June as “Great Outdoors Month” in South Dakota, joining with many states across the nation to celebrate nature.

In the proclamation, Gov. Dugaard notes that South Dakota’s natural resources, state and national parks, and open spaces are recognized as some of the most spectacular, clean and accessible. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP), he says, provides ample opportunities to connect with nature through its events, trails and educational programs at the state’s 13 state parks and 43 recreation areas.

The Governor urges South Dakotans and visitors to “escape the indoors” and take advantage of those opportunities. Throughout the month of June, GFP will host day camps, archery lessons, disc-golf demonstrations, kids’ fishing derbies, educational nature programs and environmental events.

Notable events taking place throughout the month of June include:

June 2: National Trails Day

A day set aside to celebrate America’s trail systems and their supporters and volunteers. State parks across South Dakota will host trail-related events that day.

June 2-10: National Fishing and Boating Week

This is a week to get out on the water and experience the joys of boating and fishing.

June 9: National Get Outdoors Day

National Get Outdoors Day is an annual event to encourage healthy, active outdoor fun.

For a complete list of events, visit our online calendar at gfp.sd.gov.

-GFP-

Good Earth State Park Film Wins Awards

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota’s newest state park has been getting rave reviews from visitors, but it’s the new visitor film that recently put Good Earth State Park in the spotlight.

“Good Earth: Awakening the Silent City” received seven awards at the May 2018 Archaeology Channel

International Film Festival in Eugene, Oregon. The film was also selected to open the festival, a prestigious acknowledgement. The festival received over 800 entries and the Good Earth film was one of 30 films selected to be screened at the festival.

Awards received by “Good Earth: Awakening the Silent City” include the following: Best Narration; Best Film - Honorable Mention; Public Education Value - Honorable Mention (first runner-up); Script - Honorable Mention (first runner-up); Inspiration - Honorable Mention (first runner-up); Animation and Effects - Honorable Mention; and Music - Honorable Mention.

The film is shown twice an hour during regular business hours at the Good Earth State Park Visitor Center. For details on park location, weekly events and summer and winter hours, visit gfp.sd.gov/parks/detail/good-earth-state-park/.

-GFP-



Updating South Dakota's Water Infrastructure

Fresh water is one of our most precious natural resources. We rely on it for everything from powering our homes and businesses, to drinking, showering and washing our cars, to boating, fishing and other recreation. In South Dakota, we also rely on the Missouri River to generate hydroelectricity, run our irrigation systems and more.

I serve on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW), which has jurisdiction over America's water infrastructure. When we think of the word "infrastructure," we often focus on bridges and roads, but water infrastructure—such as dams, wastewater facilities and rural water systems—is critically important to our way of life in South Dakota.

Our committee recently passed comprehensive legislation to update and maintain water infrastructure systems such as dams and levees across the U.S. By strengthening the dams and levees used to manage our nations' rivers, we're taking steps toward protecting the lives and property of those downstream by reducing flood risks. The bill also includes language to upgrade aging drinking and wastewater systems and increase water storage to make sure everyone has access to safe, clean water.

Since taking office, I have been working to make sure the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is doing all they can to properly manage the Missouri River to avoid a flood like what we experienced in 2011. I was happy that a number of my priorities related to the Army Corps were included in the water infrastructure bill that passed out of the EPW Committee. It prioritizes the implementation of the Upper Missouri River Basin snowpack monitoring system that I've been calling for, which will help mitigate the possibility of a major flood event for those living or working along the Missouri River.

It also includes a provision for the Army Corps of Engineers to carry out a project for shoreline stabilization on the Lower Brule Reservation. This much-needed project will help fix erosion that is threatening the entire community in Lower Brule and the surrounding environment. The bill holds the Army Corps financially accountable if it fails to complete studies or reports that are called for in the legislation within a set period of time.

We also worked directly with EPW Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) to secure a verbal commitment toward addressing an Obama-era proposal known as the "surplus water rule." This proposed rule could restrict South Dakotans' access to water in Army Corps-controlled land. South Dakotans are legally entitled to use the water, so providing relief from this rule is necessary.

Our bipartisan legislation makes an important investment into the future of America's water infrastructure, and by extension the livelihoods of South Dakota families and businesses. I look forward to bringing it to the Senate floor soon.

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Some Environmental Markers

Growing up on a farm, my sisters and I were raised to leave things better than we found them. This meant taking care of the land, planting trees, maintaining our barn and treating the animals well. We learned in order to enjoy something tomorrow we have to take care of it today.

Judging by the state of our environment, I'd bet a lot of South Dakotans were raised the same way. We're fortunate to live in a place where we enjoy clean air and safe drinking water, and where we're able to take advantage of renewables.

If you've ever visited other countries or large metro areas in the U.S., it's pretty clear that South Dakota's air is relatively clean. In fact, we have one of the best clean air records in the nation. South Dakota meets all EPA air quality standards all across the state. Since the federal standards were first established under the Clean Air Act of 1970, South Dakota is one of just five states in the country that has never had a "nonattainment area" – an area where standards are not met. As another indicator, the American Lung Association rates the Black Hills region among its first place winners for cleanest metro areas in the country for ozone.

South Dakota also has a stellar record when it comes to drinking water. Our state's drinking water program is one of only a few in the nation to be implementing all of the EPA's drinking water standards. Additionally, our community water systems have surpassed the EPA's goal of having 95 percent of regulated systems meet all health-based standards for each year, with 98.9 percent of our systems attaining that goal.

And we're a state that utilizes renewable energy. On average, over 30 percent of South Dakota's power generation comes from wind power. In fact, if you add hydropower generated in South Dakota, we generate over 70 percent of our power from renewables. Our state is also a top producer of ethanol, and in state government, we are using E-10, E-30 and E-85 to power our state fleet.

Can South Dakota improve? Yes. We need to do more to improve our surface water quality. But we can still be proud of our air and drinking water.

Linda and I built our home on the farm where I was raised, and once we're done serving as governor and first lady, we'll return there. The farm remains nice to this day, with many trees. I've got some deferred maintenance to address, but thanks to many years of good stewardship, it's a place Linda and I will be able to enjoy well into the future. I'm grateful that through the efforts of generations of conscientious South Dakotans, the same can be said of our air and drinking water.

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Brenda Harms Memorial Scholarships - Sarah Harms, Recipient Hannah Lewandowski, Recipient Erika Herr, Mike Harms

Tom and Barbara Paepke Scholarships - Tom Paepke, Career in Agriculture Scholarship Recipient Brenna Johnson, Fine Arts Scholarship Recipient Jasmine Schinkel, Barbara Paepke



Roger Hendrickson Memorial Scholarships - Recipient Tyler Iverson, Recipient Emma Donley, Recipient Hannah Lewandowski

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American Legion Citizenship Award

Hannah Lewandowski (right) and Luke Thorson (left), seniors at Groton Area High School, have been selected to receive the 2018 American Legion Citizenship Award. Bob Wegner (center) is representing the Groton American Legion. The basis for the award is honor, courage, scholarship, leadership, and service. Hannah and Luke received medals from the Groton American Legion Post #39.

Hannah plans to attend Lake Area Tech in Watertown and is the daughter of Brad and Rebecca Lewandowski of Groton. Luke plans to attend the University of Minnesota Duluth and is the son of Scott and Ann Thorson of Groton.



Columbia American Legion Auxiliary - Cara Dennert with recipient Jasmine Schinkel



Groton Chamber of Commerce - Jackson Oliver and Anthony Sippel

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Groton Lions Club 2018

Back - Groton Lions Club - Topper Tastad, Karyn Babcock, Madison Sippel, Luke Thorson, Hannah Lewandowski, Larry Wheeting
Front - Jessica Bjerke, Erika Herr, Harleigh Stange, Jenifer Fjelstad, Marshall Lane, Lexi Gustafson



Scottish Rite Book Grant 2018 - Hannah Lewandowski and Anthony Sippel



Full Circle Ag 2018 - Kelli Erickson, Full Circle Ag, presents the scholarship to Anthony Sippel

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Jenifer Fjelstad - SD ESA Senior High Youth Award Scholarship, 3M National Merit Scholarship Special Scholarship, Macklamore-Verlarde Burger King Scholarship



Anthony Sippel - SD Farm Bureau Scholarship



Lee Schlagel Memorial Scholarship - Jessica Bjerke



Groton Hopps Dow Scholarships - Alexis Gustafson and Jenifer Fjelstad



SD Farmers Union Scholarships- Brenna Johnson and Jenifer Fjelstad

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Alex Stange - Stratford Theatre Scholarship, Lazy Farmers 4H Club Scholarship



Anthony O' Brokaw Scholarship - Erika Herr



Ottertail Power Scholarship - Hunter Monson



Brian Sundstrom Wrestling Memorial Scholarship - Brandy Anderson



Northern State University - Hattie Weismantel (NSU Wolf PACT and Music Scholarships)



Rob Luecke Memorial - Gia Gengerke

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College Scholarships - These students received college scholarships: Gia Gengerke (Oral Roberts University Academic Scholarship and Quest Whole Person Scholarship), Marshall Lane (SDSU Blue and Yellow Scholarship and Housing Waiver Scholarship), Jenifer Fjelstad (Augustana Presidential, Fryxell, and ProMusica Scholarships) and Alex Stange (University of Nebraska Lincoln Ruth Leverson)

University of SD Achievement and Distinction Scholarships - These students received scholarships from the University of SD - Madilyn Wright, Alexis Gustafson, Madison Sippel, Jackson Oliver



Renee McKiver Memorial - Jake McKiver, recipient Emma Donley, Kristi Peterson, Katie Kampa

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James Valley Bob Peterson Memorial Telecommunications Scholarship - Alexis Gustafson and Jenifer Fjelstad



Brown County 4H Leaders Association Scholarship - Emma Donley and Alex Stange



Jasmine Schinkel - Beck Memorial Scholarship



Groton Parent Advisory Committee Community Service Scholarship - Jenifer Fjelstad



Vicki Strom Memorial recipient Hattie Weismantel

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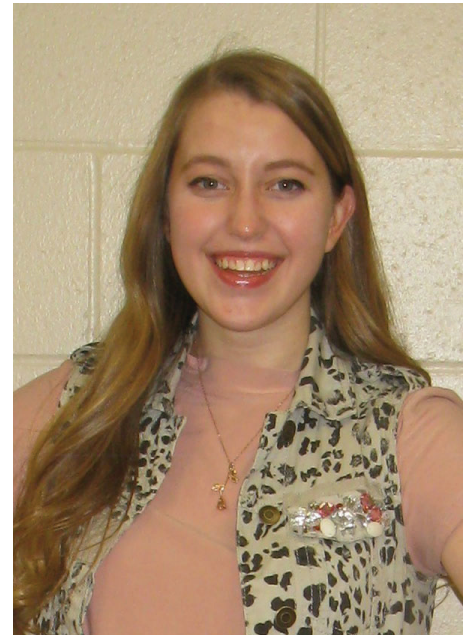
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Jerald W. Peterson Memorial - Erika Herr



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Knights of Columbus Scholarship - Hannah Lewandowski



St. Paul's Church Scholarship - Jenifer Fjelstad

CTE Scholar



The GHS 2018 award recipient is Madison Sippel.

One Groton Area High School student has qualified for the Groton Area High School CTE scholar designation in 2018. Career and Technical Education scholars are students who have completed approved courses in the technical electives, sciences, and mathematics areas and maintain an overall GPA of 3.0, no final grade below a C (2.0) and must complete four units each of English, mathematics and science, three units of social studies, two units of technical electives, and one-half unit each of fine arts and computer science.



Richard Duerre Memorial - Brandon Keith

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**Emmanuel Lutheran Faith
Forever Scholarships - Alexis
Gustafson, Madison Sippel,
Hunter Monson**

**Groton Kiwanis Community
Service Scholarship - Lee
Schinkel, Recipient Hattie
Weismantel, Reed Litch**



**Girls State - These seniors
attended Girls State in the
summer of 2017 - Hattie
Weismantel, Madison Sip-
pel, Aleaya Worlie, Madilyn
Wright**



Associated School Boards Governor's Academic Excellence Recognition - Jenifer Fjelstad with Governor Dennis Daugaard

The best and brightest from the Class of 2018 were honored for their academic achievements at the 28th Annual Academic Excellence Banquet in Pierre on Monday April 23, 2018. In conjunction with Gov. Dennis Daugaard, the Associated School Boards of South Dakota invited more than 200 students, who were identified as the top one percent of their senior class, from the state's public, private, and tribal schools, to celebrate their academic accomplishments. The event was sponsored by the South Dakota Board of Regents, the South Dakota Community Foundation and the South Dakota Education Association.



President's Volunteer Service Award - Alexandra Stange

President's Volunteer Service Award

Alexandra Stange of Groton, a student at Groton Area High School, has been honored for her exemplary volunteer service with the President's Volunteer Service Award. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, recognizes middle level and high school students across America for outstanding volunteer service.

The award, which recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to serve their communities and their country, was granted by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. Alexandra was nominated for national honors this fall in recognition of her volunteer service.

Alexandra is the daughter of Doug and Vicci Stange of Groton. She plans to attend the University of Nebraska Lincoln and major in business.

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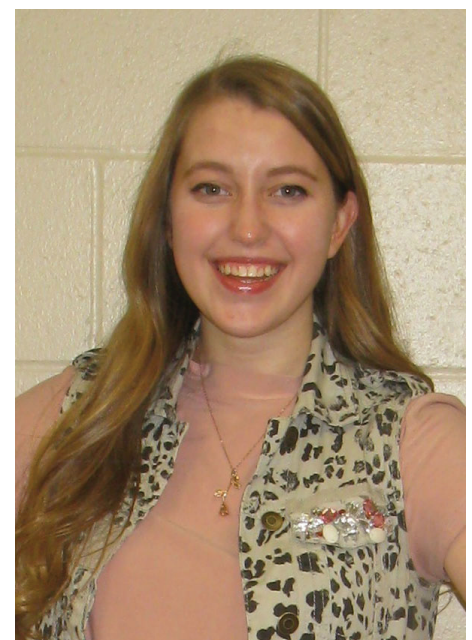
Kay and David Donovan Memorial Scholarship - Richard Donovan and scholarship recipient Tyler Iverson



Gwendolyn O'Connor Broman Memorial - Madison Sippel with Leonard Broman



These students have chosen military service through the National Guard, the Army Reserves, or the Coast Guard - Hayden Pigors, Mary Nelson, Cody Richards, Marshall Lane



Jenifer Fjelstad - recieved the John Westby Memorial Scholarship

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President's Education Awards Program

Five students in the Class of 2018 have qualified for the President's Education Awards Program. The awards are an effort by the U.S. Department of Education to recognize outstanding educational achievement and effort. The criteria have been developed to reflect changes occurring in the schools and to provide schools with both clear guidelines and flexibility. They are meant to reflect the state, local and national efforts to raise academic standards as embodied in the National Education goals.

"It is really nice to be able to recognize these seniors. They have worked hard for four years, have exceptional grade point averages, and have performed well on standardized testing," stated Jodi Sternhagen, Groton Area High School Counselor. The President's Award for Educational Excellence is signed by the President, Secretary of Education, and the school principal. Criteria include a grade point average of 3.5 or above and standardized test achievement at the 85th percentile or higher in math or reading.

Those qualifying in the Class of 2018 are Madilyn Wright, Marshall Lane, Madison Sippel, Jenifer Fjelstad, Alexis Gustafson



Groton FCCLA - Hannah Lewandowski, Alexis Gustafson, Madison Sippel



Principal's Honor Roll

Nine seniors in the Class of 2018 have been selected for the Principal's Honor Roll at Groton Area High School. To be eligible for this award, the seniors had to be on the honor roll at Groton Area High School every quarter for four years.

"This is a very special award," stated Jodi Sternhagen, School Counselor at Groton High School. "These students have worked very hard academically and should be commended." The seniors graduated on May 20, 2018.

This year's seniors on the Principal's Honor Roll are pictured above. In back, left to right, are Jenifer Fjelstad, Madilyn Wright, Madison Sippel and Alexis Gustafson; in front, left to right, are Alex Stange, Brandon Keith, Anthony Sippel and Marshall Lane; and missing is Gia Gengerke.



Principal's Student Service Award

Seven seniors at Groton Area High School, have been nominated for the Principal's Student Service Award. To be eligible for this award the students had to document exemplary community service during high school and complete an application and essay. **The award winners in 2018 are pictured above. In back, left to right, are Hattie Weismantel, Jasmine Schinkel and Alexis Gustafson; and in front, left to right, are Alexandra Stange, Jenifer Fjelstad, Madison Sippel and Gia Gengerke.**

"These students have made significant contributions to our community," stated School Counselor Jodi Sternhagen. "They have always been willing to volunteer when help is needed. When we've needed someone to help with a project, these students have stepped forward. Community service is extremely important in today's world and they have shown that they can make a difference."

The students' service areas included: peer tutoring, participating in the Food Drive, tutoring, helping youth, organizing events, and helping with youth activities such as coaching and refereeing. Each student received a pin from the National Association of Secondary School Principals for service.



Regents' Scholar Diploma

Four seniors from Groton Area High School are recipients of a Regents' Scholar Diploma awarded by the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs and the South Dakota Board of Regents.

The diplomas recognize students for academic achievement over the course of their high school career. Students earning the award automatically qualify for entry into any of South Dakota's six state-supported universities.

To earn a Regents' Scholar Diploma, students must have at least a 3.0 grade point average, no final grade below a C (2.0) and must complete four units each of English, mathematics and science, three units of social studies, two units of one modern or classical language and one-half unit each of fine arts and computer science.

The diplomas are signed by Governor Dennis Daugaard, the Secretary of State, the Department of Education Secretary, the South Dakota Board of Education President, and the Board of Regents President.

The 2018 GHS recipients are Marshall Lane, Alexandra Stange, Jenifer Fjelstad, Alexis Gustafson



Andover Threshing Association - Madilyn Wright

SD Opportunity Scholarship

The South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship was established for Regents Scholar and CTE recipients with an ACT score of 24 or greater. The scholarship provides \$6500 over four years to a qualifying student who attends an eligible higher education institution in South Dakota. While in college, students must maintain certain criteria. This scholarship is non-competitive; all students who meet the requirements and complete the application can receive the scholarship.



Four members of the Class of 2018 have qualified for the SD Opportunity Scholarship. They are Jenifer Fjelstad, Marshall Lane, Madison Sippel, Alexis Gustafson



**Heinz and Flihs Scholarships
Irvin and Janice Flihs Family Scholarship
Recipient Alex Stange and Wilfred N. and
Lucille A. Heinz Memorial Recipient Madison
Sippel**



**Sammuli Rix Scholarships - Luke Thorson
and Jackson Oliver**

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Groton Community Foundation and Barry Schuring Memorial
Brenna Johnson (Barry Schuring Memorial)
and Hattie Weismantel (Groton Community Foundation)



Ruden Family Agricultural Career Scholarship - Anthony Sippel



Cortland and Lois Kuehnert Memorial Scholarships
Alexis Gustafson - Kuehnert Financial Need, Madilyn Wright - Kuehnert Salutatorian, Kuehnert Valedictorian - Jenifer Fjelstad, Kuehnert Trade, Technical, Science, Math or Computer - Marshall Lane

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**Class of 69 Scholarships
Hannah Lewandowski and Gia Gengerke**



**Jark and Groton Employee Teaching
Groton Area School Employee Teaching
Scholarship Jasmine Schinkel and Phyllis J.
Jark Memorial Education Major Scholarship
Hattie Weismantel**



**Masonic Lodge and John Westby
Groton John Westby Memorial Jenifer
Fjelstad and Groton Masonic Lodge Jasmine
Schinkel**



**Darlene Raap Memorial Scholarships - Jes-
sica Bjerke and Erika Herr**

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Edna Bugner Memorial - Brandon Keith and Emma Donley



Don Bartz Scholarships - Alex Stange and Hannah Lewandowski



Groton FFA Alumni Scholarships - Brenna Johnson and Madilyn Wright



**Kramer and Weismantel
Susan Deanne Weismantel Memorial -
Alexis Gustafson
Shawn Weismantel Kramer Memorial -
Jenifer Fjelstad**

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Principal's Middle School Honor Roll

Eighteen eighth graders in the Class of 2022 have been selected for the Principal's Middle School 8th Grade Honor Roll at Groton Area High School. To be eligible for this award, the eighth graders had to be on the honor roll at Groton Area High School every quarter for two years.

This year's eighth graders on the Principal's Honor Roll are pictured above. In back, left to right, are Lane Krueger, Pierce Kettering, Trista Keith, Allyssa Locke, Madisen Bjerke, Kennedy Anderson, Rease Jandel, Stella Meier and Hannah Gustafson; and in front, left to right, are Travis Townsend, Seth Johnson, Kaden Kurtz, Madeline Fliehs, Jordan Bjerke, Jackson Cogley, Megan Fliehs, Kansas Kroll and Julianna Kosel.



Principal's 6th grade Middle School Honor Roll

Twenty-one sixth graders in the Class of 2024 have been selected for the Principal's Middle School 6th Grade Honor Roll at Groton Area High School. To be eligible for this award, the sixth graders had to be on the honor roll at Groton Area High School every quarter for one year.

This year's sixth graders on the Principal's Honor Roll are pictured above. In back, left to right, are Anna Bisbee, Faith Fliehs, Jaycie Lier, Karsyn Jangula, Claire Heinrich, Anna Fjeldheim, Carly Guthmiller, Hannah Monson, Ashlyn Sperry, Lydia Meier, Dillon Abeln and Bryson Wambach; and in front, left to right, are Lexi Osterman, Sara Menzia, Lane Tietz, Emily Clark, Emma Schinkel, Kyleigh Englund, Bradin Althoff, Colby Dunker and Holden Sippel.

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Today in Weather History

June 2, 1891: An estimated F3 tornado moved northeast, passing one mile south of Hazel in Hamlin County, where three people were killed in a barn. The farm home was entirely swept away. A horse was seen being carried in the air for 400 yards. The tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 5 miles.

After touching down, an estimated F2 tornado moved northeast along the eastern edge of Watertown, where a barn was destroyed, and debris was scattered for a half mile. Two homes were leveled 5 miles northeast of Watertown. Near Waverly, one person was injured in the destruction of a flour mill. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 15 miles.

June 2, 1964: Some bitter cold temperatures were observed during the early morning hours on the 2nd. Some low temperatures include; 27 degrees 12 miles SSW of Harrold; 28 degrees in Andover and 23 N of Highmore; 29 degrees 4 NW of Gann Valley, Redfield, and 2 NW of Stephan; 30 degrees in Castlewood and 1 W of Highmore; 31 degrees in Britton, 1 NW of Faulkton, and in Kennebec; and 32 degrees in McLaughlin.

