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Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

			   
Oven Fresh Sandwiches	Hot Desserts	Snack Melts	
11 E Hwy 12, Groton ~ 397-8627			

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Mike Nehls has been busy campaigning for Brown County Commission. He was caught in the action Tuesday evening at the end of Groton's Main Street putting up a sign on the property that used to be owned by his Grandfather Forrest Fulker, who operated a pool hall. The property is now owned by Mike's brother, Kevin Nehls, of Allied Climate Professionals. Pictured are JoAnn and Mike Nehls and Journey Zieroth. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The Life of Jake McKiver

Mass of Christian Burial for Jacky D. "Jake" McKiver, 66, of Groton will be 10:00 a.m., Thursday, July 26th at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton. Father Mike Kelly will officiate. Burial with military honors will follow in Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the church on Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. with a wake service at 7:00 p.m.

Jake passed away July 22, 2018 at Mayo Clinic Methodist Hospital in Rochester, MN surrounded by his family.

Jacky Dale was born in Aberdeen on April 1, 1952 to Dale and Marjorie (Fritz) McKiver. He was raised on the family farm where he developed a lifelong love of farming. He graduated from Groton High School in 1970 and enlisted in the US Army Reserve in 1972. Jake married his high school sweetheart, Renee Daly on September 15, 1973. They were blessed with three healthy children, Steven in 1974, Kristi in 1976 and Katie in 1980. Jake worked various jobs throughout his younger years. He later attended NSU and graduated with a Computer Science Degree. He opened Jack's Tax Service in 1993, which he ran until his retirement in 2015. During these years, Jake continued to farm, often helping his good friend and cousin, Rick Reber. He married Debra (Hoops) Olson on February 6, 2017 and found great companionship and love following the untimely passing of Renee in 2013.

Jake was a longtime member of the Groton American Legion Post #39 where he held various offices and was a devoted member of the honor guard. One of his favorite outings was going to Deer Camp, where "What happens at deer camp, stays at deer camp!" He will forever be remembered for his infectious laugh and good nature. He loved visiting with friends and family and could brighten the day with his big smile. Jake loved his grandchildren and great-granddaughter dearly. He was a good man, friend, husband, father, grandpa and brother.

Celebrating his life is his wife, Debra of Groton, children, Steven (Audrey) McKiver of Mandan, ND, Kristi (Ben) Peterson of Groton, Katie (Chad) Kampa of Groton, 5 grandchildren, Jocelyn, Shaylee and Drake Peterson, Dacey & Dane Kampa, great-granddaughter, Evalyn, step-children, Nicholas (Stephanie) Olson, Justin Olson, step-granddaughters, Eva and Kennedy Olson, his siblings Allen (Sherry) McKiver, Sharon (Larry) Sombke, Nancy (Merle) Walter, Bill McKiver, Gloria (Bernie) Huber, Carla Ronning, Gail (John) Zeck, sister-in-law, Lynette (Larry) Fransen and brother-in-law, Steve (Patti) Daly.

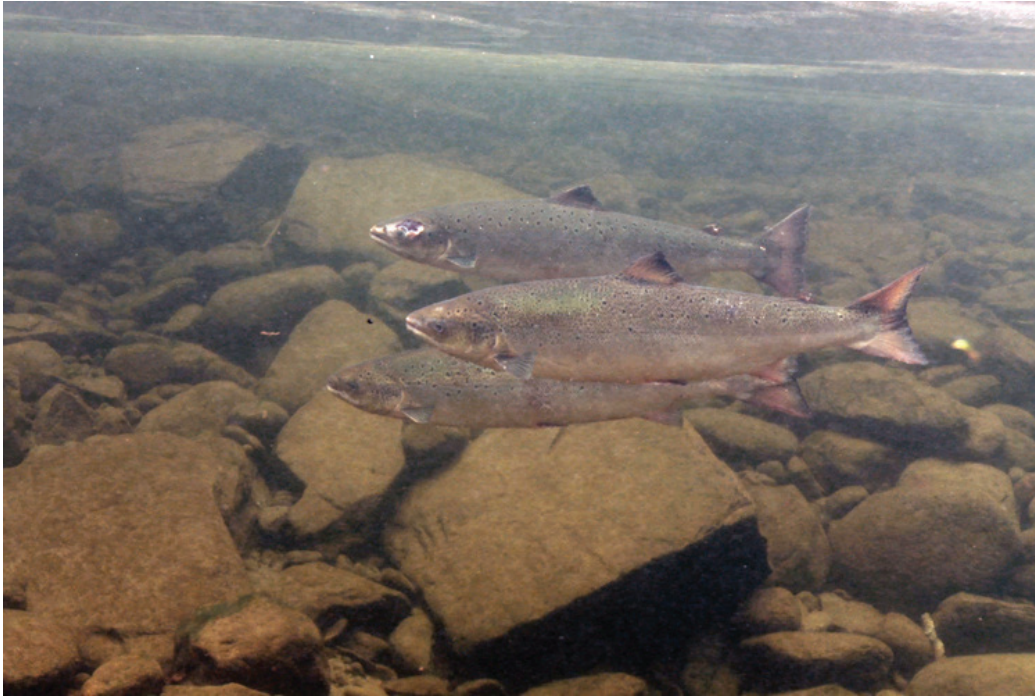
Preceding him in death were his parents, his wife of 40 years Renee, an infant brother, Kenneth, brother-in-law, Lonnie Daly and grandson, Christian Allen McKiver.

Honorary Casketbearers will be the Class of 1970 and all of Jake's Deer Camp Buddies.