June 2, 2008: Several supercell thunderstorms rolled southeast from northwest South Dakota into central South Dakota bringing large hail, damaging winds, and flash flooding during the late afternoon and evening hours. The large hail, up to baseball size, and high winds killed a large number of birds, pheasants, grouse, and rabbits. Thousands of acres of grassland and cropland along with many shelter belts received minor to major damage in Stanley and Hughes County. The large hail also knocked out many windows and damaged the siding of tens of buildings and homes in both Stanley and Hughes counties. Many roads and cropland were also affected by flash flooding throughout Hughes and Stanley counties. Very heavy rain of over 3 inches caused flash flooding in many parts of Pierre into the early morning hours. Many roads were reportedly flooded with 1 to 2 feet of water. Several homes in southeast Pierre received sewer backup. Also, several houses on Grey Goose Road received flood damage. A Federal Disaster Declaration was issued for Hughes and Stanley counties mainly for the flooding. Tennis ball hail broke most of the west side windows out of the house near Mission Ridge in Stanley County. Hail up to the size of baseballs fell in Pierre breaking some windows out of homes and vehicles. Very heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches fell across much of Stanley County causing extensive flash flooding. Seventeen roads also sustained some form of damage from the flooding.








1889: The same storm that caused the historic dam failure in Johnstown, PA, also affected Washington, D.C. The streets and reservations in the center of the city and all the wharves and streets along the riverfront were under water. Pennsylvania Avenue was flooded from 2nd to 10th Streets. The Potomac River crested at the Aqueduct Bridge at 19.5 feet on June 2. Additionally, damage occurred on Rock Creek, with the Woodley Lane Bridge washed away. Considerable damage occurred to machinery plants and material at the Navy Yard.

1917: The temperature at Tribune, Kansas dipped to 30 degrees to establish a state record for June.

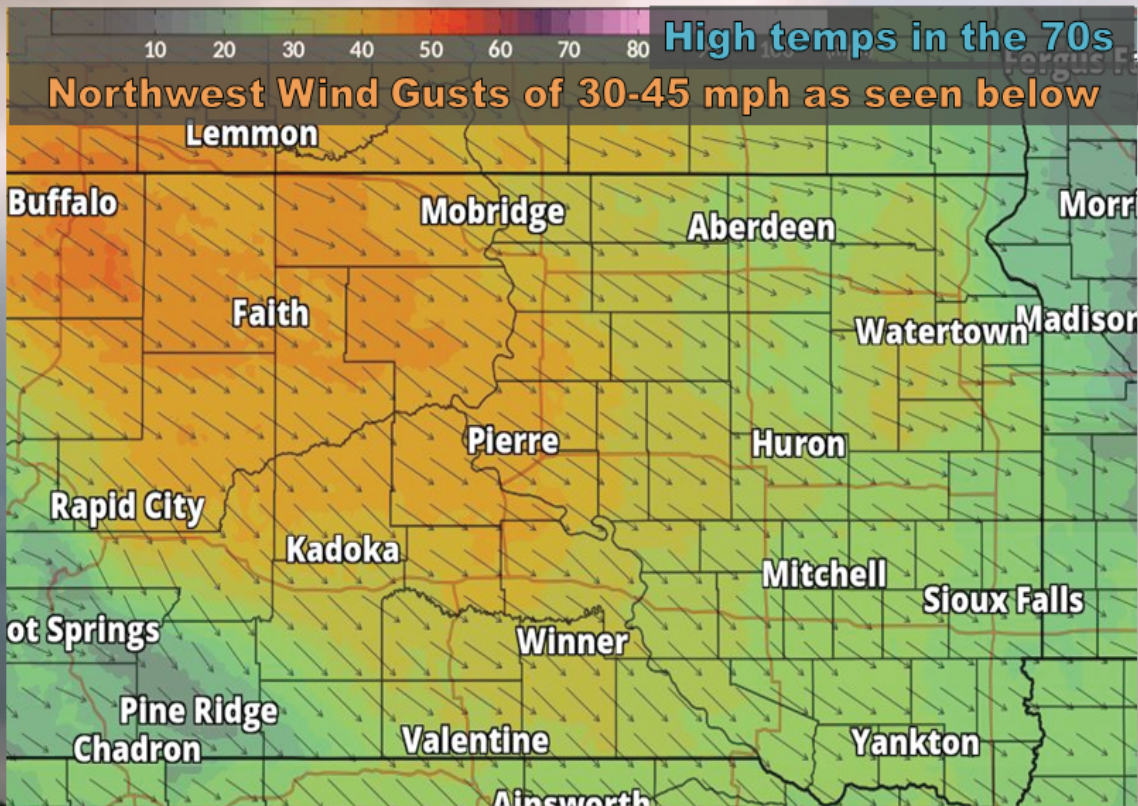
1998: Frostburg, Maryland on June 2, 1998, at 9:45 PM - This was part of a killer outbreak of tornadoes that moved southeast from Pennsylvania. The storm entered Garrett County, Maryland striking the town of Finzel. It then moved up and over Big Savage Mountain in Allegany County and ripped through the northern portion of Frostburg. It reached its peak strength as it crossed the ridge. Winds were estimated between 210 and 250 mph (F4 on the Fujita Tornado Damage Scale). This was the first tornado to "officially" be rated an "F4" in the State of Maryland. The National Weather Service adopted the Fujita Damage Scale in 1973. The total damage path of the Frostburg tornado was over 25 miles long (8 miles in Allegany County) and up to a half-mile wide. Along most of its path, it was producing winds over 125 mph (F2 or stronger). The damage path was continuous as it moved up and down over 2000-foot mountain ridges. The fact that no one was killed in Maryland was attributed to 5 to 10 minutes warning that was well communicated to people in Frostburg over television, radio, scanners, telephones, and sirens. People took quick action to move to their basements. A mother and child rode out the storm as it destroyed their house hiding under a table in the basement. They were shaken but unharmed. A jacket from a Frostburg home was found 25 miles away. A diploma was found near Winchester, Virginia, 60 miles away and a bill was found near Sterling Virginia (about 100 miles away).

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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Breezy. Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Decreasing Clouds and Breezy then Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 73 °F	Low: 47 °F	High: 79 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 87 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 90 °F

WINDY AND COOLER SATURDAY



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 6/2/2018 5:02 AM Central

Temperatures will be a good 15+ degrees cooler today than Friday. Dry, sunny and windy weather as well. The cool-down is only temporary however, as mid to upper 80s are possible again by Monday.

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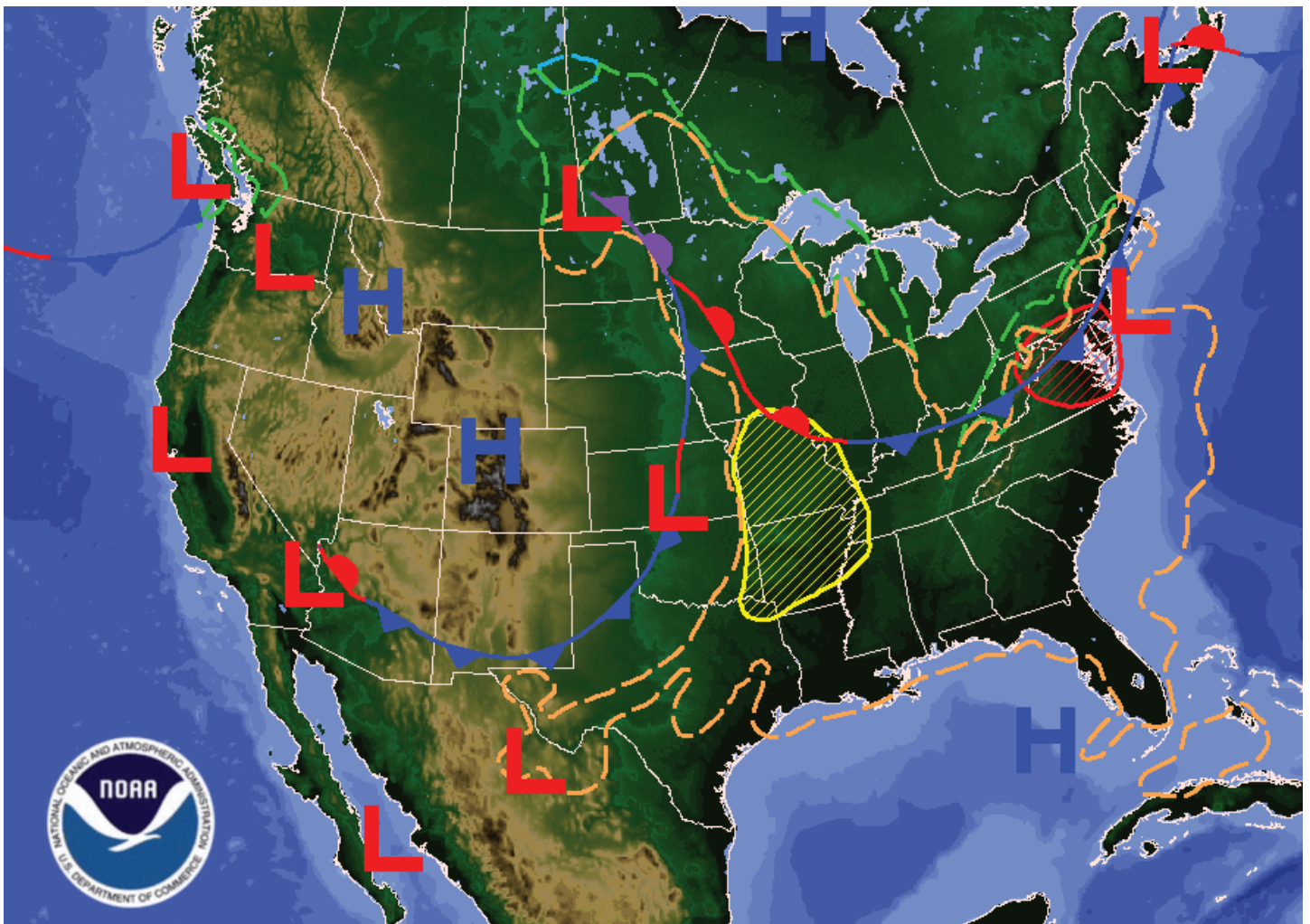
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 93.5 F at 5:04 PM
Low Outside Temp: 66.0 F at 6:34 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 47.0 Mph at 10:05 PM
Precip: 0.04

Today's Info

Record High: 100° in 2017
Record Low: 30° in 1946
Average High: 73°F
Average Low: 50°F
Average Precip in June: 0.22
Precip to date in June: 0.04
Average Precip to date: 7.36
Precip Year to Date: 4.34
Sunset Tonight: 9:15 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:47 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Jun 02, 2018, issued 5:00 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Rubin-Oster 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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WHICH IS BETTER: LONG OR SHORT?

One of my childhood memories is standing for great lengths of time while certain people prayed long, boring prayers. I remember asking God more than once if there was not something more important for Him to do than to listen to Mr. "whatever his name was." Occasionally I would put my fingers over my eyes, slightly spread two of them apart and then look around to see what everyone was doing. Most of them, if I recall correctly, were slightly shifting their weight from one foot to the other trying not to disturb the person standing next to them.

It was later in life that I discovered length was not all that important when we pray. It is our sincerity and the purpose of our prayers that gets God's attention.

Perhaps Psalms 117 was included in the Bible to make this point. It is a prayer of praise written by an unknown author. Notice also that it begins with an invitation to the Gentiles to "Laud Him" - the "Lord." The Psalmist wants everyone to know that everyone is invited to worship Yahweh.

And after the invitation the Psalmist gives a reason for this special call to worship: "For great is His love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever." Then he shouts in gratitude: "Praise the Lord."

The Psalmist made a special effort to announce the fact that all nations are included in this call to worship. It is echoed in the words of Jesus: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for Your great love and faithfulness that is limitless, all inclusive and everlasting. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 117 Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

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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
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 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

Corn Palace updates in time for tourist visits

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — The Corn Palace has completed two projects to update southeast South Dakota's famed agricultural attraction just in time for tourist season.

The Mitchell tourist site has replaced a portion of its wooden basketball court surface and added exterior lighting, the Daily Republic reported.

The Corn Palace hosts many events every year, including the Corn Palace Festival and Mitchell High School's graduation. The attraction this year saw more than 170 events that wore down the basketball court. Building staff recently noticed that parts of the wooden logo were cracking and starting to splinter, so workers replaced about 100 pieces of wood and repainted the logo.

"It was actually more expensive for us to just repair the wood and repaint that logo than it would have been to replace the wood and sand it all down and get the new logo painted," Corn Palace Director Scott Schmidt said Wednesday.

The second project included rewiring lights on the Corn Palace and adding light poles to the plaza.

"Light poles in the Corn Palace Plaza were added basically to coincide with the lights we already have on the front of the Corn Palace," Schmidt said. "The lights that surround the murals and the lights on the building were all rewired and put on a dimmer system, so we have the ability to adjust the brightness."

The dimmer system creates more opportunities for display, Schmidt said. The Corn Palace has already used the system by creating a coordinated light-and-sound show every night.

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

Spearfish seeks to regulate food trucks

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A city in western South Dakota is looking into regulating food trucks.

The Spearfish City Council will consider a proposed ordinance establishing rules for mobile food and beverage vending in the city, the Black Hills Pioneer reported.

City Planner Jayna Watson said the ordinance limits impact on traffic and ensures health standards. It also would set an annual fee, currently proposed at \$150.

Watson said the proposal places reasonable limits on a currently unregulated activity.

Food truck vendors currently have to obtain a \$500 license to sell goods on private property. The proposed ordinance would set operating hours to allow mobile food and beverage vending on public streets and to ensure they don't interfere with restaurants' operating hours in the area.

The proposal also outlines areas prohibited to food trucks, particularly in areas that could create public nuisances or traffic and safety issues.

City staff contacted restaurant owners for feedback before drafting the ordinance. Staff examined models around the country, said Watson. She believes that the ordinance fits best for Spearfish.

The City Council delayed the ordinance's first reading Monday to seek more community feedback.

Councilman Larry Klarenbeek said he wants the ordinance to be more thoroughly vetted at the committee level.

"In my opinion, this ordinance is very important for our community," Klarenbeek said. "What I meant by needing more time and further vetting was for us to again revisit this after we discuss it again in committee for potential amendments."

The ordinance will be considered again at the City Council's next meeting on June 4.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

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Busboy who held dying RFK speaks of lingering pain

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — For almost a half a century, the Mexican immigrant busboy who held a dying Robert Kennedy blamed himself and wondered if he could have done more.

Juan Romero, now 67, for years, had asked himself what if Kennedy had not stopped to shake his hand.

In a rare interview, Romero told The Associated Press that he doesn't hold the guilt anymore but believes he should have been the one to take that bullet. He's still angry that Kennedy never got the opportunity to lead a fractured nation in 1968.

This week marks the 50th anniversary of Kennedy's assassination at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. The site is now a high school that serves Latino and black students.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

05-24-52-62-66, Mega Ball: 17, Megaplier: 3

(five, twenty-four, fifty-two, sixty-two, sixty-six; Mega Ball: seventeen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$97 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$74 million

Couple to open more weight-loss stores

By JEREMY J FUGLEBERG, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Michelle Lounsbery never expected she would be running a chain of weight-loss stores.

She's a lawyer by training, after all.

And yet, in just a few years, Lounsbery and her husband, Mark Lounsbery, went from opening one of Profile by Sanford's first franchise locations, in Sioux City, Iowa, to owning six stores, with another six under development to open soon.

Lounsbery's growing Profile franchise empire mirrors the growth of the program itself.

The key, Lounsbery said, isn't just in the nutrition plan and the coaching. It's in the approach to what members need.

When Lounsbery was first getting started, she asked Nate Malloy, vice president of Profile, how to approach the business side of selling Profile's shake, bars and other food items. His answer? That's the wrong focus.

"He said, 'Our philosophy is not, 'We sell food.' Our philosophy is, 'How do we help that person be successful to meet their goal?' And that's where our focus is,'" she said. "And to me, that was awesome. Because I don't want to be that food pusher or peddler. That's icky to me."

Profile by Sanford is growing by leaps and bounds. The plan, developed by Sanford Health physicians and researchers, started in 2012 with one store.

Profile by Sanford combines nutrition, activity and lifestyle coaching to help its members lose weight. Sanford's weight-loss plan is based on a ketogenic weight-loss approach centered on protein-heavy meal replacement shakes and bars, although from the beginning, food that members can buy from the grocery store is part of the menu.

Profile has recently branched out from weight loss into performance nutrition with its Perform brand.

Today, there are 45 stores, and Profile has leaped into growth mode. There are 64 stores under construction, and another 166 are under commitment for future development. More than half of the new locations

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were sold in recent months, Profile announced recently.

Profile is now in 18 states, and the additional stores will grow its network to 35 states. Future plans include more than 1,000 U.S. locations and possible international expansion.

"We know we have at least 1,100 tier 1 and tier 2 sites or markets that work well with our model, based on our population and what's worked so far in the markets we're in," said Malloy. "At the end of the day, we're looking to grow as fast as makes sense and where there is demand for this program to deliver to as many members as we can."

The growth success hasn't gone without notice. Profile by Sanford was named an Entrepreneur Magazine Top New Franchise in 2017 and 2018, garnering it even more attention from potential franchisees.

Lounsbery first heard about Profile while working for Howalt-McDowell Insurance in Sioux Falls, the Argus Leader reported.

It was 2014, and Profile was still in its infancy.

"I had had some of my clients at Howalt on the program, and I saw them eating bars or drinking shakes, and I said, 'What are you doing?'" she said.

What's more, she saw them losing weight. She was no stranger to diet plans.

"I've tried every single diet, if it's out there," she said. "I've done the vinegar, the soup, The Ideal Weight, the Weight Watchers."

She was struck by Profile's approach to weight loss. It was focused on getting its members healthy, not selling its products.

"That's not the mission. Their mission is meet you where you are, figure out how to get you to your goal, and figure out how to keep you there," she said.

She and her husband, a Sanford Health internal medicine doctor, decided in 2015 to open a small Profile franchise in Sioux City, the weight-loss plan's first from-scratch franchise store. Lounsbery left her job at Howalt-McDowell, and the couple's store opened in June 2016.

"We jumped on, and Sioux City was a hit before we opened," she said. "I had to open up a mini-store, and we coached virtually. I had to put my manager and a coach in an office in Sioux City just talking to members."

They looked to add more stores, with the Lounsberys focusing on cities similar to Sioux Falls: Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls and Iowa City, Iowa, and Grand Forks, North Dakota.

"That store was at capacity almost two months in," she said.

Lounsbery is thinking about ways to add on to the Profile experience in her store, giving her members more options — especially in terms of prepared food and drinks.

"For me, it's really looking outside the box," she said. "I'd love to see a drive-thru in these stores; I'd like to get a shake with coffee in it. I'd love to be able to pull through and get a salad and a shake already made so it's a no-brainer for me."

But she's not done adding new locations. She's opening a store in Duluth, Minnesota and is going in with her brothers on three locations in St. Joseph, Missouri part of Profile's rapid nationwide growth.

"My goal is just to get these 12 open, and quite honestly, I'm not sure what is available still," she said.

It's not so easy to grow a business from a small chain of franchises into a nationwide network of weight-loss businesses.

There's a lot to think about.

Profile HQ provides support to franchisees, and a growing number of franchisees means a lot more work. HQ works on real estate issues for new locations. HQ ships Profile products — formerly a regional distribution chain concern, but increasingly a national one.

"In most franchise concepts, from the time you sign the franchise agreement until you get open, that's a critical time for the franchises and a critical time for us," Malloy said.

Profile's relatively slow initial growth gave its support efforts time to shake out any kinks. And early franchisees, like the Lounsberys, served as quality evangelists for Profile franchisees.

"It's really been phenomenal to see the increase in growth for Sanford," Lounsbery said. "I've had the op-

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portunity to sit in on and get a lot of the franchise phone calls from interested parties that have found out about Sanford Profile and want to own stores themselves, and so they call and ask me a ton of questions.”

But its franchise model really took off when it partnered with franchise development firm St. Gregory Group, based in Cincinnati, in January.

“That’s what’s really been driving this latest burst of interest from prospective franchisees,” Malloy said. “They are bringing to the table franchisees that have lots of experience running other concepts, whether that be QSR (quick-service restaurants) or fitness concepts, all over the board, but they’re experienced owners that have worked with this group in the past.”

Since February, Profile has held monthly discovery days for prospective franchisees, a chance to interview them and for the Profile sales team to meet them and review the business model. The plan is to continue the monthly meetings through the end of the year — unless Profile sells out of markets.

“Based on our first two discovery days, quite honestly, there’s some potential we might do that,” Malloy said.

Lounsbury credited the Profile team with taking an approach that attracts and keeps franchisees.

“Sanford Profile has been awesome to work with,” she said. “They just bend over backwards for their franchisees. It’s been amazing. And I think that’s why you’re seeing the growth.”

Malloy said by the end of the year, he expects Profile will have 100 locations open, obviously with more to come.

The future for Profile is bright, Malloy said. There’s plenty of room to grow in the U.S., and Profile is already looking to cross national borders.

“I see international growth on the horizon. We have a number of things that are in the works now that look like promising opportunities for us to expand this model to other countries,” he said. “In a three- to five-year time frame, I most definitely see us operating around the globe.”

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

Woman helps rescue animals in South Dakota

By ANNA JAUHOLA, The Daily Republic

DELMONT, S.D. (AP) — Teresa Richardson has a motto: “Big or small, I’ll take ‘em all.”

Richardson began E.T. Farms Animal Rescue in Delmont 15 years ago, The Daily Republic reported. Her sister needed help running a local restaurant.

“I came here to help, and I just fell in love with it and I stayed,” Richardson said of Delmont and South Dakota.

After purchasing acreage on the edge of town, she quickly saw the need for someone to rescue animals beyond dogs and cats. Her first rescue was a dog, but she soon began taking in hoof stock. She estimates she’s been able to help thousands of animals by also working with four other rescue organizations to help animals find homes and when she isn’t able to take an animal.

“I take the animals no one else wants,” she said of her nonprofit organization. “It takes a lot of time and patience and a lot of effort sometimes to pull them through, but once you do, that makes it all worth it.”

Right now, she has four lambs, one miniature horse and two miniature donkeys. The lambs and horse are adopted and will soon go to their new families, but the two donkeys are waiting for homes.

The donkeys — Donk and Little Man — she found at an auction. They had severe cases of mange and had not been groomed. Since bringing them in, each is on the mend.

Her first hoof stock were lambs. They often are the third of a set of triplets. A ewe can only feed two lambs at a time, Richardson said, and if a producer has 300 to 600 head of sheep, they typically won’t take time to bottle feed. She is select, too, on who adopts lambs and any of her animals.

“Too many people want to take them in to butcher,” Richardson said of the lambs. “I didn’t spend all my hard time from the time they were a day old, bottle feeding them every two hours around the clock for somebody to take them in to butcher.”

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When adopting out any of her animals, Richardson has a lengthy application process to ensure an animal's safety. She checks with veterinarians, the applicant's references, and even calls local police departments to check whether applicants have had any issues with animals in the past.

"I'm very diligent when I choose an adopter. I've turned down some people and been cussed out," Richardson said. "But, I don't care. I'm going to do what's best for that animal, not what's best for me."

Richardson has gained a great reputation and formed solid relationships with area farmers, who know she'll take in ill, deformed, or otherwise unwanted animals, but she draws the line at bison. A woman in Washington state called her a couple years ago to take in two bison and two oxen, but she is not regulated for either animal and suggested the woman call area zoos.

Richardson has rescued ducks, potbelly and regular farm pigs, dogs, donkeys, horses, sheep, goats, and others.

Her most memorable rescue was a pig named Floppy for her huge, floppy ears.

"She was special," Richardson said. "She would come up to the fence when she'd hear me. I'd scratch her back and she'd start dancing. She made a sound I never heard a pig make before."

Richardson takes in dozens of puppies every year. Recently, she helped round up approximately 25 puppies in Wagner at the request of the city. Several dogs had been let loose and were starting to form packs. She also routinely has people drop animals on her doorstep, including 30 to 40 puppies within two days last fall.

"My door is always open. I'm here 24/7," she said. "Everyone has their own story and some people fall on hard times, and that's understandable. I'd much rather they bring animals here than drop them in a ditch."

Last summer, Richardson saw the worst outbreak of parvovirus and distemper in the batches of animals she took in. One litter of 5-week-old puppies was particularly heartbreaking. After she got them home, bathed and fed them, one puppy acted strangely so she brought it to her vet in Mitchell. One after the other, the puppies became ill and died. She couldn't save a single one.

They had one puppy tested and found each suffered distemper, parvovirus, coronavirus, Hepatitis C, and hookworms.

"They didn't have a chance," Richardson said. "But at least they didn't die alone in the dirt. They got a nice warm bath, something to eat, and had somebody to hold them. They knew they were loved and somebody cared."

To further help animals, Richardson needs to complete a few projects.

Her most immediate need is help with construction to create new shelters. She has already used a shipping container to make a dog kennel with heat, air conditioning and outside runs, but needs help gathering materials and labor to build other buildings. She is paying out-of-pocket for other work and construction.

"It's hard because I'm the only one here. I divide my day between tending the animals and getting work done," she said.

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

Hot Springs man gets 20 years in prison for child sex crime

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Hot Springs man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for using the internet to try to entice a minor for sex.

The U.S. attorney's office says 32-year-old James Sides in March 2017 communicated online with an undercover agent he thought was the father of a 14-year-old girl, and tried to arrange a meeting to have sex with the girl.

Sides will be on supervised release for 20 years following his prison term.

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Sutton resigns from South Dakota Board of Regents

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents says Bob Sutton of Sioux Falls has resigned from the board.

Sutton was named president and CEO of Avera Health on Thursday. His resignation from the regents was announced Friday and takes effect Monday.

Sutton says he put “great value on higher education” and is pleased he was able to help shape it in South Dakota. He has served on the board since April 2013, and has been board president since March 2017.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard says Sutton has been “a great advocate” for state universities and their students.

Daugaard will name a successor to complete Sutton’s term, which ends in 2019.

The regents are the governing body for South Dakota’s six public universities and two special K-12 schools serving deaf and blind students.

Lakota language immersion expanding in Rapid City

By CHRISTOPHER VONDRACEK, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The children speak in Lakota. Their teacher, Savannah Greseth, walks the aisles of seated second graders, counting to 15 with them. “Wa?zí, nú?pa, yámni.” Only when she prepares a short video does a child speak up in English.

“Can I turn off the lights?” asked a student.

“Há?,” or “yes,” Greseth responded. The student scampers up to hit the lights, and the video starts. Children softly pat hands on the carpet and sing along with the teacher on the screen, who sings T?awápaha Olówa? or the “Lakota Flag Song.”

“T?u?kásilayapi, t?awápaha ki?há?”

So opens the Lakota immersion class at General Beadle Elementary School in Rapid City, the Rapid City Journal reported. The class is a year old. Next year, Greseth will move to full-time with her own classroom. But there’s nothing new about speaking and singing in Lakota.

“This language predates Rapid City,” Greseth said.

Around a poster of Charlie Brown pasted on the hallway space of the converted classroom, flags of the nine Sioux nations in South Dakota line the wall. Sometimes the kids point up to tell Greseth which tribe their family comes from. The class comprises Native American and non-Native students.

“They get a sense of pride that they get to share their background knowledge,” said Greseth. “Some kids have said ‘Lakota’ is their favorite class.”

Most don’t come from Lakota-speaking homes.

“Some will come in knowing a word or two.”

After the movie, the white boards come out, and Greseth sounds out letters.

“Yah-Yameni,” Greseth said.

The children scribble “Ys” on the boards and hold them up for approval.

Next, the children move to BINGO or WAGMU. Greseth made the cards herself.

“It just has the right amount of letters and,” she claps her hands, indicating syllabic stress, “bin-GO and wag-MU.”

“Same amount of squares. Nothing too special.”

Students can enroll in Lakota language at many colleges from the University of South Dakota to Sitting Bull College. On Pine Ridge, students learn Lakota, too. The Lakota classes offered in public schools in Rapid City include an elective at North Middle School and a language class at Central High School. But when Sarah Pierce took over last summer as the city’s director for Title VI, which funds education programs for Native American students, she wanted to implement language programming more regularly at the elementary level.

“I knew all about her expertise in this and asked if she’d be willing,” Pierce said.

Both Pierce and Greseth are enrolled Oglala Lakota. Pierce grew up near Rockyford and took Lakota at Red Cloud Indian School (where she met Greseth), but she envies the instruction students at General

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Beadle receive from Greseth.

"They're learning the foundation of the language," Pierce whispers, while the student sound out letters with their teacher, who uses non-verbal cues such as opening her eyes wide when a student's answer surprises her.

Greseth loves language. She received degrees at Sisseton Wahpeton College and Black Hills State University and a Lakota Language certificate from Oglala Lakota College. At Central High School in Rapid, she also took French and Spanish. But her interest of Lakota — she's learned from teachers and elders at language programs from Pine Ridge to Standing Rock — began at age 6.

"My u?cí, or my grandma, she speaks some (Lakota), but she went to the boarding school so not a whole lot," Greseth said.

Boarding schools, as part of assimilation, forbade and punished children speaking in their native language. Today, Lakota is considered "critically endangered." The Lakota Language Consortium in 2016 reported that 2,000 first-language speakers were alive, down two-thirds from a decade earlier.

But at General Beadle, and many schools, efforts are underway to preserve the language. It's more than just learning the diacritics and glottal stops (which creates a popping sound), but values.

"We learn the values of wówachi?t?a?ka, or patience and tolerance, and wócha?tet'i?ze, or courage, and what that looks like from a Lakota lens.

Seventy percent of General Beadle Elementary's students are Native American, many Lakota. But learning Lakota is not only culture-building, it's also good training. Studies suggest bilingual students have more brain activity, can more easily make friends, and land better jobs.

"Lakota is a world language," Greseth said. "And it should be valued as such."

Lakota has no official orthography, so Greseth uses what she calls "user-friendly" spellings from the Lakota Language Consortium. Materials come packaged with games on the iPad, flash cards, and laminated posters of animals with names highlighted.

This summer, preparing to teach Lakota full-time in the fall (she currently spends half her day in the Jobs for Graduates program at North Middle School), Greseth plans to deepen her curriculum with traditional Lakota stories. She said her own children are even learning, slowly.

"Wasté! Wagnú wa? luhá!" she said, congratulating a student whose WAGMU card filled up.

The other students sit four to a table and reverently wait the next sound.

"Gnugnúska," Greseth said.

"That's grasshopper," Pierce said.

Students who have the "g" sound quickly place markers over the letter.

At the end of class, high school seniors arrive in their graduation gowns to high-five students for the annual graduation walk, trotting past the sign Greseth had posted on the wall of her makeshift classroom:

"Ta?yá? Yahípi."

"It means 'welcome,'" Greseth said. "Literally it said, 'It's good that you're all here.'"

This story has been changed to correct the spelling of several Lakota words throughout. It also corrects paragraph 14 to note that Greseth made the game cards herself, instead of inventing the game.

Agropur expansion raising water quality concerns

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A cheesemaker's plan to expand operations in eastern South Dakota is running into some opposition following its request to dump millions of gallons of wastewater daily into the Big Sioux River.

Wisconsin-based Agropur needs a permit from South Dakota environmental officials to release wastewater into the river. Agropur announced earlier this year the company is expanding its facility in Lake Norden and upgrading its wastewater treatment plant.

The cheese manufacturer's plans call for dumping up to two million gallons of wastewater a day into the nearby Big Sioux River watershed.

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But some environmentalists and water systems officials in the region argue that the move could put drinking water supplies downstream at risk, the Argus Leader reported .

They're concerned with the nitrate levels that will accompany the wastewater when it's put into the river.

The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources received 14 letters opposing Agropur's permit application during the public comment period that ended May 11, said surface water discharge specialist Al Spangler.

State law doesn't cap the amount of nitrates that a permit holder can place into the river, but it requires nitrate levels to be monitored and reported to the department.

Jay Gilbertson, manager at East Dakota Water Development District, said the regulation doesn't mitigate the impact that nitrate-filled wastewater can have on downstream communities relying on the watershed for drinking water.

"Given the fact that these water systems serve a significant portion of the state's population, we believe it prudent to plan ahead, rather than deal with the consequences when things go bad," said Kurt Pfeifle, executive director of the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems.

Tim Czmowski, vice president of Agropur's Midwest operations, said the plans comply with state and federal law. He said the company will also follow any recommendations or discharge limits, as long as they're reasonable.

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

Hunting won't be expanded on South Dakota wildlife refuge

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Department of Interior is not moving forward with a proposal to expand waterfowl hunting at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern South Dakota.

The federal agency cited overwhelming public opposition for its decision, saying the refuge northeast of Aberdeen is widely valued as a sanctuary for migratory birds and other wildlife.

Hunting is allowed on certain areas of the refuge as a management tool with specific rules and regulations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opened a 60-day comment period in November for public input on the proposed expansion. The wildlife agency sought feedback on how to allow hunting while meeting the refuge's expectations to preserve the area for migratory birds to rest and breed.

Retired South Dakota conservation officer Bill Antonides expressed opposition to the proposal at a meeting in the fall. He told the Aberdeen American News that expanding hunting could have disrupted wildlife patterns on the lake and pushed birds out of the refuge earlier than normal.

"(The decision is) good for sportsmen, for outdoorsmen, for the bird lovers and, most importantly, for the refuge," Antonides said.

Sand Lake was established in 1935 with an executive order signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

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

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, May 29

New NFL rule does (almost) nothing

The National Football League's decision to not allow its players, coaches or other personnel to kneel in protest during the playing of the National Anthem before games should not be construed as a victory for patriotism.

To do so would suggest that patriotism and love of country come with price tags.

The NFL announced its new policy last week. After the league took a public-relations beating because

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of the silent, kneeling protests by quarterback Colin Kaepernick (who, conspicuously, could not find a job in the league last year) and others, the league decided that players who wish to express their views on racial injustice, for example, during the anthem can do so in the locker room and not on the field. If players do engage in such expression on the field, their teams will be fined.

This is the latest twist in what has become a mangled issue, reshaped in part by President Trump's attacks on NFL players. He even suggested last week that those who don't stand for the anthem should leave the country.

The player protests were really about racial injustices that are still woven in the fabric of this nation. The protests aimed to call attention to these issues and beseech those who love America to help address that imbalance. While it would not have been the form of protest many of us would have chosen, it was the players' constitutional right to do so. And it surely did get our attention.

But the NFL has chosen otherwise.

The league's choice is the bottom line. The disgust of some fans with the protests hit the NFL in the pocketbook and its public image. Thus, the league's decision wasn't about patriotism so much as it was about profits.

Unfortunately, the league's decision does almost nothing.

It doesn't address the issues that are the subject of the silent protests. These matters concern many of the players employed by the league. Instead, the NFL's decision places those issues on the back burner, or in the locker room — out of sight and, the league hopes, out of mind.

To be fair, the league's decision also doesn't prevent the players from speaking out on those issues via the platform the NFL gives them. They can still air their views in interviews; they can still speak out in other opportunities.

The league's decision does not bolster the freedom that the National Anthem hails; in fact, it undercuts it. Again, while many of us may not agree with this form of protest, it is still a right of speech guaranteed in the Constitution. There are indications that lawsuits may be filed to push that very point.

The league's decision doesn't bolster patriotism in this country, since patriotism cannot be legislated. It doesn't change hearts and minds, and does nothing to bridge the ideological gap. It only serves to ignore a problem, which is an approach that rarely results in constructive outcomes.

The one thing the decision DOES do is reinforce the interpretation of the protests as being acts of disrespect toward America by pampered, crybaby athletes who should appreciate what they have. That view mangles the point completely and fails to promote reasonable discussion or insight on the matter.

Nothing has been solved here, no answers have been found and no dialogue or understanding has been created. The NFL has simply moved to protect (or cover) its bottom line. It comes at an unfortunate cost.

The Public Opinion, Watertown, June 1

Thumbs up, thumbs down

Memorial Day over, thoughts never end — Thumbs Up

People in Watertown, the rest of South Dakota and the rest of the nation spent time on Monday remembering the hundreds of thousands of U.S. servicemen and women who have died in defense of our country. The Rev. N. Craig Werling, a graduate of the United States Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., delivered an address at the Veterans Memorial at Lake Kampeska. His words, and the gratitude we all felt for our armed forces, should not fade away once the holiday is over. Let's make it a point to be thankful for the service and sacrifices of our military every day of the year.

Even the perception of bias is harmful — Thumbs Down

An election issue was raised this week when members of the Codington County Auditor's Office were listed in a political advertisement as supporting one of the candidates. Questions arose because the Auditor's Office is responsible for all aspects of the election, including counting ballots on Election Day. There is no law, rule or policy that says these employees — who are also eligible voters and taxpayers — can't

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openly support the candidate of their choice. But we believe such public pronouncements of support may serve to put a suspicion of bias — whether conscious or unconscious — in the minds of the general public and should be limited.

Why would they do something like that? — Thumbs Down

Most people had probably never heard of the “Poet’s Table” that sits on a spot high up in Custer State Park in the Black Hills. It was legendary among hikers: a wooden table where people could relax and take in the stunning scenery. Last week the state became outraged when two women cut the iconic table in half and toted it down the trail. Sometimes the actions of others make us scratch our head. Why would anybody want to do something like that? And this can’t be blamed on youthful indiscretion, since the perpetrators were both in their late 20s. Their names have been made public, and we’re sure they will be met with much scorn. The written law they broke will only result in a slap on the wrist, since there was not much monetary value in the table, so maybe a little scorn isn’t a bad thing.

Speaking of elections ... — Thumbs Up

It seems like the current Primary Election campaign has been going on forever, but it’s about to end. Tuesday, June 5, is the day we all go to the polls. For Democrats, there won’t be much on the ballot outside of changes to Marsy’s Law. But Republicans have some big races with some big names running. This year, we will elect a new governor and a new congressional representative. In Codington County, we have a good race for sheriff, some good County Commission battles and state Senate seat up for grabs. Voter turnout is often disappointing during non-presidential primaries, but we’re hoping that isn’t the case this year. With so many close races involving so many quality candidates, we hope everybody gets to the polls on Tuesday.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, May 29

Week in review: the best, worst

CHEERS to the official dedication of Mitchell’s Veterans Park at the corner of First Avenue and Main Street on Saturday. Each of the five primary branches of the military is represented, as are those killed in action. Considering the level of community involvement needed to make the project happen, the hard work of the project’s donors certainly deserve to be recognized. Most readers will remember just a few years ago when that property had become an eyesore at the entrance to the city’s Main Street area. Today, Mitchell’s Veterans Park is a community asset for which everyone in the city can be proud.

HISSES are in order to the news of some serious crashes along area roads and highways this weekend. More campers, trucks and motorcycles are on Interstate 90 and on the less-traveled roads, there’s farm equipment trying to get around, as well. It’s a reminder worth noting every day but especially during the summer driving season: wear your seat belt and drive safely.

CHEERS to the area athletes who qualified for the South Dakota State Track and Field Meet and those in baseball and golf who are competing at state events in the next week. It was a short season for many of these athletes because of the weather but there were still some strong performances. This area has some very solid small-school golf programs and four area high school baseball teams made the state tournament, as well. Congratulations to those athletes on their successful seasons.

HISSES to some of the news about the latest U.S. Census Bureau figures for South Dakota population in small communities, in which more than half of South Dakota’s cities are estimated to be shrinking. Overall, the state has grown by 6.8 percent since 2010 in total residents and the state’s 20 largest cities — Mitchell included — continue to see a slight uptick or better in population. But the state’s smallest communities are struggling to hold on to the residents they have. It’s not a new problem for this state, but it will need to be a continued focus for the region’s leaders to continue to make those communities attractive places to live and work.

Midwest economy: May state-by-state glance

By The Associated Press

The Institute for Supply Management, formerly the Purchasing Management Association, began formally surveying its membership in 1931 to gauge business conditions.

The Creighton Economic Forecasting Group uses the same methodology as the national survey to consult supply managers and business leaders. Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss oversees the report.

The overall index ranges between 0 and 100. Growth neutral is 50, and a figure greater than 50 indicates growth in that factor over the next three to six months.

Here are the state-by-state results for May:

Arkansas: The May overall index for Arkansas rose to 66.2 from April's 59.6. Components were new orders at 77.9, production or sales at 70.9, delivery lead time at 58.8, inventories at 57.6 and employment at 66.1. Over the past 12 months, the Arkansas economy has added 1,200 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 1.6 percent and added 1,900 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 2.3 percent.

Iowa: The state's overall index dipped in May to 62.5 from 63.9 in April. Components were new orders at 62.3, production or sales at 70.2, delivery lead time at 58.1, employment at 65.1 and inventories at 56.9. Over the past 12 months, the Iowa economy has added 7,700 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 6.3 percent and has added 2,200 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 2.4 percent.

Kansas: Kansas' overall index hit 68.7 last month, compared with 66.5 in April. Index components were new orders at 80.6, production or sales at 73.0, delivery lead time at 61.2, employment at 69.0 and inventories at 59.6. The Kansas economy has added 900 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 1 percent over the past 12 months, Goss said, and has added 2,800 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 4.3 percent.

Minnesota: The state's overall index rose to 64.2 in May from April's 63.6. Index components were new orders at 75.6, production or sales at 69.1, delivery lead time at 56.9, inventories at 55.8 and employment at 63.6. Over the past 12 months, the Minnesota economy has added 2,800 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 1.4 percent and has added 1,900 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 1.6 percent.

Missouri: The overall index for Missouri climbed to 69.6 last month from 67.4 in April. Index components were new orders at 81.6, production or sales at 73.9, delivery lead time at 62.1, inventories at 60.4 and employment at 70.1. The Missouri economy has added 4,100 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 2.6 percent over the past 12 months, Goss said, and has lost 1,700 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs for decline of 1.6 percent.

Nebraska: Nebraska's overall index rose to 70.1 in May from 67.0 in April. Index components were new orders at 82.2, production or sales at 74.3, delivery lead time at 62.5, inventories at 60.7 and employment at 70.7. Over the past 12 months, the Nebraska economy has added 1,900 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 4.3 percent and has added 1,200 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 2.2 percent.

North Dakota: The state's overall index rocketed to 62.4 last month from April's regional low of 49.8. Index components were new orders at 73.6, production or sales at 67.5, delivery lead time at 55.1, employment at 61.4 and inventories at 54.4. The North Dakota economy has added 800 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 5 percent over the past 12 months, Goss said, and has lost 100 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs — a drop of 1.2 percent.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma's overall index jumped to 68.5 in May from 62.7 in April. Index components were new orders at 80.4, production or sales at 72.9, delivery lead time at 61.0, inventories at 59.4 and employment at 68.8. Over the past 12 months, the Oklahoma economy has added 5,200 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 6.0 percent and has lost 1,400 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs — a

drop of 3.4 percent.

South Dakota: The state's overall index fell to 66.8 in May from April's regional high of 69.3. Index components were new orders at 78.6, production or sales at 71.4, delivery lead time at 59.4, inventories at 58.1 and employment at 66.8. The South Dakota economy has added 1,600 durable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 5.9 percent over the past 2 months, Goss said, and has added 500 nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs for a growth of 3.3 percent.

Avera Health names Bob Sutton as new president and CEO

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Avera Health has named its top human resources executive as the new president and CEO of the regional health system.

Avera says Executive Vice President of Human Resources Bob Sutton will succeed President and CEO John Porter in June. Porter is retiring after 44 years of leadership at Avera.

Sutton has worked for Avera since 2013. Mary Kay Panowicz is chair of the President and CEO Search Committee. Panowicz says Sutton brings important experience from leadership both inside and outside health care.

Sutton says he aspires to lead with vision and courage as the organization sets a clear direction for growth.

Survey report suggests Midwest economy still steaming ahead

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The surging business conditions in nine Midwest and Plains states will be tested by trade conflicts and other factors that could slow growth, an economist said in a survey report issued Friday.

The Mid-America Business Conditions Index recorded its highest mark in 14 years last month, hitting 67.3 in May, compared with 64.5 in April, according to the report. The March figure was 62.1.

This is the 18th straight month the index has remained above growth neutral 50.0, pointing to strong growth for the region over the next three to six months.

"The Goldilocks economy — not too hot, not too cold — will be tested in the months ahead as trade skirmishes and potential wars slow growth and contribute to higher prices for inputs such as steel and aluminum," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey. "These higher prices will slow growth and push the Federal Reserve to be more aggressive in raising interest rates in the weeks and months ahead."

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth in that factor. A score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

The wholesale inflation index hit 88.9 in May, the highest figure since April 2011, and up from 85.7 in April. "Both our regional wholesale inflation index and the U.S. inflation gauge are elevated. I expect this elevated inflation to begin to show up at the consumer level," said Goss, who added that he consequently expects the Federal Reserve to raise short-term interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point later this month.

Economic optimism, as reflected by May's business confidence index, decreased to 66.3 from April's 70.2.

Healthy profit growth, still low interest rates, and lower tax rates, kept business confidence into a range indicating robust confidence, Goss said. However, he said, the May survey was conducted before the announcement of higher U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Conde woman burned in meth lab blast sentenced on drug count

REDFIELD, S.D. (AP) — A Conde woman who was severely burned in a methamphetamine lab explosion in December 2016 has been sentenced to five years in prison.

The American News reports that 44-year-old Roberta Zens was sentenced for keeping a place for the sale or use of drugs.

Zens was flown to a burn center in Minnesota after the explosion and fire in the house in which she

was manufacturing meth.

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

Sears stores to close in Grand Forks and Sioux Falls

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) — Sears Holdings Corp. plans to close two stores in the Dakotas as part of a nationwide reorganization.

Sears stores in the Columbia Mall in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and the Empire Mall in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, are expected to close by September. It's not clear how many workers will lose their jobs.

The Chicago-based company announced Thursday that it plans to close 57 Sears department and specialty stores, and 15 Kmart stores around the country.

Ellsworth airman sentenced to 30 years for son's death

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — An airman at Ellsworth Air Force Base has been sentenced to 30 years in a military prison for the beating death of his infant son two years ago.

Twenty-four-year-old Airman 1st Class David MacDonald pleaded guilty to murder shortly after his court-martial began Wednesday at the air base. As part of his sentence handed down Thursday, he will be dishonorably discharged from the Air Force.

MacDonald admitted striking his 3-month-old son, Elliot, after he got frustrated trying to calm the infant at their on-base residence on Nov. 4, 2016. He had been watching the infant on his own while his wife was out working.

An autopsy found the baby died of a head injury.

Pushing the envelope: Why was Kim's letter for Trump so big?

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is known for pushing the envelope with threats and bluster as he seeks to leverage his nuclear weapons program into security and economic benefits for his country. But lately he's gained notoriety for his envelopes alone.

President Donald Trump on Friday declared that his on-and-off summit with Kim was on again. The announcement came after Trump hosted a senior North Korean envoy at the White House and he delivered a personal letter from Kim that was inside a white envelope nearly as large as a folded newspaper.

Trump has not yet revealed what was written in the letter, but he sure seemed happy to get it. A photo showed a grinning Trump holding up the envelope alongside Kim Yong Chol, the most senior North Korean to visit the White House in 18 years, as they posed in the Oval Office in front of a portrait of Thomas Jefferson.

The photo made rounds on social media, where theories abound about why Kim would have sent Trump what seemed like a comically oversized letter.

Did Kim, a third-generation heredity leader, think Trump would share his love for lavish gestures and things grandiose? After spending months trading insults and war threats with him, has Kim learned that the way to influence Trump is to appeal to his ego — something South Korean President Moon Jae-in seemed to try in April when he openly vouched for Trump as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize?

No one outside North Korea likely knows the real reason for the letter's size. It could just be that's how Kim likes it.

Moon, who lobbied hard for nuclear negotiations between Trump and Kim, received a letter of similar size from Kim during February's Winter Olympics in which he expressed a desire for an inter-Korean summit.

Kim's letter to Moon was personally delivered by Kim's sister, who attended the Olympics as a special envoy, and was covered by a blue folder emblazoned with a golden seal.

Analysts say the gesture of sending the letter itself is part of the meticulous steps North Korea is tak-

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ing to present Kim as a legitimate international statesman who is reasonable and capable of negotiating solutions and making deals.

Following a provocative 2017 in which his engineers tested a purported thermonuclear warhead and long-range missiles that could target American cities, Kim has engaged in a flurry of diplomatic activity in recent months in what's seen as an attempt to break out of isolation and obtain relief from sanctions decimating his country's economy.

While trying to communicate its willingness to embrace Western diplomatic norms, Pyongyang has put in painstaking efforts to maintain reciprocity with Washington and Seoul, said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

Kim Yong Chol's trip to Washington was clearly a response to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's travelling to Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, twice in recent weeks for pre-summit negotiations with Kim. Likewise, Kim's letter to Trump would have been a reciprocal response to Trump's own letter to Kim on May 24 that temporarily shelved the highly anticipated meeting, Yang said.

In his letter printed on White House stationery, Trump, in an uncharacteristically warm and congenial tone, said he was canceling the summit because of North Korea's harsh comments about U.S. officials. But he also told Kim "please do not hesitate to call me or write."

North Korea then issued an unusually conciliatory response to Trump's letter, with senior diplomat Kim Kye Gwan saying in a statement that Pyongyang had "highly appreciated" Trump's willingness to hold a summit, calling it a "bold decision, which any other U.S. presidents dared not." Hours later, Trump said the summit was potentially back on.

Kim's letter to Trump on Friday will probably borrow much of the language from the statement of his vice foreign minister, said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University.

"Kim would begin by praising Trump's leadership and his 'bold decision' to build up the summit," said Koh, who is also a policy adviser to the South Korean president. "He will then talk about denuclearization, ending hostility and normalizing relations between the countries."

Because of the directness and weight of formality they provide, Kim might see personal letters as an important way to communicate with leaders of countries the North never had close ties with, Koh said.

This sets Kim apart from his father and grandfather, who were never bold proponents of letter diplomacy and mostly limited the exchange of letters and telegrams with traditional ally Beijing and, to a lesser extent, Moscow.

It remains unclear whether North Korean Vice Marshal Jo Myong Rok was carrying a letter from the late Kim Jong Il, the second North Korean leader, when he visited former President Bill Clinton at the White House in 2000.

Pushed by voters, GOP moderates rebel on immigration

By ALAN FRAM and NICHOLAS RICCARDI, Associated Press

HOMESTEAD, Fla. (AP) — Cipriano Garza says Rep. Carlos Curbelo is "a decent man, a family man." He lauds the South Florida Republican for defiantly pushing his party to protect young "Dreamer" immigrants from deportation.

Founder of a nonprofit that helps farm workers, Garza happily hosted Curbelo at a reception honoring high school graduates last week at the massive Homestead-Miami Speedway. But his praise came with a warning about this November's elections.

"He better do what's right for the community," said Garza, 70, himself a former migrant laborer. "If not, he can lose."

Across the country — from California's lush Central Valley to suburban Denver to Curbelo's district of strip malls, farms and the laid-back Florida Keys — moderate Republicans like Curbelo are under hefty pressure to buck their party's hardline stance on immigration. After years of watching their conservative colleagues in safe districts refuse to budge, the GOP middle is fighting back — mindful that a softer position may be necessary to save their jobs and GOP control of the House.

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"Members who have priorities and feel passionate about issues can't sit back and expect leaders" to address them, Curbelo said. "Because it doesn't work."

Curbelo, 38, is seeking a third term from a district that stretches from upscale Miami suburbs to the Everglades and down to eccentric Key West. Seventy percent of his constituents are Hispanic and nearly half are foreign-born. Those are among the highest percentages in the nation, giving many of them a first-hand stake in Congress' immigration fight.

Curbelo and Rep. Jeff Denham, R-Calif., whose Modesto-area district thrives on agriculture powered by migrant workers, have launched a petition drive that would force House votes on four immigration bills, ranging from liberal to conservative versions. Twenty-three Republicans have signed on, two shy of the number needed to succeed, assuming all Democrats jump aboard.

Another supporter of the rare rebellion by the usually compliant moderates is Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., a former Marine who learned Spanish when his district was redrawn to include Denver's diverse eastern suburbs. In an interview, Coffman expressed frustration over waiting nearly 18 months for House Speaker Paul Ryan to deliver on assurances that Congress would address the issue.

"He was always telling me, 'It will happen, it will happen.' I never saw it happen," Coffman said. "One cannot argue that those of us who signed onto this discharge petition didn't give leadership time."

The centrists favor legislation that would protect from deportation hundreds of thousands of immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children. They back a path to citizenship for these immigrants, who have lived in limbo since President Donald Trump ended the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, called DACA. Federal courts have blocked its termination for now.

Trying to head off the petition, Ryan, R-Wis., and conservatives are negotiating with the centrists in hopes of finding compromise. Roll calls are on track for later this month, but it will be tough to steer legislation through the House that's both liberal enough to survive in the more moderate Senate and restrictive enough for Trump to sign into law.

At the speedway, a local economic anchor since Hurricane Andrew shattered the city in 1992, Curbelo didn't mention his battle in Washington to the graduates. "Our country and our community need you," he told his audience, some of whom Garza said were DACA recipients.

Curbelo's district backed Democrat Hillary Clinton by a whopping 16 percentage points in the 2016 presidential race over Trump, who has fanned immigrants' resentment by repeatedly linking them to crime and job losses. That's left Curbelo facing a competitive re-election, though he's raised far more campaign cash than his likely Democratic challenger, Debbie Mucarsel-Powell.

Of the 23 Republican petition signees, nine represent districts whose Hispanic populations exceed the 18 percent national average. Clinton carried 12 of their districts in 2016, and several are from moderate-leaning suburbs of cities like Philadelphia and Minneapolis and agricultural areas in California and upstate New York that rely on migrant workers.

The centrists' petition echoes the hardball tactics often employed by the hard-right House Freedom Caucus. Its roughly 30 members often band together with demands top Republicans ignore at peril of losing votes in the narrowly divided House.

GOP leaders and Freedom Caucus members fear that under the votes the petition would force, liberal-leaning legislation backed by most Democrats and a few Republicans would prevail. That would infuriate conservative voters who'll be needed at the polls to fend off a Democratic wave threatening GOP House control.

Among those envisioning that scenario is Nicholas Mulick, GOP chairman of Florida's Monroe County, which encompasses the Keys and is the reddest portion of Curbelo's district. "With the greatest respect for the congressman, I don't think it's going to work," Mulick said.

Others reject that argument, saying moderates' worries should be heeded because they must be re-elected for Republicans to retain their majority.

"That sounds like somebody who's never run in a swing district," former Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., who once led his party's House campaign arm, said of claims that immigration votes would dampen conservative

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turnout. "Do they want to be in the majority, hold gavels?"

Democrats and local immigration activists say they wish Curbelo's effort well but question his motivation. They say he's reacting to election pressures and simply wants to show voters he's fighting for them.

"It feels very late, opportunistic, theatrical," said Thomas Kennedy, deputy political director for the Florida Immigrant Coalition.

Many at the speedway event, sponsored by Garza's Mexican-American Council, were sympathetic to Curbelo's battle in Washington, signaling the type of support he'll need to be re-elected.

Rosa Castillo, 51, of nearby Florida City, said she knows people who don't get driver's licenses for fear of having their residency challenged. "He's doing an awesome job for our DACA people," said Castillo, a Democrat who said she'll back Curbelo.

"He's aware of our issues in our community," said Pedro Sifuentes, 45, an independent from Homestead.

That sentiment isn't universally shared. Over breakfast at a nearby Cracker Barrel restaurant, retiree and Trump backer Randy Nichols, 73, said he won't support Curbelo.

"If they're illegal, they need to leave. I hate to say that, but even for DACA kids," said Nichols, who lives in Marathon, one of the Keys.

Mucarsel-Powell, Curbelo's likely Democratic challenger, said in an interview that she was glad he'd "finally found some strength" to take on fellow Republicans.

The former state Senate candidate, an immigrant from Ecuador, said Curbelo's challenge to GOP leaders "will obviously bring some positive attention."

She said she hopes Curbelo and his supporters "aren't doing it for political reasons."

—
Riccardi reported from Denver.

US commerce secretary in Beijing for talks on trade surplus

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross arrived in Beijing on Saturday for talks on China's promise to buy more American goods after Washington revived tensions by renewing its threat of tariff hikes on Chinese high-tech exports.

The talks focus on adding details to China's May 19 promise to narrow its politically volatile surplus in trade in goods with the United States, which reached a record \$375.2 billion last year.

President Donald Trump threw the status of the talks into doubt this week by renewing a threat to hike tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese goods over complaints Beijing steals or pressures foreign companies to hand over technology.

Private sector analysts say that while Beijing is willing to compromise on its trade surplus, it will resist changes that might threaten plans to transform China into a global technology competitor.

The two governments released no schedule for the talks, but China said earlier that Ross was due to be in Beijing through Monday.

Reporters saw Ross outside his hotel at midday Saturday but he didn't respond to their questions before he got in a car and was driven away. Ross was to have a dinner meeting Saturday evening with Vice Premier Liu He at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

Ross was scheduled to meet with Liu again on Sunday.

China has promised to "significantly increase" purchases of farm goods, energy and other products and services. Still, Beijing resisted pressure to commit to a specific target of narrowing its annual surplus with the United States by \$200 billion.

Following Beijing's announcement, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the dispute was "on hold." But the truce appeared to end with this week's announcement Washington was going ahead with tariff hikes on technology goods and also would impose curbs on Chinese investment and purchases of U.S. high-tech exports.

The move reflects growing American concern about China's status as a potential tech competitor and

complaints Beijing improperly subsidizes its fledgling industries and shields them from competition.

Foreign governments and businesses cite strategic plans such as "Made in China 2025," which calls for state-led efforts to create Chinese industry leaders in areas from robots to electric cars to computer chips.

"The U.S. focus on so-called industrially significant technologies heightens the risk of escalation between the two countries," BMI Research said in a report. "Indeed, while China has shown itself willing to compromise in the area of trade deficit reduction, it will not take any actions which threaten its strategically important 'Made in China 2025' program."

Trump also has threatened to raise tariffs on an additional \$100 billion of Chinese goods, but gave no indication this week whether that would go ahead.

Earlier, China responded with a threat to retaliate with higher duties on a \$50 billion list of American goods including soybeans, small aircraft, whiskey, electric vehicles and orange juice. It criticized Trump's move this week and said it reserved the right to retaliate but avoided repeating its earlier threat.

Trade analysts warned Ross's hand might be weakened by the Trump administration's decision Thursday to go ahead with tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Europe and Mexico.

That might alienate allies who share complaints about Chinese technology policy and a flood of low-priced steel, aluminum and other exports they say are the result of improper subsidies and hurt foreign competitors.

US employers keep on hiring despite growing trade concerns

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defying fears of a global trade war, U.S. businesses have made it abundantly clear that they see no reason to stop hiring.

Employers added a robust 233,000 jobs in May, up from 159,000 in April, the government said Friday, and helped drive the nation's unemployment rate to an 18-year low of 3.8 percent.

In the midst of all that hiring, the Trump administration has slapped tariffs on steel and aluminum from Europe, Mexico and Canada. The White House is also threatening China with separate duties. And Europe, Mexico, Canada and China have vowed to hit back at U.S. goods.

Yet so far, the trade disputes have done nothing to knock the nearly 9-year-old economic expansion — the second-longest on record — off track. Hiring has actually picked up this year compared with 2017.

"The May jobs report revealed impressive strength and breadth in U.S. job creation that blew away most economists' expectations," said Scott Anderson, chief economist at Bank of the West.

Some economists do remain concerned that the Trump administration's aggressive actions on trade could eventually hamper growth. The direct impact of the tariffs on the nearly \$20 billion U.S. economy will likely be scant. But persistent uncertainty about which trading partners might be hit next — and which U.S. products might be penalized in retaliatory moves — could disrupt some companies' expansion plans.

"Risks are brewing ... with the latest round of tariffs on aluminum and steel," said Joseph Song, an economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. "However, the concerns so far remain on the periphery."

Should the trade fights worsen, they would most likely affect some of the same industries that have ramped up hiring and lifted the economy. Manufacturers, for example, have added 259,000 jobs in the past year, a 2.1 percent increase. That's the biggest percentage gain in factory jobs since 1995.

Exports have been a big driver of that hiring. In 2017, simultaneous growth in Europe, China, Japan, and some developing countries were a key reason that factory output rose. Now, European officials are threatening to raise tariffs on Harley-Davidson motorcycles and on Levi's jeans.

Roughly an hour before the May employment data was released Friday morning, President Donald Trump appeared to hint on Twitter that a strong jobs report was coming.

"Looking forward to seeing the employment numbers at 8:30 this morning," he tweeted.

The president is normally briefed on the monthly jobs report the day before it is released, and he and other administration officials are not supposed to comment on it beforehand.

Larry Kudlow, the president's top economic adviser, downplayed Trump's tweet.

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"He didn't give any numbers," Kudlow said. "No one revealed the numbers to the public."

Investors cheered the jobs data. The Dow Jones industrial average finished up 219 points. Other stock indexes also rose.

The healthy employment figures make it more likely that the Federal Reserve will keep raising interest rates this year — two and possibly three more times, after doing so in March.

Unemployment dropped from 3.9 percent in April. When rounded to one decimal, as the Labor Department typically does, the official jobless rate is now the lowest since April 2000. For women, unemployment has fallen to 3.6 percent, the lowest since 1953.

But the unrounded figure is 3.75 percent, the lowest since December 1969, when it was 3.5 percent. Unemployment remained below 4 percent for nearly four straight years in the late 1960s before reaching 6.1 percent during a mild recession in 1970. It didn't fall below 4 percent again until the dot-com-fueled boom of the late 1990s.

With the unemployment rate so low, businesses have complained for months that they are struggling to find enough qualified workers. But Friday's jobs report suggests that they are taking chances with pockets of the unemployed and underemployed whom they had previously ignored.

Unemployment among high school graduates fell sharply to 3.9 percent, a 17-year low. For black Americans, it hit a record low of 5.9 percent.

And the number of part-time workers who would prefer full-time jobs is down 6 percent from a year ago. That means businesses are converting some part-timers to full-time work.

Companies are also hiring the long-term unemployed — those who have been out of work for six months or longer. Their ranks have fallen by nearly one-third in the past year.

That's important because economists worry that people who are out of work for long periods can see their skills erode.

Those trends suggest that companies, for all their complaints, are still able to hire without significantly boosting wages. Average hourly pay rose 2.7 percent in May from a year earlier, below the 3.5 percent to 4 percent pace that occurred the last time unemployment was this low.

And there may be more of those workers available. The number of involuntary part-time workers is still higher than it was before the 2008-09 recession.

Martha Gimbel, director of economic research at Indeed, the job-listing site, said some of the fastest-growing search terms on the site this year are "full-time" and "9-to-5 jobs," evidence that many people want more work hours.

"That suggests there is still this pool of workers that employers can tap without raising wages," Gimbel said.

Debbie Thomas, owner of Thomas Hill Organics, a restaurant in Paso Robles, California, said that finding qualified people to hire is her biggest challenge. She has raised pay by about a dollar an hour in the past year for cooks and dishwashers but is reluctant to go much higher.

"You don't want to price yourself out of the market," Thomas said.

The report comes amid other signs that the economy is picking up. Consumer spending rose in April at its fastest pace in five months. And companies are also stepping up spending, buying more industrial machinery, computers and software — signs that they're optimistic enough to expand. A measure of business investment rose in the first quarter by the most in 3½ years.

Macroeconomic Advisers, a forecasting firm, said it now foresees the economy expanding at a robust 4.1 percent annual pace in the April-June quarter, which would be the fastest in nearly four years. The economy expanded just 2.2 percent in the first quarter.

In NYC, a Republican ex-con fights to return to Congress

By STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Grimm doesn't want to talk about his time in prison. He just wants your vote. The former Republican congressman from New York City's Staten Island is fighting his party, his president

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and the stigma of a felony conviction in a no-holds-barred primary June 26.

Just two years out of prison, the amateur boxer with a fiery temper wants his old job back. And he has a legitimate chance to seize the nomination from the incumbent, Dan Donovan.

Just don't ask Grimm about his time behind bars for tax fraud.

"I'm done talking about it," Grimm said in a recent Associated Press interview, blaming his seven-month stay in a federal prison on a politically motivated Justice Department under the Obama administration. "It's a closed chapter in my life. I'm looking to the future."

President Donald Trump spotlighted the race this past week with a Twitter endorsement of Donovan, warning that a Grimm primary victory would risk losing the GOP's only U.S. House seat in the city.

"Remember Alabama," Trump wrote, likening Grimm to Republican Roy Moore, the Alabama Senate candidate who was nominated even despite being accused of molesting teenage girls and who lost the general election to a Democrat in the GOP stronghold.

Trump's decision to step into New York's turbulent GOP primary tests the strength of his influence in his hometown's only conservative pocket. The 11th Congressional District covers the quiet streets of Staten Island as well as a slice of southern Brooklyn.

It is truly the heart of New York's Trump country, and is home to many white working-class voters — police officers, firefighters and hairdressers — who have sent a Republican to Washington for most of the past decade.

Donovan, a 61-year-old former public prosecutor, isn't shy about highlighting Grimm's criminal history.

"Once you betray the community you don't get a second chance," Donovan told the AP as he toured the district this past week. "This race comes down to integrity: Who can the public trust?"

Grimm, 48, is a former Marine and FBI agent who represented the area from 2011 to 2015.

He survived a political firestorm in 2014 after his violent threat against a reporter on Capitol Hill was caught on video. A year later, Grimm was forced to resign after pleading guilty to felony tax fraud involving a restaurant he partially owned before going to Congress.

In an interview, Grimm suggested that Donovan dangled the possibility of a presidential pardon should he abandon his primary challenge. A Donovan spokeswoman denied the claim.

A spokeswoman for Trump, who pardoned one conservative supporter this past week and is contemplating other pardons, did not respond to questions about a possible pardon for Grimm, who insists his harsh sentence was politically motivated.

Does Grimm want a pardon?

"Of course! I don't know of anyone who wouldn't, especially in my circumstances," Grimm told the AP.

While Grimm's criminal history is a central issue in the race, so is Trump.

As in other Republican primary contests this year, the New York candidates have sparred over the strength of their loyalty to the Republican president.

Donovan, who has been active in New York City politics for decades, notes that Trump has endorsed him six times over his political career. Yet Donovan has had to explain voting against Trump's tax overhaul and plan to replace President Barack Obama's health care law.

"I vote with Trump 90 percent of the time," Donovan said. "I vote with my constituents 100 percent of the time."

Grimm's campaign released a new TV ad on Friday that says: "Every time it mattered, Dan Donovan voted against President Trump."

"Look, if they want a guy like Dan Donovan, who's about as exciting as a wet noodle, to represent them, they already have that," Grimm said in the interview. "I'm a Marine. Guys like me don't charge into combat because we don't have an aggressive personality."

He added: "I'm a fighter in every way."

On Staten Island, voters have strong opinions about Grimm's personality and his baggage.

Outside Tony's Brick Oven pizzeria on Bay Street, 61-year-old Victor Aasen said he's definitely voting for Donovan.

"The other guy is just full of drama," Aasen said, citing Grimm's threat against the reporter in Washing-

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ton. "He's a hot head."

Later, Dennis Quirk, president of the New York State Court Officers Association, railed against Grimm's background after endorsing Donovan.

"I think it's a disgrace for someone who's a convicted felon to run for office," Quirk said. "He should be ashamed of himself."

Yet evidence of Grimm's appeal across the district is easy to find.

His red, white and blue campaign signs are plastered along businesses and homes up and down Staten Island's main streets. Constituents talk openly about his dedication to the district after Superstorm Sandy, which caused damage that's still being repaired in some cases.

Grimm is an aggressive campaigner who insists he can win simply by outworking his opponent.

At Andrew's Diner, he hugged a boy in a wheelchair and promised to write a letter of recommendation for another who hoped to go to West Point.

"I really feel that he was railroaded," 81-year-old Bob Demarest said of Grimm as he waited for his pancakes. "I want him back."

It's unlikely that the president will visit the district on Donovan's behalf. With far more consequential races across the country this fall, Trump is expected to focus his time and energy attacking vulnerable Democratic Senate candidates in Republican-leaning states.

Grimm, who says he maintains connections in the White House, recommends that Trump stay out of Staten Island.

"If I was legitimately advising the president, which I'm not, but if I was, I would say, 'Stay out of a race like this because I don't see how it would benefit him to get into such a contentious race,'" Grimm said. "By going into the race, he puts himself in a situation where he's going to lose."

Sworn in as Spain's leader, Sanchez faces Catalan conundrum

By JOSEPH WILSON, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — New Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez had been barely sworn in Saturday before one of the country's most critical issues facing his fragile government was pressed upon him: ending the Catalan secession crisis.

Not even two hours after Sanchez had taken his oath to uphold the Spanish Constitution, Catalan chief Quim Torra demanded to meet with Sanchez and speak "government to government" regarding the future of the restive northeastern region.

"Pedro Sanchez, let us talk, take risks, both you and I, let us sit down at a table and talk, government to government," Torra said after swearing in his Cabinet in Barcelona.

Torra, who was chosen by separatist lawmakers to lead the region last month, said that his government "accepts the charge to continue forward with the mandate (.) to form an independent state."

Sanchez, the leader of Spain's Socialist Party, came to power after he successfully ousted predecessor Mariano Rajoy, who lost a no-confidence vote in parliament on Friday.

In order to cobble together the support to cast out Rajoy, Sanchez promised to open talks with Torra in order to get the votes he needed from the Catalan pro-secession lawmakers in the national parliament.

Sanchez said on Thursday that one of the priorities of his government would be "rebuilding bridges" with regions and "establishing the foundations that allow us to normalize relations and start a dialogue between the Spanish government and the new government in Catalonia."

Sanchez, however, insisted that any solutions for Catalonia must fit within the constitutional framework. Spain's Constitution calls the nation "indivisible" and says national sovereignty resides in the Madrid-based parliament.

Sanchez had been Rajoy's most loyal backer of a government takeover of Catalonia's regional affairs following an illegal- and unsuccessful- declaration of independence by the region's parliament in October.

That takeover came to an end on Saturday after Torra formed his government, as stipulated by the

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Senate when it granted the central government the extraordinary powers to intervene in the running of the region.

Torra's 13 regional ministers took oaths of allegiance to Catalonia while omitting the traditional oath of allegiance to the Spanish Constitution.

Torra is a fervent Catalan nationalist and was hand picked by former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont to succeed him. Puigdemont is fighting extradition from Germany to Spain where he is sought on charges of rebellion and misuse of public funds.

Torra's prior statements in articles and social media posts deriding Spaniards have been called xenophobic by critics. Torra has recently apologized for those views.

Sanchez himself called Torra "the Spanish Le Pen" in aligning him with the most extreme elements of the European far-right.

Sanchez not only inherits Spain's worst political crisis in nearly four decades. His government will depend on the support of the far-left Podemos (We Can) party and of a motley crew of regional parties and Catalan secessionists to get anything done in government.

Spain's parliament voted Friday to replace Rajoy's government with one to be led by Sanchez a week after a ruling by the National Court delivered hefty prison sentences to 29 business people and ex-members of Rajoy's Popular Party, including some elected officials, for fraud, money laundering and tax evasion, among other crimes.

Rajoy was in attendance at Saturday's ceremony held in the royal Zarzuela Palace and shook Sanchez's hand after the new leader was sworn in by King Felipe VI. The two political rivals then posed for a photo with the monarch.

Sanchez has vowed to fight corruption and help those Spaniards affected by years of public spending cuts under Rajoy's government. He also pledged to hold an election soon, while not setting a date.

Unlike the new government in Italy, Sanchez and his party are staunch supporters of the European Union and the shared currency.

Ex-chemical industry lawyer to lead Superfund task force

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A lawyer tapped to lead a task force at the Environmental Protection Agency overseeing cleanups at the nation's most polluted places worked until recently for a top chemical and plastics manufacturer with a troubled legacy of creating some of those toxic sites.

Steven D. Cook has been named as the new chair of the Superfund Task Force, which EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt created last year to revamp how the agency oversees cleanups at the more than 1,300 toxic sites.

Before beginning work in February as deputy assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management, Cook served more than 20 years as in-house corporate counsel for LyondellBasell Industries — one of the world's largest plastics, chemicals and refining companies.

EPA records show that LyondellBasell and its subsidiaries are listed as being potentially responsible for at least three dozen Superfund polluted sites.

An analysis by The Associated Press shows that nearly half the political appointees hired at EPA under President Donald Trump have industry ties. Of more than 60 EPA hires tracked by the AP over the last year, about one-third worked as registered lobbyists or lawyers for chemical manufacturers, fossil fuel producers or other EPA-regulated companies.

Trump promised as a presidential candidate to drain the swamp in Washington. An executive order signed two weeks after his inauguration bars former lobbyists and corporate lawyers from participating in any matter they worked on for private clients within two years of going to work for the government.

Following a request by AP, EPA provided a copy of an April 20 memo Cook signed recusing himself from participating in regulatory matters involving LyondellBasell. However, as stated in the letter, Cook can participate in matters affecting his former employer as long as his actions would also impact at least five

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similarly situated companies.

"All EPA employees receive ethics briefings when they start and continually work with our ethics office regarding any potential conflicts they may encounter while employed here," said Lincoln Ferguson, an EPA spokesman. "Steven Cook is no different."

It was not immediately clear whether Cook would be allowed to participate in decisions involving Lyondell-Basell, anyway. AP reported in March that White House counsel Don McGahn has issued at least 37 ethics waivers to key administration officials, including three working at EPA, that allow them to help regulate the very industries from which they previously collected paychecks even after signing recusals. It was not clear whether Cook was granted a waiver, and Ferguson did not respond to AP's inquiries on the subject.

Lyondell Chemical Co., a Houston-based subsidiary of LyondellBasell, agreed to pay \$250 million in 2010 to settle environmental claims and provide cleanup funds for 15 properties across the country as part of bankruptcy proceedings.

Another subsidiary of the Dutch chemicals conglomerate, Equistar Chemicals, agreed in 2007 to spend more than \$125 million on pollution controls and cleanup costs to address a myriad of air, water and hazardous waste violations at seven petrochemical plants in Texas, Illinois, Iowa and Louisiana. Court filings made as part of the company's legal settlement with the Justice Department, and EPA listed Cook as the primary contact for Equistar.

LyondellBasell subsidiaries are identified as a responsible party on dozens of Superfund sites. The companies set aside funds for cleanups before emerging from bankruptcy.

"LyondellBasell resolved its Superfund obligations nearly a decade ago," said Pattie Shieh-Lance, a corporate spokeswoman in Houston. "The company does not currently have any such obligations."

Cook is taking over as chair of the Superfund Task Force following the resignation of Albert "Kell" Kelly, a longtime friend and business associate of Pruitt's. AP reported in August that federal banking regulators had banned Kelly, who previously the chairman of Oklahoma-based SpiritBank, from banking for life. Members of Congress had been pressing for details about what led to the banking sanctions against Kelly when he quit his EPA job.

Cook's appointment to lead the task force was first reported by Bloomberg.

He is currently the top political appointee at EPA's Land and Emergency Management office, which oversees the agency's response to chemical spills and oversees management of the Superfund program.

Trump has nominated Peter C. Wright to serve as assistant administrator for Land and Emergency Management, but he has not yet been confirmed to the post by the U.S. Senate. Wright has worked as a corporate lawyer at Dow Chemical Co. since 1999.

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

Trump, NKorea's Kim back on for summit

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — After a week of hard-nosed negotiation, diplomatic gamesmanship and no shortage of theatrics, President Donald Trump has announced that the historic nuclear-weapons summit he had canceled with North Korea's Kim Jong Un is back on.

The June 12 meeting in Singapore, the first between heads of the technically still-warring nations, is meant to begin the process of ending North Korea's nuclear program, and Trump said he believes Kim is committed to that goal. The announcement puts back on track a high-risk summit that could be a legacy-defining moment for the American leader, who has matched his unconventional deal-making style with the mercurial Kim government.

Despite recently envisioning Nobel laurels, Trump worked on Friday to lower expectations for a quick breakthrough.

"We're going to deal, and we're going to really start a process," Trump said. He spoke from the South Lawn of the White House after seeing off a senior Kim deputy who spent more than an hour with him in

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the Oval Office. Much had been made of a letter his visitor was bringing from the North Korean leader, but Trump's comments left it unclear when he had even managed to take a look at it.

The president said it was likely that more than a single meeting would be necessary to bring about his goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. He said, "I think you're going to have a very positive result in the end, not from one meeting."

In the latest sign of hostility cooling down but hopes kept in check, Trump said he had unilaterally put a hold on hundreds of new sanctions against the North, without Kim's government even asking. "I'm not going to put them on until such time as the talks break down," he said.

"I don't even want to use the term 'maximum pressure' anymore," Trump added, referencing his preferred term for the punishing U.S. economic sanctions imposed on North Korea in response to its nuclear and ballistic missile tests. But he said he would not remove current sanctions until the North took steps to denuclearize.

Trump warmly greeted Kim Yong Chol, the vice chairman of the North Korean ruling party's central committee, in the Oval Office, where a brief encounter meant for the hand delivery of a personal letter from Kim Jong Un became a longer discussion of areas of disagreement between the two countries.

After the meeting, Trump posed for photos with Kim Yong Chol outside the Oval Office, and they talked amiably at Kim's black SUV before he was driven away.

Trump told reporters he hadn't yet read the letter from the North Korean leader and added with a smile, "I may be in for a big surprise, folks." But minutes earlier, he had described the note as "a very interesting letter," and teased journalists about revealing its contents.

Later Friday, deputy White House press secretary Hogan Gidley confirmed that Trump had read the letter, but he did not reveal its contents.

Plans for the meeting in Singapore had been cast into doubt after Trump suddenly announced his withdrawal last week, only to announce a day later that it could still get back on track. White House officials cast the roller-coaster public statements as reflective of efforts by each leader to test the resolve of the other.

Trump cited increasingly bellicose statements from the North — and ignored messages about summit logistics — when he announced he was backing out of the summit in a strongly worded letter. He cited "tremendous anger and open hostility" by Pyongyang but also urged Kim Jong Un to call him. By the next day, he was signaling the event could be back on after a conciliatory response from North Korea.

Within days, three teams of officials in the U.S., Singapore and the Korean demilitarized zone began meeting on preparations for the summit.

Trump has declined to publicly acknowledge whether he's spoken directly with Kim Jong Un ahead of the talks.

Kim Yong Chol, whisked to the Oval Office by White House chief of staff John Kelly, is the most senior North Korean to visit in 18 years, a symbolic sign of easing tensions after fears of war escalated amid North Korean nuclear and missile tests last year.

Questions remain about what a deal on the North's nuclear weapons would look like. Trump said Friday he believed Kim Jong Un would agree to denuclearization, but the two countries have offered differing visions of what that entails. Despite Kim's apparent eagerness for a summit with Trump, there are many doubts that he would fully relinquish his nuclear arsenal, which he may see as his guarantee of survival.

U.S. defense and intelligence officials have repeatedly assessed the North to be on the threshold the capability to strike anywhere in the continental U.S. with a nuclear-tipped missile — a capacity that Trump and other U.S. officials have said they would not tolerate.

Defense ministers from Japan and South Korea offered very different views of the North Korean leader at an international security conference in Singapore. Japan's defense chief urged caution in dealing with North Korea, while his South Korean counterpart said there was no reason to question the North Korean leader's sincerity.

Trump has promised that he will provide "protections" for Kim and his government in return for giving up the nuclear program. He also indicated that South Korea, China, and Japan would be prepared to invest

in the North to boost its besieged economy.

Kim Yong Chol left his hotel in New York City early Friday for the trip to Washington in a convoy of SUVs. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the former CIA chief who has traveled to North Korea and met with Kim Jong Un twice in the past two months, said he believed the country's leaders are "contemplating a path forward where they can make a strategic shift, one that their country has not been prepared to make before."

Kim Yong Chol was allowed into the United States despite being on a U.S. sanctions list, and granted special permission to travel outside the New York area to meet with the president.

Associated Press writers Christopher Bodeen in Beijing and Matthew Lee in New York contributed.

Lobbyist tied to EPA chief's condo tried to influence agency

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Newly filed reports show the Washington lobbyist whose wife rented a bargain-priced Capitol Hill condo to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt had far more contact with the agency than previously disclosed, despite repeated denials by both men.

Powerhouse lobbying firm Williams & Jensen amended its 2017 disclosure filings to show that former chairman J. Steven Hart contacted EPA on behalf of the Coca-Cola Company, pork producer Smithfield Foods and a board overseeing the finances of hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico.

Pruitt has denied that Hart lobbied his agency in 2017, most recently during congressional testimony last month. The firm amended its required federal lobbying disclosures after an extensive review of Hart's emails, calendar entries and other materials.

Hart was forced to retire early as a result of the scandal that erupted following public disclosure of the EPA chief's unusual living arrangements. Pruitt has denied wrongdoing, describing Hart as a personal friend from his home state of Oklahoma.

In a statement, Williams & Jensen said Hart had failed to fully disclose his lobbying activities to his own firm, resulting in prior reports omitting information. Federal law requires lobbyists to file quarterly reports detailing their contacts with government officials, including the clients they were representing, what topics were discussed and how much they were paid.

"Following press reports of a former member of our firm engaging in lobbying activity that had not been disclosed, we engaged outside counsel to conduct a review of relevant filings," the firm's statement said. "Following the completion of that review and the advice of counsel, today the firm filed amendments to several disclosure reports that include information that was not previously disclosed to our firm and therefore not included in the original filings."

Both Pruitt and Hart have publicly denied the lobbyist had conducted any business with EPA in 2017. At a May 16 hearing before a Senate appropriations subcommittee, the embattled EPA chief erroneously insisted that Hart had not lobbied the government last year.

"Steve Hart is someone that was not registered as a lobbyist in 2017," Pruitt testified. "He's a longtime associate and friend."

Records showed that Hart was in fact a registered lobbyist in 2017, though at the time it had not yet been formally disclosed that he directly lobbied Pruitt's agency. Federal law makes it a crime to "knowingly and willfully" give materially false statements to Congress.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox did not respond to requests for comment Friday night about whether Pruitt still stood by his testimony.

A spokesman for Hart did not respond to phone or email Friday.

Pruitt's connections to Hart have been under intense scrutiny since March, when media reports first revealed that the EPA chief had rented a luxury Capitol Hill condo from a corporation co-owned by Hart's wife for just \$50 a night. Pruitt's daughter, then a White House summer intern, stayed in a second bedroom at the condo at no additional cost.

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On Pruitt's 2017 condo lease, a copy of which was reviewed by The Associated Press, Steven Hart's name was originally typed in as "landlord" but was scratched out. The name of his wife, health care lobbyist Vicki Hart, was scribbled in.

The AP and other media outlets reported in April that Pruitt had met in his office last year with Hart on behalf of the philanthropic arm of Smithfield Foods to discuss efforts to preserve the Chesapeake Bay. The world's largest pork producer, Smithfield has been involved with efforts to clean up the bay since EPA fined the company \$12.6 million in 1997 for illegally dumping hog waste into a tributary.

The amended disclosure report filed Friday by Williams & Jensen acknowledges the meeting between Hart and Pruitt constituted lobbying, as did additional communications by the lobbyist with Pruitt's staff to recommend potential candidates for a science advisory board and other positions appointed by the EPA administrator.

A spokeswoman for Smithfield did not respond to a request for comment Friday.

The new disclosure report says Hart also lobbied EPA in 2017 on behalf of the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico about water quality and infrastructure in the wake of Hurricane Maria. A spokesman for the oversight board did not immediately respond Friday to an email seeking comment.

The firm also disclosed for the first time that Hart had contact with EPA on behalf of Coca-Cola. According to the reports, Hart lobbied the agency about clean water supplies, water conservation and "environmental issues impacting the beverage industry, including hydrofluorocarbon replacement."

Hydrofluorocarbons are potent greenhouse gases commonly used for refrigeration. Under the Obama administration, EPA had sought to phase out the use of hydrofluorocarbons because they contribute to global warming, but the effort was stymied after industries challenged the proposed ban in court.

In a statement issued Friday, Coca-Cola said the company has severed ties with Williams & Jensen.

"The Coca-Cola Company is committed to the highest level of integrity in all aspects of our business, and we expect our lobbying firms to uphold that same commitment," the statement said.

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

Mattis slams China on South China Sea island weaponization

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — China's placement of weapons systems on manmade islands in the South China Sea is designed to intimidate and coerce others in the region, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Saturday, laying out a sharp criticism of Beijing at an international security forum and threatening larger consequences if militarization continues.

He warned that America's recent move to disinvite China from a multinational naval exercise this summer was an "initial response" to the militarization of the islands. It was, he said, a "relatively small consequence, I believe there are much larger consequences in the future."

China relying on muscle to use weapons to pursue goals not favored by international tribunals "is not a way to make long-term collaboration the rule of the road in a region that's important to China's future," Mattis said, when asked to elaborate more on the consequences. "There are consequences that will continue to come home to roost, so to speak, with China, if they don't find a way to work more collaboratively with all of the nations who have interests."

The U.S., he said, remains committed to ensuring free and open transit in the region. And he said he doesn't believe that China's actions will pay off. Militarizing the islands, Mattis said, will not enhance China's standing in the world.

"Despite China's claims to the contrary, the placement of these weapons systems is tied directly to military use for the purposes of intimidation and coercion," Mattis said, referring to the recent deployment of anti-ship missiles, surface-to-air missiles, electronic jammers and other equipment on the Spratly Islands, and the landing of bomber aircraft at Woody Island.

Mattis also struck at one of the key, longstanding disputes between the U.S. and China, telling the

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conference that America will continue to provide defense equipment and services to Taiwan and oppose any effort to alter the status quo. China claims the self-governing island as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary.

But in a quick pivot, he said the U.S. welcomes cooperation with China "wherever possible," and announced that he has accepted Beijing's invitation to visit there soon. It remains to be seen if that invitation will stand after this conference.

Mattis' comments triggered an equally pointed reaction from a Chinese official at the meeting.

Senior Col. Zhao Xiaozhuo said a U.S. move a couple years ago to send two warships into China's "territorial waters" was a violation of law, and an "obvious provocation to China's national security and territorial integrity."

Mattis responded that the question reflected a fundamental disconnect with the way international tribunals have spoken on the matter.

"We do not see it as a militarization by going through what has traditionally been an international water space," said Mattis of the U.S. ship movements through the South China Sea. "What we see it as, is a reaffirmation of the rules-based order."

As expected, the Pentagon chief gave only a brief mention of the ongoing negotiations for an historic summit later this month between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Trump announced Friday that the nuclear-weapons summit he had canceled with North Korea's Kim Jong Un is back on. The summit is expected to be here in Singapore.

Mattis said the Pentagon will "hold the line" and support the diplomatic effort to secure the "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

The Pentagon leader's comments at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue came in the wake of a tumultuous few weeks between the U.S. and China.

Last week the U.S. withdrew an invitation for Beijing to participate the exercise known as Rim of the Pacific. China had participated in the exercise known as Rim of the Pacific in 2014 and 2016.

The Pentagon said the decision to disinvite the Chinese Navy was triggered by what it called strong evidence that China has deployed weapons systems on the islands, and called on China to remove them. China says it is within its rights to build up defenses on islands in the South China Sea that it believes are its sovereign territory.

China's activities, Mattis said in his speech Saturday, stand "in stark contrast to the openness of what our strategy promotes; It calls into question China's broader goals."

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, who was attending the conference, said China is alienating other nations and nations must band together and say the actions are unacceptable.

The U.S. response to China's weaponization of the islands continued on Sunday, as two U.S. warships sailed close to the Paracel Islands, which lie north of the Spratlys. It was the latest freedom of navigation operation designed to challenge Beijing's claims. China protested the maneuver.

In recent years, the U.S. had sought to stabilize military relations with China, but the militarization of the islands has been a persistent point of conflict. Many nations fear that Beijing will use the construction on the islands to extend its military reach and potentially try to restrict navigation in the South China Sea.

China's delegation at the conference is being led by Lt. Gen. He Lei, vice president of the People's Liberation Army's Academy of Military Science. China has not sent high-level officials to the three-day meeting, in an apparent attempt to deflect attention from its campaign to expand its sovereignty across virtually the entire South China Sea.

Mattis made clear that the U.S. does not expect nations to choose between the U.S. and China, adding that Beijing should have a voice in shaping the region, while allies have a voice in shaping China's role.

The U.S., he said, "will continue to pursue a constructive, results-oriented relationship with China, cooperation when possible, and competing vigorously where we must."

Mormons grapple with race decades after ban on black leaders

By BRADY McCOMBS, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The Mormon church on Friday celebrated the 40th anniversary of reversing its ban on black people serving in the lay priesthood, going on missions or getting married in temples, rekindling debate about one of the faith's most sensitive topics.

The number of black Mormons has grown but still only accounts for an estimated 6 percent of 16 million worldwide members. Not one serves in the highest levels of global leadership.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has worked to improve race relations, including calling out white supremacy and launching a new formal alliance with the NAACP, but some black Mormons and scholars say discriminatory opinions linger in some congregations from a ban rooted in a belief that black skin was a curse.

In a 2013 essay, the church disavowed the reasons behind the ban and condemned all racism, saying the prohibition came during an era of great racial divide that influenced early church teachings. Blacks were always allowed to be members, but the nearly century-long ban kept them from participating in many important rituals.

Scholars said the essay included the church's most comprehensive explanation for the ban and its 1978 reversal, which leaders say came from a revelation from God.

But it didn't include an apology, leaving some unsatisfied.

"A lot of members are waiting for the church just to say, 'We were wrong,'" said Phylicia Norris-Jimenez, a 30-year-old black Mormon and member of the grass-roots Black LDS Legacy Committee, a group of women who are organizing a conference Saturday in Utah to honor the legacy of black Mormon pioneers.

Norris-Jimenez said non-black church members still struggle with how to talk about the ban or understand the pain it causes. She said the anniversary celebration honors something that should have never existed but that it's a good gesture and hopefully leads to more discussions about race.

A fellow group member, LaShawn Williams, said she finds comfort in her belief that the ban was a "policy of people, not a policy of God," made during a racist time.

She and her three children are the only black members of her congregation in Orem, Utah, and she tries to talk about race issues regularly with the teenagers she teaches in Sunday school.

Williams, an assistant professor in social work at Utah Valley University, would like an apology.

"If we preach repentance, we should definitely embody it," she said.

The theme of the anniversary celebration in Salt Lake City was "Be one," a reference to a Mormon scripture. Gladys Knight, one of the most famous black Mormons, performed, and top church leaders gave speeches.

President Russell M. Nelson said comprehending true brotherhood and sisterhood can inspire people to "build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation."

Nelson's first counselor, Dallin H. Oaks, acknowledged the "pain and suffering" the ban caused while urging members to "look forward in the unity of our faith."

Prior to event, Ahmad Corbitt, a church employee who led the effort to organize the event, said the celebration was "a call to the entire church, and by extension, the entire world, to let go of prejudices and come together as one unified family."

Corbitt declined to address a church apology, saying the faith is focused on a forward-looking approach to unity.

Darius Gray, co-founder of the Genesis Group that supports black Mormons, said the church and its doctrine aren't racist but racism lingers in the faith as it does in society.

He said he's been plagued by calls from Mormons concerned about how they're being treated, which he attributes to a rise in racism in the U.S. since President Donald Trump was elected.

He said he wouldn't be opposed to an apology for the ban but that he's more interested in helping the faith make progress in rooting out racism. Gray, who helped plan Friday's event, said it's a step toward healing.

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"An apology is here today and gone tomorrow," Gray said. "More significant is what an organization does long term. The LDS church has been moving forward and changed its paradigm in massive ways."

The Utah-based church doesn't provide ethnic or racial breakdowns of its members, but independent Mormon researcher Matt Martinich said those of primarily African descent account for about 6 percent of worldwide members.

In the U.S., blacks account for about 1 to 3 percent of 6.6 million Mormons, according to Pew Research Center surveys done in the last two decades.

It's not the only faith that struggles with a lack of black members in its U.S. congregations: The United Methodist Church, Catholic Church and Judaism also have similarly low rates, according to a 2014 Pew Research Center study .

Mormons probably shouldn't wait for a rare apology from church leaders, said W. Paul Reeve, a Mormon studies professor at the University of Utah. The church seems to be trying to walk a tight rope by disavowing past beliefs while not apologizing for the ban to avoid members questioning other doctrine they think should be changed, he said.

"What else are they wrong about? Are they wrong about gay marriage? Are they wrong about female ordination?" Reeve said. "If they got race and the priesthood wrong, what else could they be wrong about? I think that's part of the fear."

Records: DNA from tissue led to Golden State Killer arrest

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — DNA from a tissue left in a trash can led authorities in April to arrest a former police officer suspected of being California's notorious, elusive Golden State Killer, according to warrants released Friday.

Documents released by a judge at the request of news outlets detail the case Sacramento County sheriff's investigators pieced together to obtain arrest and search warrants for 72-year-old Joseph DeAngelo, who is facing murder charges in multiple counties.

DeAngelo is suspected of committing at least a dozen killings and roughly 50 rapes in the 1970s and '80s.

The documents also offer a window into the crimes that terrorized California.

After investigating for more than 40 years, police zeroed in on DeAngelo by using genealogical websites to identify potential relatives of the killer based on DNA collected at a crime scene.

Investigators used DNA from a semen sample collected at the double murder of Lyman and Charlene Smith in 1980 in Ventura County to find one of DeAngelo's relatives and eventually the suspect himself, according to the warrants.

After identifying DeAngelo as a suspect, investigators followed him to a store outside Sacramento and took a swab from the door handle of a car he exited. That sample didn't immediately lead to an arrest.

The use of so-called "touch DNA" — collected when only a few human cells are left behind when someone touches an object — has raised controversy among forensic experts.

Three days later, investigators collected trash from cans left outside DeAngelo's home in Citrus Heights, California.

A piece of tissue plucked from the trash proved to be the piece of evidence they needed to obtain an arrest warrant, according to the documents.

DeAngelo was arrested several days later and has since been charged with 12 counts of murder in Sacramento, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Orange counties. Prosecutors haven't yet decided where he'll be tried.

Investigators have searched DeAngelo's house, vehicles and storage locker, as well as his computer and cellphone. It's not clear what was recovered from DeAngelo because a judge ruled that those records should remain sealed.

Authorities said the Golden State Killer stole dozens of rings, watches, cufflinks and tie pins over the years that detectives hoped to find, along with an odd assortment of items including women's purses, cameras, jewelry made from coins, china, a clock radio and a wooden bowl. He also took drivers' licenses,

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photographs and other identification from his victims, according to the documents.

Detectives also hoped the killer might have kept three blunt objects containing blood, tissue and hair from four victims who were beaten to death. One of the weapons is described as "possibly a metal sprinkler head."

The heavily redacted affidavits show a chilling pattern of behavior. Neighbors reported numerous silent or lewd phone calls before the double murder of Brian and Katie Maggiore in Sacramento in 1978.

A 25-year-old woman in the neighborhood reported finding shoeprints outside her bedroom window and drawings in what appeared to be bodily fluids, according to the affidavit.

The Maggiores were shot while on a walk one evening. The attacker then fled, running through multiple neighbors' yards. To one, he said, "excuse me, I'm trespassing," the documents state.

The killer was prone to "explosive violence" when cornered and, once confronted by police or neighbors, he tended to never again attack within that same jurisdiction, the documents said.

Descriptions provided by those neighbors helped investigators draw their first composite sketch of the killer.

Associated Press writers Don Thompson and Sophia Bollag and Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles contributed.

Missouri governor quits in scandal, signs 'revenge porn' law

By DAVID A. LIEB, Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Just hours before he left office Friday, Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens signed scores of new laws, including a measure that makes it a crime to try to threaten a person using a private sexual image — the same allegation that led to his downfall.

In the flurry of last-minute activity, the scandal-plagued governor approved 77 new laws, granted several pardons and commutations and won at least a temporary reprieve in a court battle over campaign records. He posted a long Facebook message touting his accomplishments — without any mention of why he was quitting — and quietly left Capitol about an hour before his resignation took effect.

A short time later, fellow Republican Lt. Gov. Mike Parson was sworn in as Greitens' successor and immediately pledged "to bring honor, integrity (and) transparency to the governor's office."

"We have an opportunity beginning today to have a fresh start in state government," Parson said.

The "revenge porn" law signed by Greitens creates a felony that will apply to cases when someone threatens the nonconsensual dissemination of a private sexual image by coercing another person to refrain from an action.

The governor has been accused of taking a nonconsensual photo of a partially nude woman with whom he had an affair in 2015 and warning her he would distribute it if she ever spoke of their encounter.

He has acknowledged having the affair but denied criminal wrongdoing and refused to directly answer questions about whether he took the photo.

Greitens cannot be charged under the new law because it was not in effect at the time. But a special prosecutor is still weighing whether to refile an invasion-of-privacy charge against Greitens under a different law.

In a news release announcing the bill signings, he touted other measures such as a corporate income tax cut and changes to the state foster care system. Later, he announced he had pardoned five people and commuted the sentences of four others, including several whom he said had been wrongfully convicted of murder.

Greitens has similarly insisted that he has done nothing worthy of being forced out of office.

"The ability to make wrong things right, for Missourians who have not gotten fair treatment from our criminal justice system, is one of the most solemn and precious abilities of a Governor," Greitens said in a written statement announcing the clemency actions.

His resignation is part of a deal with a St. Louis prosecutor to drop a felony charge alleging misuse of a

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charity donor list to raise money for his 2016 gubernatorial campaign. His voluntary departure also avoids the potentially dubious distinction of becoming the first Missouri governor to be impeached by the House. Instead, Greitens became the first governor in Missouri's 197-year history to resign amid scandal.

Though he's leaving, Greitens isn't entirely clear of legal problems.

The Missouri Ethics Commission continues to investigate a complaint that Greitens' campaign filed false documents about the charity donor list. The FBI also has received information about Greitens from the chairman of a House investigatory panel and a private attorney representing the ex-husband of the woman with whom he had an affair.

On Friday, a judge granted a request from an attorney for Greitens' campaign and a pro-Greitens non-profit called A New Missouri to delay compliance with a Friday deadline to provide records subpoenaed by a House investigatory committee. A hearing on whether to rescind the order isn't expected before next week.

Responding to a court order in a separate case, Greitens on Friday supplied a judge with a list of 20 governor's office employees who downloaded or used a smartphone app called Confide, which automatically deletes text messages. The order also directed Greitens to provide phone numbers and other details, which would allow the plaintiffs in a lawsuit alleging violations of the state records-retention law to request information from Confide.

The 44-year-old Greitens is a former Navy SEAL officer who won election in 2016 as a political outsider pledging to take on "career politicians" and crack down on perceived corruption in Jefferson City.

Parson, 62, who was elected separately from Greitens, is an Army veteran who built a career as a law officer and lawmaker. He spent 12 years as the rural Polk County sheriff before serving another dozen years in the Missouri House and Senate. He is also a cattle farmer and was moving his animals when he got the call Tuesday that Greitens was resigning.

On Friday, Parson participated with his wife, Teresa, and about 70 others in a prayer service at a capital city Baptist church, where his brother Pastor Kent Parson preached about moving beyond the past and focusing on today. Parson then took the oath in the quickly cleaned-out governor's office with his wife by his side.

"Now is the time for Missouri to come together, to work together and to help one another," Parson said in brief remarks.

Parson had kept a low profile as scandals grew around the governor following the January revelation that Greitens had engaged in an affair. The woman alleged in subsequent testimony that Greitens had restrained, slapped, shoved and belittled her.

As the governor denied any violence, Parson shied away from joining some other top Republicans who called on Greitens to resign. Instead, Parson emphasized the need for unity.

He will serve the remainder of Greitens' term, which runs until January 2021.

Associated Press writers Summer Ballentine and Blake Nelson contributed to this report.

Trump's teasing jobs report tweet raises questions

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JOSH BOAK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a tantalizing tweet, President Donald Trump seemed to tease a positive jobs report on Friday, a protocol-defying step that moved markets and raised questions about the appropriateness of the president publicly hinting at information that could make or lose fortunes.

Treasury yields jumped and the value of the dollar increased within seconds of Trump's 7:21 a.m. tweet that said he was "looking forward to seeing the employment numbers at 8:30 this morning," suggesting that traders likely were making investment decisions based on what they extrapolated from Trump's post. The director of the White House National Economic Council, Larry Kudlow, said he briefed Trump on the jobs report on Thursday evening.

One hour and nine minutes after Trump's tweet Friday morning, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced

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that 223,000 jobs were created in May, beating expectations, and that the unemployment rate fell to 3.8 percent. Though Trump's tweet drew sharp criticism, Kudlow defended it as appropriate.

"Why not? He didn't give any numbers," Kudlow told reporters at the White House. "I just want to interject this radical notion: The jobs report was really good, the economy is doing really well."

The jobs data come out once a month and can lead to massive buying or selling trends on Wall Street, depending on how the information is received. Trump has made the roaring stock market a centerpiece of his administration and re-election campaign, though Wall Street has faced recent uncertainty due to the administration's saber-rattling over tariffs.

"We've reached yet one more historic milestone with 3.8 percent unemployment, just announced," Trump said later Friday at a Coast Guard ceremony.

With its power to move the markets, the jobs report is a closely held secret before it is released. Only a select few officials, including the labor secretary, the head of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, the treasury secretary and the Fed chairman, are told prior to its release for fear that a leak could give some investors an unfair advantage.

Tony Fratto, a Treasury Department official who worked in George W. Bush's administration, said that while not illegal, Trump's tease could be deemed inappropriate because "you want market participants to get their data from their government in predictable, official ways, not haphazard ones."

"If not, you end up with some people getting information ahead of other people," Fratto continued. "People who happened to be on Twitter at 7:21, you learned that the president was likely happy with the jobs report. If you weren't on Twitter, you didn't and that's problematic for markets."

Jason Furman, the head of the Council of Economic Advisers for President Barack Obama, tweeted that if Trump's tweet conveys inside info then he should never get the jobs report briefing again. And Lawrence Summers, who served as treasury secretary for President Bill Clinton, tweeted if during the Clinton or Obama administrations information had been similarly conveyed "it would have been a major scandal — with all sorts of investigations following on."

Trump's embrace of the unemployment rate is a far cry from his 2016 campaign rhetoric when he called it "one of the biggest hoaxes in modern politics," suggesting it was a phony number because it showed that the economy was expanding under Obama.

Rules stipulate that no federal worker is allowed to comment on the jobs report until at least one hour after its release. The Trump administration has violated that several times, including a post in March 2017 by then-White House press secretary Sean Spicer.

Prior presidents generally followed the protocol closely, though in the 1960s President Lyndon Johnson had a habit of talking about the numbers in advance.

It is not required for the president to see the jobs report number in advance. Asked if he'll share it with Trump ahead of time again, Kudlow responded, "I have no idea."

"It's a judgment call," Kudlow said. "He is the president."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Zeke Miller and Christopher Rugaber contributed reporting.

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US unemployment falls to nearly 1969 levels; hiring solid

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Another month of strong hiring drove the nation's unemployment rate down to 3.8 percent — tantalizingly close to the level last seen in 1969, when Detroit still dominated the auto industry and the Vietnam War was raging.

Employers added 233,000 jobs in May, up from 159,000 in April, the Labor Department reported Friday. And unemployment fell to an 18-year low.

The report shows that the nearly 9-year-old economic expansion — the second-longest on record —

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remains on track and may even be gaining steam. Employers appear to be shrugging off recent concerns about global trade disputes.

"The May jobs report revealed impressive strength and breadth in U.S. job creation that blew away most economists' expectations," said Scott Anderson, chief economist at Bank of the West.

With the unemployment rate so low, businesses have complained for months that they are struggling to find enough qualified workers. But Friday's jobs report suggests that they are taking chances with pockets of the unemployed and underemployed whom they had previously ignored.

Roughly an hour before the employment data was released, President Donald Trump appeared to hint on Twitter that a strong jobs report was coming. "Looking forward to seeing the employment numbers at 8:30 this morning," he tweeted.

The president is normally briefed on the monthly jobs report the day before it is released, and he and other administration officials are not supposed to comment on it beforehand.

Larry Kudlow, the president's top economic adviser, downplayed Trump's tweet.

"He didn't give any numbers," Kudlow said. "No one revealed the numbers to the public."

Investors welcomed the report. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 219 points Friday, or 0.9 percent. Other indexes also moved higher.

The healthy jobs data makes it more likely that the Federal Reserve will keep raising interest rates this year — two and possibly three more times, after doing so in March.

Unemployment dropped from 3.9 percent in April. When rounded to one decimal, as the Labor Department typically does, the official jobless rate is now the lowest since April 2000.

But the unrounded figure is 3.75 percent, the lowest since December 1969. Unemployment remained below 4 percent for nearly four straight years in the late 1960s, but it rose to 6.1 percent during a mild recession in 1970. It didn't fall below 4 percent again until the dot-com-fueled boom of the late 1990s.

Businesses desperate to hire are reaching deep into pools of the unemployed to find workers. Unemployment among high school graduates fell sharply to 3.9 percent, a 17-year low. For black Americans, it hit a record low of 5.9 percent. The unemployment rate for women dropped to 3.6 percent, the lowest since 1953.

And the number of part-time workers who would prefer full-time jobs is down 6 percent from a year ago. That means businesses are converting some part-timers to full-time work.

Companies are also hiring the long-term unemployed — those who have been out of work for six months or longer. Their ranks have fallen by nearly one-third in the past year.

That's important because economists worry that people who are out of work for long periods can see their skills erode.

Those trends suggest that companies, for all their complaints, are still able to hire without significantly boosting wages. Average hourly pay rose 2.7 percent in May from a year earlier, below the 3.5 percent to 4 percent pace that occurred the last time unemployment was this low.

The number of involuntary part-time workers is still higher than it was before the 2008-09 recession.

Martha Gimbel, director of economic research at Indeed, the job-listing site, said some of the fastest-growing search terms on the site this year are "full-time" and "9-to-5 jobs," evidence that many people want more work hours.

"That suggests there is still this pool of workers that employers can tap without raising wages," Gimbel said.

Debbie Thomas, owner of Thomas Hill Organics, a restaurant in Paso Robles, California, said that finding qualified people to hire is her biggest challenge. She has raised pay by about a dollar an hour in the past year for cooks and dishwashers but is reluctant to go much higher.

"You don't want to price yourself out of the market," Thomas said.

The job gains in May were broad-based: Professional and business services, which include higher-paying fields such as accounting and engineering, added 31,000 jobs. Health care, a consistent job engine, gained nearly 32,000.

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Manufacturing, which is benefiting from increased business investment in machinery and other equipment, added 18,000 jobs, and construction 25,000.

Some economists remain concerned that the Trump administration's aggressive actions on trade could hamper growth. The administration on Thursday imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from key allies in Europe, Canada and Mexico. Earlier in the week, it threatened to hit China with tariffs on \$50 billion of its goods.

Still, consumer spending rose in April at its fastest pace in five months. And companies are also stepping up spending, buying more industrial machinery, computers and software — signs that they're optimistic enough to expand. A measure of business investment rose in the first quarter by the most in 3½ years.

Macroeconomic Advisers, a forecasting firm, said it now foresees the economy expanding at a robust 4.1 percent annual pace in the April-June quarter, which would be the fastest in nearly four years. The economy expanded just 2.2 percent in the first quarter.

Populists take power in Italy, with euro-skeptic agenda

By FRANCES D'EMILIO, Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Populists took power in Italy for the first time Friday with the swearing-in of a new government fusing in a coalition a political movement that delights in pillorying the establishment and a party whose anti-migrant, euro-skeptic politics have seen it soar in popularity.

At an oath-taking ceremony in the presidential palace atop Quirinal Hill, the new premier, political novice Giuseppe Conte, and his 18 Cabinet ministers pledged their loyalty to the Italian republic and to the nation's post-war constitution in front of President Sergio Mattarella.

Only five days earlier, the leader of the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement, Luigi Di Maio, was inciting followers to press for Mattarella's impeachment. The president had invoked his constitutional powers to reject the populists' initial choice for economy minister because he is an advocate of a backup plan to exit from euro-currency membership.

Mattarella's act scuttled Conte's first try to assemble a coalition uniting the forces of Di Maio's 5-Stars and his populist rival Matteo Salvini, leader of the right-wing League, which is based in the affluent north.

The president approved Conte and a rejiggered Cabinet list Thursday after Paolo Savona was moved from the economy slot to that of the ministry of European affairs. On Friday, a beaming Di Maio stood before Mattarella and recited the loyalty oath — he'll serve as minister of labor and economic development.

The initial failure of Conte to form a government had alarmed financial markets, which feared a quick return to the polls that risked being tantamount to a plebiscite on Italy's keeping the euro currency.

But the markets were reassured by the formation of a new government, which came three months after elections resulted in a political stalemate with no single party or alliance winning control of Parliament.

On Friday, the 5-Stars' clinched their quest for national power, after five years in Parliament as the largest opposition party. Co-founded by comic Beppe Grillo, who rails against an entrenched political "caste," the Movement bills itself as a web-based democratic force, not a traditional political party.

Grillo tweeted euphorically: "If you can dream it, you can do it."

Conte was a professor of law at the University of Florence, who had offered ahead of the March election to serve as a 5-Star minister. He became a compromise choice for premier when rivals Di Maio and Salvini refused to let the other hold the top post.

Emphasizing their "anti-establishment" claim, 5-Star ministers, who hold seven of the Cabinet posts, took a single taxi van to the Quirinal Palace.

In a Facebook post, Di Maio gushed: "There are a lot of us, and we're ready to launch a government of change to improve the quality of life for all Italians."

Next week the government faces mandatory confidence votes in each chamber of Parliament, where the coalition members hold narrow, but viable majorities.

Salvini said he would set straight to work on a campaign pledge to expel many of several hundred thousand asylum-seekers who were rescued at sea from human traffickers over the last few years but are

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ineligible for asylum.

Public resentment over what was perceived as fellow EU nations' failure to help ease the financial and logistical burden on Italy in caring for the flood of migrants helped boost the League's popularity.

"The immigration question is still burning," Salvini said.

The last-minute compromise appointment of Giovanni Tria as economy minister was aimed at calming EU leaders' jitters. He is close to the center-right forces loyal to Silvio Berlusconi, the former premier and billionaire media mogul.

Another Cabinet pick seen as reassuring to those concerned the populists could set Italy drifting from its strong ties with the EU is Foreign Minister Enzo Moavero Milanesi. A former minister, he teaches European Union law at LUISS, a Rome university championed by a powerful Italian industrialists lobby.

Conte himself acknowledged that the populists are a whole new breed that is leaving some wondering what they will be like.

"We're not Martians, and we'll prove it," said the premier, who in a play on his law professor profession promises to be the "defense lawyer" of the Italian people in an "Italians first" government.

Still, the "rest of Europe is looking at Italy with apprehension," wrote Massimo Franco, a political commentator for the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. "It fears that it is a laboratory for what can happen in other countries" and hopes that Italy's populist "experiment doesn't turn out to be a disaster."

If the populists make reality of central campaign promises that could swell Italy's already staggering high debt, the EU and financial markets might grow uneasy again.

Salvini wants to undo or at least drastically revamp pension reform that raised retirement ages. Di Maio wants to give the jobless and low-income citizens a minimum monthly income of 780 euros (about \$930), an electoral pledge that helped secure the Movement's triumph in the unemployment-plagued south.

Some promises have already been broken. Di Maio had vowed never to join in a governing coalition, a form of "establishment" politics that the 5-Star Movement abhors.

And Salvini and Di Maio have railed for years about the recent succession of premiers who didn't run for election in Parliament. Their pick for premier, Conte, is now the latest.

The new government delighted leaders of an increasingly bolder far-right in European politics.

French leader Marine Le Pen hailed the new government as "a victory of democracy over intimidation and threats from the European Union." Nigel Farage, a British force behind the successful Brexit movement, advised Italy's populists to "stay strong or the bully boys will be after you." He was referring to EU officials who recently evoked dire scenarios for Italians if the populists gained power.

Salvini has branded as "racist" advice from European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker for Italians to work harder and be less corrupt instead of blaming their woes on the EU.

For decades, the League's forerunner, the Northern League, had branded Italian southerners as lazy, uncouth citizens draining too much development aid from the central government, whose coffers depended on taxpayers in the productive north.

Associated Press writer Nicole Winfield contributed to this report.

The summit's back on: Trump, NKorea's Kim to meet after all **By ZEKE MILLER, JOSH LEDERMAN and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — After a week of hard-nosed negotiation, diplomatic gamesmanship and no shortage of theatrics, President Donald Trump announced Friday that the historic nuclear-weapons summit he had canceled with North Korea's Kim Jong Un is back on.

The June 12 meeting in Singapore, the first between heads of the technically still-warring nations, is meant to begin the process of ending North Korea's nuclear program, and Trump said he believes Kim is committed to that goal. The announcement puts back on track a high-risk summit that could be a legacy-defining moment for the American leader, who has matched his unconventional deal-making style with the mercurial Kim government.

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Despite recently envisioning Nobel laurels, Trump worked on Friday to lower expectations for a quick breakthrough.

"We're going to deal, and we're going to really start a process," Trump said. He spoke from the South Lawn of the White House after seeing off a senior Kim deputy who spent more than an hour with him in the Oval Office. Much had been made of a letter his visitor was bringing from the North Korean leader, but Trump's comments left it unclear when he had even managed to take a look at it.

The president said it was likely that more than a single meeting would be necessary to bring about his goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. He said, "I think you're going to have a very positive result in the end, not from one meeting."

In the latest sign of hostility cooling down but hopes kept in check, Trump said he had unilaterally put a hold on hundreds of new sanctions against the North, without Kim's government even asking. "I'm not going to put them on until such time as the talks break down," he said.

"I don't even want to use the term 'maximum pressure' anymore," Trump added, referencing his preferred term for the punishing U.S. economic sanctions imposed on North Korea in response to its nuclear and ballistic missile tests. But he said he would not remove current sanctions until the North took steps to denuclearize.

Trump warmly greeted Kim Yong Chol, the vice chairman of the North Korean ruling party's central committee, in the Oval Office, where a brief encounter meant for the hand delivery of a personal letter from Kim Jong Un became a longer discussion of areas of disagreement between the two countries.

After the meeting, Trump posed for photos with Kim Yong Chol outside the Oval Office, and they talked amiably at Kim's black SUV before he was driven away.

Trump told reporters he hadn't yet read the letter from the North Korean leader and added with a smile, "I may be in for a big surprise, folks." But minutes earlier, he had described the note as "a very interesting letter," and teased journalists about revealing its contents.

Later Friday, deputy White House press secretary Hogan Gidley confirmed that Trump had read the letter, but he did not reveal its contents.

Plans for the meeting in Singapore had been cast into doubt after Trump suddenly announced his withdrawal last week, only to announce a day later that it could still get back on track. White House officials cast the roller-coaster public statements as reflective of efforts by each leader to test the resolve of the other.

Trump cited increasingly bellicose statements from the North — and ignored messages about summit logistics — when he announced he was backing out of the summit in a strongly worded letter. He cited "tremendous anger and open hostility" by Pyongyang but also urged Kim Jong Un to call him. By the next day, he was signaling the event could be back on after a conciliatory response from North Korea.

Within days, three teams of officials in the U.S., Singapore and the Korean demilitarized zone began meeting on preparations for the summit.

Trump has declined to publicly acknowledge whether he's spoken directly with Kim Jong Un ahead of the talks.

Kim Yong Chol, whisked to the Oval Office by White House chief of staff John Kelly, is the most senior North Korean to visit in 18 years, a symbolic sign of easing tensions after fears of war escalated amid North Korean nuclear and missile tests last year.

Questions remain about what a deal on the North's nuclear weapons would look like. Trump said Friday he believed Kim Jong Un would agree to denuclearization, but the two countries have offered differing visions of what that entails. Despite Kim's apparent eagerness for a summit with Trump, there are many doubts that he would fully relinquish his nuclear arsenal, which he may see as his guarantee of survival.

U.S. defense and intelligence officials have repeatedly assessed the North to be on the threshold the capability to strike anywhere in the continental U.S. with a nuclear-tipped missile — a capacity that Trump and other U.S. officials have said they would not tolerate.

Trump has promised that he will provide "protections" for Kim and his government in return for giving up the nuclear program. He also indicated that South Korea, China, and Japan would be prepared to invest

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in the North to boost its besieged economy.

Kim Yong Chol left his hotel in New York City early Friday for the trip to Washington in a convoy of SUVs. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the former CIA chief who has traveled to North Korea and met with Kim Jong Un twice in the past two months, said he believed the country's leaders are "contemplating a path forward where they can make a strategic shift, one that their country has not been prepared to make before."

Kim Yong Chol was allowed into the United States despite being on a U.S. sanctions list, and granted special permission to travel outside the New York area to meet with the president.

Associated Press writers Christopher Bodeen in Beijing and Matthew Lee in New York contributed.

APNewsBreak: Pentagon to take over security clearance checks

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department is poised to take over background investigations for the federal government, using increased automation and high-tech analysis to tighten controls and tackle an enormous backlog of workers waiting for security clearances, according to U.S. officials.

The change aims to fix a system whose weaknesses were exposed by the case of a Navy contractor who gunned down a dozen people at Washington's Navy Yard in 2013. He was able to maintain a security clearance despite concerns about his mental health and an arrest that investigators never reviewed.

Problems had earlier surfaced with former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, who now lives in Russia to avoid charges for disclosing classified material, and Army Pvt. Chelsea Manning, who went to prison for leaking classified documents, triggering calls to update the antiquated system to include more frequent criminal and financial checks of workers who have security clearances.

Another problem has been delays: a backlog of about 700,000 people, including high-ranking federal officials waiting as much as a year to get clearances. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, for example, received his permanent clearance just a few weeks ago, more than 16 months after Trump took office. The delay, his lawyer said, was caused by the backlog in the new administration and Kushner's extensive financial wealth, which required lengthy review.

Pentagon officials said that over the next three years, the Defense Department will take responsibility for all background investigations involving its military and civilian employees and contractors. But according to a U.S. official, the White House is expected to soon give the department authority to conduct security reviews for nearly all other government agencies as well. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the decision before it was publicly announced.

Plans to transfer responsibility from the Office of Personnel Management to the Pentagon for all of the roughly 3.6 million Pentagon employees, directed by defense legislation for fiscal 2017, are already in the works. The new program will involve a system of continuous checks that will automatically pull and analyze workers' criminal, financial, substance abuse and eventually social media data on a more regular basis, rather than only every five or 10 years as it is done now.

Garry Reid, director for defense intelligence, said the shift of responsibility to the Pentagon will allow OPM officials to begin eating away at the current backlog of about 700,000, of which roughly 500,000 are Defense Department workers. The Pentagon won't take over any of the backlogged cases because they are already underway in OPM.

While the Office of the Director of National Intelligence is the executive agent for the program, and sets the guidelines for the security requirements based on federal investigative guidelines. OPM and the Pentagon carry out the vetting process, working with the DNI.

Bill Evanina, director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, said at his confirmation hearing last month that by mid-June the national intelligence director would issue guidance to departments and agencies to update 2012 federal investigative standards used to vet for security clearances. He said the government also was working on ways to allow contractors and federal workers to move more seam-

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lessly between the private sector and government without having to get new clearances.

Evanina said changes could result in a 20 percent reduction in the backlog within six months.

In the first year, the Pentagon will take over investigations for those seeking a renewal of their secret clearance, then over the next two years will take on those seeking their initial secret clearance and then move to employees seeking top secret renewals and initial clearances, said Reid, in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

According to Reid, about 20 people are already on board setting up the program and 350 more will be hired in the coming months.

It will cost an additional \$40 million for fiscal year 2019. But over time, he said, the department expects to spend "significantly less" than the current \$1.3 billion price tag for the program because of the increased automation and other savings.

A key problem contributing to the backlog is that field investigations into workers seeking security clearances can take up to 500 days, as investigators scour records and conduct interviews with neighbors and other acquaintances of the employee.

An analysis of the process, said Reid, found that 50 percent of the investigators' workloads involves tasks such as driving around the country, finding sources and looking for people to talk to about the employees.

Using more automated and continuous checks, he said, "can find out that same information that's taking hundreds of days and frankly a billion dollars a year to do, and collect similar information."

As an example, he said an automated check could reveal information in the national criminal database about an incident that wasn't otherwise reported or communicated between a local law enforcement agency and the military.

Carrie L. Wibben, the Pentagon's director of counterintelligence and security, said that as a result, the department is discovering problems years before investigators would have turned them up in regularly scheduled five or 10-year checks.

Workers with secret clearance are re-evaluated every 10 years, and those with top secret clearances are checked every five years.

She also said that through advanced technology, the department will be able to determine specific risk factors for workers based on their histories, and then set up automatic checks and analyses to watch for problems. For example, an employee who had some minor financial problems might get their credit checked more frequently.

Already the department has started the continuous evaluation process for about 1.1 million employees, and since January, 58 workers have had their security clearances revoked.

While social media can provide a massive amount of information about people, it also presents a challenge.

Wibben said the department has done pilot programs to assess the value, but so far she said the Pentagon is not scouring workers' social media accounts for information.

"The challenge of social media in general is the fidelity of it — you can't believe everything you read on the internet," said Reid, adding that researching everyone's internet postings would be wasteful and erroneous. "So we have the authority, frankly, to do more, but to make it effective is something we're still really researching."

Associated Press writer Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

Bare-knuckle boxing from a bygone era looks for a comeback

By **BOB MOEN, Associated Press**

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — In 1889, the great John L. Sullivan, the Boston Strong Boy, beat Jake Kilrain in 75 rounds — yes, 75 — in what the International Boxing Hall of Fame has called the "last significant bare-knuckle bout in boxing."

Since then, about the only gloves-off fighting many people have witnessed has consisted of barroom brawls.

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But on Saturday night, 10 bouts of bare-knuckle boxing, including one involving female fighters, will take place at the Cheyenne Ice and Events Center.

The event, available on pay-per-view, is being promoted as the first legal, regulated and sanctioned bare-knuckle fight event in U.S. history. Back in Sullivan's day, there were no sanctioning bodies and few if any regulations.

"I think it's what the public wants to see. The public is begging for something new," promoter David Feldman said, noting that it has been 25 years since the advent of UFC mixed martial arts. "We're hopefully leading the way to a new era in combat sports."

The boxers will be allowed wraps around their thumbs and wrists but will not wear any protection over their knuckles the way fighters normally do in traditional boxing, MMA or other combat sports where padded gloves of various thickness are used.

Each bout is scheduled for five, 2-minute rounds, fought in a ring with rounded ropes instead of the traditional square.

Bare-knuckle regulations are otherwise similar to those of glove boxing, in that opponents can only throw punches and there's a standing eight count and a three-knockdown rule.

"But when you're in a clinch, you can hit with the open hand. You can pull the back of their neck into punches," Feldman said. "So it gives a little bit more excitement in the clinches."

ESPN boxing columnist Nigel Collins said gloves — originally known as mufflers — were introduced around the 18th century to help protect fighters' hands and the faces and hands of aristocrats who took up the sport. By the turn of the 20th century all boxing matches had gloves because new rules required them, Collins said.

Some authorities on boxing have argued that padded gloves made the sport more dangerous by allowing fighters to hit their opponents in the head more often with less risk of hurting their hands.

Collins said he personally isn't interested in bare-knuckle fighting "but I wouldn't knock it. If that's what people want to do, let them do it." He said it would be hypocritical of fans of boxing and other martial arts to object to the danger and brutality.

Feldman's Bare Knuckle Fighting Championships organization has been trying to get bare-knuckle boxing sanctioned in a number of states. The Wyoming State Board of Mixed Martial Arts, created in 2012, was the first to do so.

Board chairman Bryan Pedersen said the board received no opposition and saw the event as an opportunity to provide better safety than is afforded at unregulated bare-knuckle fights. Ringside doctors, for instance, are required at state-sanctioned bouts.

The board reviewed research that indicated bare-knuckle boxing would be safer than other combat sports, especially when it comes to concussions, Pedersen said.

"If you look at what we already regulate in the state of Wyoming — we regulate kickboxing and MMA, right?" he said. "In those two, you could take an elbow to the head, a knee to the head or a shin kick to the head. And go out in your yard and punch a basketball and kick a basketball and see what goes farther."

Collins said whether bare-knuckle boxing is safer than regular boxing isn't known. He only knows that the bare-knuckle fights being held in Wyoming won't be nearly as brutal as the bouts in the old days, when fighters slugged it out until one couldn't continue.

Fighter Bobby Gunn, who is on the card Saturday night, said Wyoming is bringing a sport that exists underground into the light of day.

"I don't got to worry about being arrested," Gunn said with a laugh.

Pedersen sees advantages for the state of Wyoming as well: "I see the whole thing as a giant economic possibility for diversity in our state and to really help promote the Cowboy State and our strong sense of Western independence."

Ricco Rodriguez, a former UFC champion who is making his first try at bare-knuckle boxing on Saturday, said it seems safer to him than gloved fighting because the athletes know they have to be more careful not to injure their hands.

"You hit an elbow or you hit the back of the head or something, you're liable to definitely break your hand," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez's training for Saturday included conditioning his hands by punching wood dummies and doing pushups on his knuckles.

He said he likes the idea of being involved in building a new combat sport. Also, he said, "I think it's the purest form of fighting."

Feldman said that when people first hear about bare-knuckle returning as a sport, it always draws a reaction.

"Because of that reaction, we're going to shock the world Saturday night," he said.

Blacks fare surprisingly well in prostate cancer research

By LINDSEY TANNER, AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Black men with advanced prostate cancer fared surprisingly well in two new studies that challenge current thinking about racial disparities in the disease.

Blacks are more likely to get prostate cancer and to die from it than whites, but the new research suggests getting access to the same treatment may help balance the odds — even if it doesn't greatly extend life after cancer has spread. Given the same standard treatments, blacks with advanced disease may do even better than whites, the studies suggest.

Both were presented Friday at an American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting in Chicago.

The lead author of one study, Susan Halabi of Duke University, said the results "are contrary to the mainstream understanding" that blacks fare worse than whites with prostate cancer. She said the analysis highlights the importance of minorities participating in medical studies.

Her report pooled results from nine studies in the U.S., Europe and Asia, and focused on the more than 7,000 whites and 500 blacks with advanced prostate cancer who had stopped responding to hormone therapy. Patients' average age was 69 and most had cancer that had spread to their bones. The men were all treated with standard chemotherapy.

The analysis found that black men fared at least as well as whites, with both groups surviving almost two years after starting treatment. But researchers found a slight survival advantage for black men — they were about 20 percent less likely than whites to die — when taking into account patients' individual characteristics including tumor type and levels of PSA, a blood protein that can be elevated in cancer.

That blacks may do even better underscores the need to dig deeper to find out why, said Halabi. It's possible black men who enroll in prostate cancer studies are healthier than other patients or they might have biological differences that make them respond better to treatment, she said.

The results suggest that access to care is key, said Dr. Richard Schilsky, the society's chief medical officer. If men are diagnosed later and not treated as quickly or as well, "of course the outcomes are going to be worse," he said.

A separate, smaller study, led by Duke's Dr. Daniel George, compared the prostate cancer drug Zytiga with prednisone in 50 blacks and 50 whites whose cancer had spread. The drug stopped cancer from spreading further for about 17 months on average in both groups. But declines in PSA levels, considered a promising sign, were greater in black men. Blacks also had different side effects — less high blood pressure but more trouble with low potassium levels. Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Zytiga's maker, paid for the study but was not involved in the research.

Genetic testing in the study found racial differences that might make blacks respond better to Zytiga than whites, and the results suggest that the drug might have greater benefit if started earlier, before cancer has spread, George said.

Dr. Robert Dreicer, an expert for the cancer group and University of Virginia cancer specialist, called the results thought-provoking and said additional research on genetic differences might lead to new, more effective treatments for black men.

Dr. Adam Murphy, a Northwestern University physician who studies racial disparities in prostate cancer,

said some reasons for low black enrollment in studies include poor overall health, money and mistrust of the medical establishment.

"We just need more patients enrolled," Murphy said.

Denial also leads some men to delay seeking any kind of treatment, but Westley Sholes, 78, a retired health care manager in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, said he decided to be proactive after his father was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer.

Sholes says he asked his doctor to do repeat scans. Results from the first were suspicious and the second done three months later detected early cancer. That was 20 years ago; Sholes had surgery and is doing well.

He credits good health insurance, excellent treatment and educating himself about the disease.

"Of course I was scared," Sholes said. "I had top-notch awareness and the awareness overrode the reluctance to do something."

AP Chief Medical Writer Marilyn Marchione contributed to this report.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner on Twitter at @LindseyTanner. Her work can be found here .

The Associated Press Health & Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Judge agrees to halt fetal heartbeat abortion law in Iowa

By DAVID PITT, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — An Iowa judge agreed Friday to temporarily block the most restrictive abortion law in the country under an agreement between the state and abortion rights groups.

Attorneys for the state and Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds told the judge they agreed to prevent the law from taking effect on July 1 after discussions with three groups challenging the law: the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa, Planned Parenthood Federation of American and the Emma Goldman Clinic.

The groups are suing the state, arguing that the law — which bans most abortions if a fetal heartbeat can be detected — is unconstitutional. An attorney representing the state said Friday that the goal now is to quickly get the case before a judge "for the sake of getting to a resolution on the merits sooner and better."

"This is a much better outcome for women than having to spend the next few weeks worrying about whether or not they're going to be able to exercise their fundamental right to have a safe and legal abortion in Iowa," said Rita Bettis, ACLU of Iowa attorney.

Judge Michael Huppert said he would formally issue a temporary injunction later Friday. The injunction means the law won't go into effect until the lawsuit is resolved, which could take months. Both sides have said they want the case to go to the Iowa Supreme Court — though anti-abortion rights groups are aiming for the U.S. Supreme Court.

The state is being represented for free by the Thomas More Society, a conservative Chicago-based law firm that stepped in after Democratic Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller refused to defend the law. Miller said he believed the law undermines the rights and protections for women.

Reynolds signed the law May 4, two days after lawmakers sent her the legislation. The moves marked a dramatic change in abortion policy in Iowa, which before the 2016 elections had little to no role in the broad Republican effort to overturn Roe v. Wade. The landmark 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that established a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy until a fetus is viable.

The 2016 election flipped control of the Iowa Senate, putting Republicans in charge of the Legislature and the governor's office for the first time in two decades. Among the results: numerous anti-abortion bills, including a 20-week abortion ban and a requirement that women wait three days before ending a pregnancy.

The waiting provision — one of the longest in the country — also is on hold because of a different lawsuit.

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Iowa Republicans also gave up millions in federal dollars last year to create a state-funded family planning program that prohibits participation from abortion providers, such as Planned Parenthood.

If the fetal heartbeat law is eventually allowed to take effect in Iowa, most abortions would be banned after around the sixth week of pregnancy — a time when, abortion-rights groups say, many women don't even know they're pregnant.

Planned Parenthood and the Emma Goldman Clinic, which is in Iowa City, said they provided nearly 3,000 abortions last year. They argue the law is an all-out ban on abortion, in violation of women's constitutional rights.

"From our side, there aren't really any questions that at six-week gestation an embryo is not viable, so it is hard to imagine how this (court fight) could take a very long time," Bettis said. "But we will wait and see what their answer says ultimately then we'll have a better idea."

Martin Cannon, a lawyer with Thomas More Society, noted that the latest lawsuit was filed in state court, meaning getting the case into the federal court system is difficult. But, he said, "there is plenty to argue about right here in Iowa in front of this supreme court."

Bob Vander Plaats, CEO of the conservative Christian group Family Leader, said he and other anti-abortion activists aren't deterred.

"This is going to be the long game," he said. "I do believe that this will be the vehicle that will end abortion in this country."

This story has been corrected to reflect the governor signed the bill on May 4.

US commerce secretary in Beijing for talks on trade surplus

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross arrived in Beijing on Saturday for talks on China's promise to buy more American goods after Washington revived tensions by renewing its threat of tariff hikes on Chinese high-tech exports.

The talks focus on adding details to China's May 19 promise to narrow its politically volatile surplus in trade in goods with the United States, which reached a record \$375.2 billion last year.

President Donald Trump threw the status of the talks into doubt this week by renewing a threat to hike tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese goods over complaints Beijing steals or pressures foreign companies to hand over technology.

Private sector analysts say that while Beijing is willing to compromise on its trade surplus, it will resist changes that might threaten plans to transform China into a global technology competitor.

The two governments released no schedule for the talks, but China said earlier that Ross was due to be in Beijing through Monday.

Reporters saw Ross outside his hotel at midday Saturday but he didn't respond to their questions before he got in a car and was driven away. Ross was to have a dinner meeting Saturday evening with Vice Premier Liu He at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

Ross was scheduled to meet with Liu again on Sunday.

China has promised to "significantly increase" purchases of farm goods, energy and other products and services. Still, Beijing resisted pressure to commit to a specific target of narrowing its annual surplus with the United States by \$200 billion.

Following Beijing's announcement, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the dispute was "on hold." But the truce appeared to end with this week's announcement Washington was going ahead with tariff hikes on technology goods and also would impose curbs on Chinese investment and purchases of U.S. high-tech exports.

The move reflects growing American concern about China's status as a potential tech competitor and complaints Beijing improperly subsidizes its fledgling industries and shields them from competition.

Foreign governments and businesses cite strategic plans such as "Made in China 2025," which calls for

state-led efforts to create Chinese industry leaders in areas from robots to electric cars to computer chips.

"The U.S. focus on so-called industrially significant technologies heightens the risk of escalation between the two countries," BMI Research said in a report. "Indeed, while China has shown itself willing to compromise in the area of trade deficit reduction, it will not take any actions which threaten its strategically important 'Made in China 2025' program."

Trump also has threatened to raise tariffs on an additional \$100 billion of Chinese goods, but gave no indication this week whether that would go ahead.

Earlier, China responded with a threat to retaliate with higher duties on a \$50 billion list of American goods including soybeans, small aircraft, whiskey, electric vehicles and orange juice. It criticized Trump's move this week and said it reserved the right to retaliate but avoided repeating its earlier threat.

Trade analysts warned Ross's hand might be weakened by the Trump administration's decision Thursday to go ahead with tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Europe and Mexico.

That might alienate allies who share complaints about Chinese technology policy and a flood of low-priced steel, aluminum and other exports they say are the result of improper subsidies and hurt foreign competitors.

From distillers to farmers, trade war would cause casualties

By PAUL WISEMAN and STEVE KARNOWSKI, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — If a trade war is coming, the cheesemakers of Wisconsin are standing in the line of fire. So are the farmers of the Great Plains and the distillers of Kentucky. And the employees of iconic American brands like Harley-Davidson and Levi Strauss.

The likelihood of a trade conflagration leapt closer to reality this week after the United States imposed tariff on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Mexico and the European Union. Infuriated, the jilted U.S. allies vowed to retaliate with tariffs of their own. And in a separate dispute, China is poised to penalize \$50 billion in U.S. goods — many of them produced by supporters of President Donald Trump in the America's agricultural heartland.

"They're going to hit the farmers," said Bryan Klabunde, a farmer in northwestern Minnesota. "We want things fair for all industries, but we're going to take the brunt of the punishment if other countries retaliate."

President Donald Trump, who entered office promising to rip up trade deals and crack down on unfair trading practices, is clashing with trading partners on all sides. To the north, he's battling Canada; to the south, Mexico; to the east, Europe; across the Pacific Ocean to the west, China and Japan.

"The president seems to be creating trade (and other) disputes with everyone — allies and adversaries alike -- and it's difficult to discern any coherent strategy," said Rod Hunter, a former National Security Council staffer under President George W. Bush. "The impacts of the disputes have been limited so far, but the economic and political costs will go up as retaliation by trading partners begins in earnest."

Mexico, for instance, plans to retaliate against the steel and aluminum tariffs by targeting U.S. cheese, among other products.

"It's our second-largest market," Jeff Schwager, president of Sartori, a cheese company in Plymouth, Wisconsin, said of Mexico. Retaliatory tariffs "will reduce sales — there's no question."

"The hard-earned sales we've secured in Mexico could be at risk given the potential for retaliation," the National Milk Producers Federation warned in a statement.

The EU is threatening to penalize Kentucky bourbon and the motorcycles of Wisconsin-based Harley-Davidson. The potential tariffs pack a political punch: They'd hurt constituents of House Speaker Paul Ryan, a Wisconsin Republican, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican.

On Friday, reporters in Louisville, Kentucky, asked McConnell if he thought the Europeans were trying to get his attention.

"Well," the Senate leader said, "they got my attention. They didn't need to do that. These are our friends. These are not enemies. Canada and Mexico, Europe — these are our allies, and we need to work this out in a way that's comforting to everyone."

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Harley-Davidson has already absorbed higher steel and aluminum costs since Trump first announced the metals tariffs three months ago. Now, the threats of retaliatory tariffs from abroad raise the fear of higher prices for Harley motorcycles sold outside the U.S.

In a statement, Harley-Davidson said retaliatory tariffs "would have a significant impact on our sales" in those countries. The Milwaukee-based company said it was evaluating options for controlling higher materials costs. In April, its chief financial officer warned that cost increases could be worse than the company forecast in January and might last for several quarters.

The jeans maker Levi Strauss is also on the EU's target list.

"American brands, workers and consumers will ultimately suffer," the San Francisco-based company said in a statement.

Ben Steffen, a dairy farmer who also grows corn, soybeans, and wheat on 1,900 acres southeastern Nebraska near Humboldt, is angry about the U.S. tariffs being imposed on America's closest trade partners and allies.

"I'm upset because it hits me in my pocketbook from multiple angles," he said. "I sell beef, I sell corn, I sell soybeans and I sell milk. All of those products are vulnerable because we export significant amounts in those markets."

The milk market has been depressed for about three years, and farmers have struggled to break even. About 14 percent of U.S. milk production is exported; the largest customer is Mexico.

"This is the worst possible thing to have for our milk market, and it's the same for every other commodity," Steffen said. "These are important relationships."

In Stockton, California, Jeff Colombini is worried about the financial damage a trade war would bring to his 1,800-acre farm. His company, Lodi Farming, exports walnuts, cherries and apples to Mexico, Canada, the European Union and other countries.

"With these tariffs, it's going to make the product too expensive for the consumers in Mexico and in Canada and in the EU," Colombini said. "We're not going to be able to sell all of our crop. And so some of it is probably going to go unharvested or just dumped ... I have 200 employees, and they depend on the success of this operation for their jobs to feed and clothe their families."

A trade fight with the Europe would also cause collateral damage across the Atlantic. Steelworkers in Port Talbot, Wales, who have struggled to protect their factory and 4,000 jobs, now face another threat.

Union leader Mark Turner said workers are trying to sort out what the tariffs will mean for Port Talbot. But they feel "everything is against us," particularly given Britain's economic uncertainty as the country prepares to leave the European Union.

"We will keep fighting," Turner said. "If we can't go into the American market, then there's other markets out there we will try and get into."

An even higher-stakes trade dispute is playing out on the Pacific Rim. The United States and China are poised to impose tariffs on up to \$200 billion worth of each other's goods in a battle over Beijing's strong-arm efforts to overtake U.S. technological supremacy.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross is traveling to Beijing this weekend for talks aimed at preventing an all-out trade war between the world's two biggest economies. On the Chinese target list are American soybean farmers, who send about 60 percent of their exports to China.

On Friday, Klabunde, who grows corn and soybeans on 3,000 acres near Waubun, Minnesota, spent two nerve-racking hours with a hired hand, pulling a stuck tractor out of a drainage ditch. They finally got the machine free.

"I think the tariffs and trade war scare me more than a stuck planter," Klabunde said. "I can lose only so much money on a stuck planter. I can lose a lot more money in a trade war."

Karnowski reported from Minneapolis

AP staffers Terry Chea in Stockton, California; Carrie Antfinger in Plymouth, Wisconsin; Bruce Schreiner

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in Louisville, Kentucky; David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa; Anne D'Innocenzio and Candice Choi in New York; David Koenig in Dallas; and Danica Kirka in London contributed to this report.

Going it alone: US alienates allies before taking on Beijing

By PAUL WISEMAN, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration's decision to slap tariffs on its top allies could weaken Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross' hand as he landed in Beijing on Saturday to try to fend off a trade war with China.

That, at least, is the view of many longtime trade analysts and China watchers.

"This is really the U.S. going it alone," said Philip Levy, senior fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs who was a trade adviser in the George W. Bush administration. "By assaulting all our allies, we leave ourselves standing unprotected and by ourselves in a way we really never have been."

"We are alienating all of our friends and partners at a time when we could really use their support," added Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade negotiator who is now vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

After briefing reporters on the administration's decision to slap tariffs on imported steel from Canada, Mexico and the European Union, Ross arrived in Beijing for negotiations aimed at resolving a dispute over China's aggressive attempts to challenge U.S. technological supremacy.

Trade analysts say the Trump team should be enlisting its allies to present a united front to China. After all, U.S. friends like Japan and the European Union share many of the same gripes about China. They decry rampant theft of intellectual property and Chinese overproduction, which has flooded world markets with cheap steel and aluminum.

And in fact, U.S. Trade Rep. Robert Lighthizer, Japan's economics minister, Hiroshige Seko, and EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom did issue a vague statement from Paris on Thursday urging unidentified countries to do more to protect intellectual property and to reduce overcapacity.

But the U.S. undermined the alliance on Thursday by slapping key allies and trading partners — Canada, Mexico and the EU — with tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum. All vowed to retaliate by penalizing American products.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, noting that Canadians and Americans have been allies for 150 years and fought and died together in World War II and in Afghanistan, took a shot at the Trump team:

"Americans remain our partners, friends, and allies," Trudeau said. "This is not about the American people. We have to believe that at some point their common sense will prevail. But we see no sign of that in this action today by the U.S. administration."

Now, the U.S. is turning to Beijing and to a standoff that has taken some confusing turns.

Last month, the administration proposed tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese imports to punish China for forcing U.S. companies to hand over technology in exchange for access to its market. President Donald Trump later ordered his top trade negotiator to seek up to an additional \$100 billion in Chinese products to tax.

China responded by targeting \$50 billion in U.S. products, including soybeans — a shot at Trump supporters in America's heartland. Rising tensions between the world's two biggest economies alarmed investors and business leaders.

But they breathed a sigh of relief earlier this month when the U.S. and China declared a cease-fire after talks in Washington. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said then that the trade war was "on hold." And the tariffs were suspended after China agreed to "substantially reduce" its trade surplus with America by buying more U.S. products.

The truce didn't last long. Trump, facing criticism from some in Congress for cozying up to Beijing, on Tuesday renewed his threat to impose the tariffs on China. His hardline trade adviser, Peter Navarro, charged Wednesday that Mnuchin's conciliatory comments about China were "an unfortunate sound bite."

Critics say the administration should be picking its trade fights far more judiciously.

"This is dumb," said Republican Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska. "Europe, Canada and Mexico are not China, and you don't treat allies the same way you treat opponents."

"There's still a risk that this escalates into a trade war," Levy said. "Our allies and partners are going to be pressured by China to take their side. In this environment, it's hard for them to be very pro-U.S."

Associated Press writer Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

Caesars workers threatening strike in Las Vegas reach deal

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A union for casino workers and one of the largest resort operators in Las Vegas reached a tentative labor agreement Friday that would cover about a quarter of the 50,000 employees threatening the first citywide strike in more than 30 years.

The new five-year deal with Caesars Entertainment covers about 12,000 bartenders, housekeepers, kitchen workers and others at nine casino-resorts on the Las Vegas Strip, the Culinary Workers Union Local 226 said. It declined to provide details because workers have not approved the contract, but generally both sides agreed to wage increases and stronger language against sexual harassment.

"We feel very good about the contract," said Geoconda Arguello-Kline, union secretary-treasurer. "We feel like the company got what they need for their business to continue, and we feel like we can still provide the American dream for the members."

It comes just after tens of thousands of bartenders, housekeepers, cocktail and food servers, porters, bellmen, cooks and other kitchen workers saw their contracts expire. The union has yet to reach new agreements with MGM Resorts International and other smaller casino-hotel operators on the Strip and in downtown Las Vegas.

The main sticking points have been wages, workplace training and job security as casino-hotels turn to technology that can displace workers, the union says. Employees want contract language that would protect them if properties are sold and an independent workload study for housekeepers.

"Technology is being heavily introduced in the casino industry, and unfortunately, they are not ... investing in us," said Kimberly Ireland, bell desk dispatcher at The Mirage. "MGM Resorts International has not agreed to any of our terms pertaining to job security, safety, our housekeeping study, so we are prepared to do whatever it takes to make sure that we secure our future."

MGM said Friday that it has "made good progress in resolving the remaining issues." Caesars did not respond to a request for comment.

"We remain dedicated to negotiating a contract that demonstrates our commitment to employees and their families while our company continues creating good jobs and future opportunities in Las Vegas," MGM said in a statement.

Workers have voted to authorize a strike, but no date has been set. They have started signing up for strike pay, financial assistance and picketing shifts.

Dozens of workers gathered Friday to put together bilingual picket signs reading "Las Vegas hotel and restaurant workers, MGM Resorts, on strike." The walls of what they christened as their strike headquarters had maps of properties operated by MGM with the entrances clearly marked.

If there is a strike, visitors could see workers picketing outside casino-hotels still in negotiations, including Aria, Bellagio and Mandalay Bay.

Companies have declined to provide details of their contingency plans, but hospitality experts say the properties will remain open, with replacement workers and managers carrying out additional tasks.

If the contract agreement sticks, a walkout would not affect Caesars' Las Vegas Strip properties: Bally's, Flamingo, Harrah's, Paris, Planet Hollywood, The Cromwell, The Linq and Caesars Palace, including Nobu. The deal also would apply to the off-Strip Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino.

The union has said Caesars workers had asked for a wage increase of 4.2 percent effective Friday, and annual increases of about 4 percent thereafter. The union previously said the company had offered an approximate 2.8 percent increase for each of the five years.

In MGM's case, the union has asked for average annual wage increases of 4 percent for each of the next five years. It says the company has countered with an approximate 2.7 percent raise.

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The average worker on the Las Vegas Strip makes about \$23 an hour, including benefits such as premium-free health care, a pension and a 401(k) retirement savings plan.

The last citywide strike was in 1984, costing the city and workers millions of dollars.

Follow Regina Garcia Cano on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/reginagarciakNO>.

Chris Cuomo believes there's room in the middle

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Chris Cuomo envisions his new CNN prime-time show as a haven for independent thinkers who want their preconceptions tested. His challenge is finding enough people who want that on a cable news network.

He's swimming against a strong tide. Fox News Channel and MSNBC are thriving with prime-time programming that appeals to partisans of each side, most emphatically with Sean Hannity and Rachel Maddow in the 9 p.m. Eastern time slot where "Cuomo Prime Time" lands Monday.

Cuomo respects the success of his rivals, but believes it reflects a troubling trend.

"What you see is people retreating to their corners — left and right, spreading apart," he said. "I don't know where that gets us. I think the pursuit has to be for independent thinking — people who are open, people who are pushing those in power to do things for them, to find common ground and act on it, and to test arguments, not merely go to a place where you get told what you believe and hear an echo."

The numbers sharply illustrate how many viewers have retreated into tribes during the Trump era.

Fox has long been a favorite of Republican viewers, and the most-watched cable news network overall. During the last three months of 2016, encompassing the presidential election, MSNBC (1.64 million) and CNN (1.57 million) were roughly equivalent in prime-time, weeknight viewership, the Nielsen company said. Fast forward to the first quarter of this year, MSNBC averaged 2.36 million viewers and CNN had 1.16 million.

"The liberal audience was looking for a home and they found it on MSNBC," said Paul Sweeney, an analyst for Bloomberg.

In May, Hannity averaged 3.13 million viewers and Maddow had 2.6 million, making their shows two of the most popular programs on all of cable. CNN averaged 846,000 viewers in the time slot for the second half of Anderson Cooper's two-hour show, Nielsen said.

Welcome aboard, Chris!

The market leaders have sharply different shows, most evident in their openings. Maddow's meticulously constructed, often-meandering lead story is built on reporting about President Donald Trump and his cronies, while Hannity's is a call to arms for Trump supporters, focused on the day's talking points. Both are designed to energize partisans.

"I do not do that," Cuomo said. "I do the opposite. I play against partisan perspective. Instead of telling you what to think, I question what people are telling you to think."

"It's a very different thing and I believe that the opportunity is that the more people are being pushed into the fringes, the more people are being left out," said the former ABC newsman and brother of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. "The independent thinker, the open-minded person doesn't have anywhere to go. So we are building a home for them."

The competition will test whether news consumers believe what they say, said Al Tompkins of the Poynter Institute, a journalism think tank. People constantly say in surveys that they want news served straight and unslanted.

"Human nature being what it is makes it easier for them to watch things that they already believe," he said.

CNN doesn't believe it's dealing from a position of weakness; in a news-hungry environment, CNN was among cable television's 10 most popular networks for the fifth month in a row in May. Cuomo's show is a long-term play for when the superheated partisanship cools down, said Michael Bass, CNN's executive vice president of programming.

"He has a passion and an energy that is perfect for prime time," Bass said.

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Newsmaking interviews will be a centerpiece of most shows, he said. Cuomo and his producers aren't afraid to let them run long if the conversations prove productive; a recent interview with Trump adviser Rudy Giuliani went 42 minutes.

Cuomo has been actively lobbying for President Trump to come on his show. Trump, when he does television interviews, is more likely to talk to personalities he deems friendly, primarily on Fox.

"I am surprised the president hasn't come on, since nobody argues his points as well as he has," Cuomo said. "He is much better when he is tested than when he is in one of those pastoral interviews." When tested, "he's more compelling and more cogent," he said.

Cuomo will have guests in his New York studio, but isn't a fan of sprawling panels of pundits that can appear on other CNN shows. "Cuomo Prime Time" won't just be a political talk show, either: the host will occasionally travel to the sites of major news stories. Like most new programs, it can be expected to evolve, Bass said.

Stocks, interest rates climb as job market keeps improving

By STAN CHOE, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks climbed Friday after a report showed the U.S. job market is still revving higher, even with the specter of a possible trade war hanging over markets around the world.

The better-than-expected news on jobs helped the S&P 500 more than recover all its losses from earlier in the week. Interest rates and the value of the dollar also rose on expectations that the Federal Reserve got more justification to continue raising interest rates steadily, with its next decision due in about a week and a half.

Beyond the jobs report, stronger-than-expected readings came in on U.S. manufacturing growth and construction spending. They helped turn attention away from the worries about global trade tensions and European politics that had dragged on stocks in recent weeks.

"It's refreshing that some strong economic data today took some focus off the trade rhetoric," said Jon Adams, senior investment strategist at BMO Global Asset Management. "It's been a banner day for U.S. data overall. You look at the payrolls report, and it's hard to find too much negative in there."

The strong reports raise the likelihood that the Federal Reserve may increase short-term interest rates four times this year, rather than just three. Higher rates can hurt stock prices, but Adams said investors appear relatively prepared for the possibility "because the Fed is hiking for the right reasons."

The S&P 500 index rose 29.35 points, or 1.1 percent, to 2,734.62. For the week, it climbed 0.5 percent after scrambling back from a loss of more than 1 percent earlier.

The Dow Jones industrial average jumped 219.37, or 0.9 percent, to 24,635.21, and the Nasdaq composite rose 112.21, or 1.5 percent, to 7,554.33. The Russell 2000 of small-company stocks rose 14.37, or 0.9 percent, to 1,647.98.

Twice as many stocks rose as fell on the New York Stock Exchange.

Employers added 223,000 jobs last month, more than economists expected and a pickup from April's hiring rate of 159,000. Wages for workers also accelerated, with pay up 2.7 percent from a year ago. That's a bit faster than April's 2.6 percent wage growth.

President Donald Trump raised eyebrows when he sent out a tweet ahead of the jobs report's release that suggested it may be a good one. Treasury yields and the dollar rose modestly following the tweet, although they had steeper gains after the official release. Because the jobs report typically moves markets, government officials are not supposed to comment on it beforehand.

The encouraging data helped push the yield on the 10-year Treasury note to 2.90 percent from 2.86 percent late Thursday. The two-year yield, whose movements are dictated more by expectations for Fed movement, rose to 2.48 percent from 2.44 percent.

A quick beneficiary of higher rates can be the banking industry, which would reap bigger profits from making loans. Financial stocks in the S&P 500 rose 1.1 percent.

On the flip side were companies that pay big dividends. Higher rates make bonds more attractive to

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income investors and pull buyers away from dividend-paying stocks. Utility stocks in the S&P 500 fell 1.5 percent for the largest loss among the index's 11 sectors.

Another force helping stocks on Friday was relief that politicians in Italy appeared to avoid a scenario that investors had been fearing would hit markets.

Italy's anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and right-wing League succeeded Thursday in forming western Europe's first populist government. It will be headed by a political novice whose first try was rejected four days earlier as too risky for the Italian economy, but the outcome avoids an interim government and a swift return to the polls that investors had feared could end up being a referendum on Italy staying with the euro currency.

In European stock markets, France's CAC 40 rose 1.2 percent, and Germany's DAX climbed 0.9 percent. The FTSE 100 rose 0.3 percent.

In Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 slipped 0.1 percent, the Hang Seng in Hong Kong rose 0.1 percent and the Kospi in South Korea climbed 0.7 percent.

In commodities markets, benchmark U.S. crude fell \$1.23 to settle at \$65.81 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 77 cents to settle at \$76.79.

Natural gas rose a penny to \$2.96 per 1,000 cubic feet, heating oil fell 3 cents to \$2.18 per gallon and wholesale gasoline lost 2 cents to \$2.14 per gallon.

Gold slipped \$5.40 to settle at \$1,299.30 per ounce, silver dipped 2 cents to \$16.44 per ounce and copper rose 3 cents to \$3.10 per pound.

The dollar rose to 109.51 Japanese yen from 108.64 yen late Thursday. The euro fell to \$1.1662 from \$1.1685, and the British pound rose to \$1.3346 from \$1.3289.

AP Business Writer Elaine Kurtenbach contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, June 2, the 153rd day of 2018. There are 212 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 2, 1953, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place in London's Westminster Abbey, 16 months after the death of her father, King George VI.

On this date:

In 1863, during the Civil War, Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman wrote a letter to his wife, Ellen, in which he commented, "Vox populi, vox humbug" (The voice of the people is the voice of humbug).

In 1886, President Grover Cleveland, 49, married Frances Folsom, 21, in the Blue Room of the White House. (To date, Cleveland is the only president to marry in the executive mansion.)

In 1897, Mark Twain was quoted by the New York Journal as saying from London that "the report of my death was an exaggeration." (Twain was responding to a report in the New York Herald that he was "grievously ill" and "possibly dying.")

In 1924, Congress passed, and President Calvin Coolidge signed, a measure guaranteeing full American citizenship for all Native Americans born within U.S. territorial limits.

In 1941, baseball's "Iron Horse," Lou Gehrig, died in New York of a degenerative disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; he was 37.

In 1946, Italy held a referendum which resulted in the Italian monarchy being abolished in favor of a republic.

In 1966, U.S. space probe Surveyor 1 landed on the moon and began transmitting detailed photographs of the lunar surface.

In 1976, Arizona Republic investigative reporter Don Bolles (boh-lz) was mortally wounded by a bomb planted underneath his car; he died 11 days later. (Prosecutors believed Bolles was targeted because he

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had written stories that upset a liquor wholesaler; three men were convicted of the killing.)

In 1983, half of the 46 people aboard an Air Canada DC-9 were killed after fire broke out on board, forcing the jetliner to make an emergency landing at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.

In 1986, for the first time, the public could watch the proceedings of the U.S. Senate on television as a six-week experiment began.

In 1997, Timothy McVeigh was convicted of murder and conspiracy in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people. (McVeigh was executed in June 2001.)

In 2002, a fire broke out at Buckingham Palace, forcing the evacuation of hundreds of people and mar-
ring the four-day celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's 50 years on the throne.

Ten years ago: Massachusetts Sen. Edward M. Kennedy underwent 3 1/2 hours of risky and delicate surgery to cut out as much of his cancerous brain tumor as possible. The space shuttle Discovery linked up with the international space station, and the 10 space travelers immediately got ready to install the Japanese lab Kibo (KEE'-boh). Bo Diddley, 79, a founding father of rock 'n' roll, died in Archer, Florida, at age 79. Actor-director Mel Ferrer died in Santa Barbara, California, at age 90.

Five years ago: Egypt's highest court ruled that the nation's interim parliament was illegally elected, though it stopped short of dissolving the chamber immediately. Indiana Pacers center Roy Hibbert was fined \$75,000 by the NBA for using a gay slur and profanity during his news conference after Game 6 of the Eastern Conference finals; Hibbert apologized for the comments.

One year ago: Environmental campaigners protested President Donald Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the Paris climate accord, while nations around the world pledged to double down on their efforts to curb global warming. Three former Penn State administrators were handed jail and house-arrest sentences ranging up to nearly two years for burying child sexual abuse allegations against Jerry Sandusky. In a rambling press conference, embattled comedian Kathy Griffin said she was not afraid of Donald Trump and planned to keep making fun of him but maintained that she was sorry for a video that depicted her holding a likeness of the president's severed, bloody head.

Today's Birthdays: Actress-singer Sally Kellerman is 81. Actor Ron Ely is 80. Filmmaker and movie histo-
rian Kevin Brownlow is 80. Actor Stacy Keach is 77. Rock musician Charlie Watts is 77. Actor Charles Haid is 75. Rhythm and blues singer Chubby Tavares (Tavares) is 74. Movie director Lasse (LAH'-suh) Hallstrom is 72. Actor Jerry Mathers is 70. Actress Joanna Gleason is 68. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman is 66. Actor Dennis Haysbert is 64. Comedian Dana Carvey is 63. Actor Gary Grimes is 63. Pop musician Michael Steele is 63. Rock singer Tony Hadley (Spandau Ballet) is 58. Actor Liam Cunningham is 57. Actor Navid Negahban is 54. Singer Merril Bainbridge is 50. TV personality-producer Andy Cohen ("The Real House-
wives" TV franchise) is 50. Rapper B-Real (Cypress Hill) is 48. Actress Paula Cale is 48. Actor Anthony Montgomery is 47. Actor-comedian Wayne Brady is 46. Actor Wentworth Miller is 46. Rock musician Tim Rice-Oxley (Keane) is 42. Actor Zachary Quinto is 41. Actor Dominic Cooper is 40. Actress Nikki Cox is 40. Actor Justin Long is 40. Actor Deon Richmond is 40. Actress Morena Baccarin is 39. Rhythm and blues singer Irish Grinstead (702) is 38. Rock musician Fabrizio Moretti (The Strokes) is 38. Olympic gold medal soccer player Abby Wambach is 38. Country singer Dan Cahoon (Marshall Dyllon) is 35. Singer-songwriter ZZ Ward is 32. Actress Brittany Curran is 28. Actor Sterling Beaumon is 23.

Thought for Today: "Only the man who finds everything wrong and expects it to get worse is thought to have a clear brain." — John Kenneth Galbraith, American economist (1908-2006).