Casketbearers will be Charlie Robinson, Bob Wegner, Rick Reber, Rodney Boehmer, Steve Herron, Gordy Weideman and AJ McKiver.

www.paetznick-garness.com





Atlantic Salmon Trial Enters Final Phase

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks plans to stock approximately 7,000 – 10,000 Atlantic salmon, 8-10 inches in length, at Whitlock Bay on Lake Oahe this fall.

Resident and nonresident anglers will recall that the department first sought public input on this effort back in 2014 for a potential stocking to take place in 2016. That stocking did not happen due to difficulties in obtaining fish eggs. During the public comment period, approximately 86 percent of respondents were in favor or neutral regarding this stocking and 14 percent of anglers were opposed to Atlantic salmon stockings for various reasons.

The primary objective for this potential stocking is to provide additional salmon fishing opportunities in Lake Oahe. Chinook salmon are stocked yearly in Lake Oahe and have been since the mid-1980s.

Hatchery biologists at McNenny and Cleghorn State Fish hatcheries have spent the last two years researching the feasibility of raising Atlantic salmon in South Dakota. Research indicates that these slow-growing fish can be raised in South Dakota's hatcheries, but a substantial number of eggs are necessary each year to develop a stocking program similar to what the department does for Chinook salmon.

"Going forward, biologists will study the success of this introductory stocking into Lake Oahe to determine if enough adult salmon return to the Whitlock Bay Spawning Station to then provide adequate eggs for the future and if the Atlantic salmon are being caught by anglers," concluded Will Sayler, fish hatchery and stocking program administrator. "A second stocking of 7,000 – 10,000 Atlantic salmon will also likely be completed in the fall of 2019 to allow for further evaluation; which could take up to two to three years."

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

Air ambulance companies have consumers in death grip

By Trudy Lieberman, Rural Health News Service

Two years ago in this space I told the story of a Mississippi woman Katherine Green who got caught in the unsavory business practices of the air ambulance industry that has trapped many more Americans since then. Green, a college history professor, chose to fight the company that transported her late husband to a Jackson hospital after he suffered a fatal fall in their home.

The ambulance company Rocky Mountain Holdings, a subsidiary of Air Methods, billed her \$50,950. Her husband's insurance company, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi, which administered the State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan, paid \$7,192 of the \$58,142 the ambulance billed. She was on the hook for the balance.

Green's retirement savings was in jeopardy. Alarmed, she took her case to Mississippi state officials and the media, which resulted in lots of publicity about her plight. In a recent phone call, Green told me, "I figured out from this, you have to contact everybody. The more inquiries you get out about your situation it eventually becomes too much trouble for them."

Mississippi does prohibit balance billing, which means once a seller of health care services accepts any insurance payment, they cannot bill patients for the remainder. However, the prohibition doesn't apply to air ambulances, according to Roy Mitchell, executive director at the Mississippi Health Advocacy Group. "I think they do not like the publicity they're getting, and that's why they've left her alone," he said, adding the company could still try to collect.

In fact, Mississippi and other states have had a devil of a time trying to regulate air ambulances as the industry has grown from a few dozen helicopters in the 1980s, operated mostly by hospitals, to some 900 today. According to Bloomberg Business, wealthy investors and private equity groups control many of the newcomers in this profitable industry.

The trouble regulating air ambulances stems from a 1978 law that deregulated the airlines. Under the Airline Deregulation Act, air ambulance operators are considered to be air carriers – like Delta and American - and the states have no power to regulate them. States have their hands tied and cannot regulate rates or their billing and collection practices.

The companies have carte blanche to conduct business as they please, and for people like Katherine Green, it's "Let the Buyer Beware."

The practice of balance billing is especially pernicious when consumers find that, although they have insurance, the air ambulance is not in the insurer's network and the insurers has not negotiated rates with the ambulance company. The company can and does charge whatever it wants and then tries to collect from the consumer, sometimes using hardball tactics like slapping liens on people's homes.

"This is untenable for Mississippi consumers, Mitchell said. "It's unthinkable someone in a trauma situation and victimized by an out-of-state corporation has no recourse."

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A handful of states have tried to impose regulations on air ambulances, but the industry has challenged those laws in court, and state insurance regulators have lost the battle. North Dakota is trying again. The state passed a second law that regulates how insurers pay for air ambulance services and prohibits balance billing. The insurance, however, must have been issued in the state.

The industry has again challenged North Dakota's law, and the state is back in court. "Deregulation was never meant to be used this way," says deputy insurance commissioner Jeff Ubben. "Shopping for a vacation flight to Orlando is much different from lying in a ditch waiting for a helicopter to pick you up."

That's why consumer groups and insurance regulators are working in Congress to change the law. One vehicle for fixing the problem is to allow states to regulate air ambulance companies, in other words to change the deregulation law. A bill sponsored by Montana Sen. Jon Tester would do just that.

Another approach is to add an amendment to the Federal Aviation Administration's reauthorization bill. It would require the Department of Transportation to set rules for the industry based on input from a committee that includes consumers, set up a toll-free hotline for consumer complaints, and require that charges for air ambulance transportation services be separated from medical charges. Such changes are included in the bill passed by the House.

Even these modest changes may be encountering pushback in Congress. Mitchell told me he talked to staff members for Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker and their response was "not encouraging." Mitchell said staff members told him to lobby the state's Blue Cross & Blue Shield organization to accept Air Methods in their network. That's the same company whose subsidiary Katherine Green had battled.

"They have a business model that capitalizes on not being regulated by the states, and that means not being part of a network," he added.

The public should demand more. How can consumers know when they will be lying in the ditch at the mercy of the company that comes to pick them up?

Have questions about how health insurance details can affect you? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.

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2018 Summer Fest Car Show Winners!!



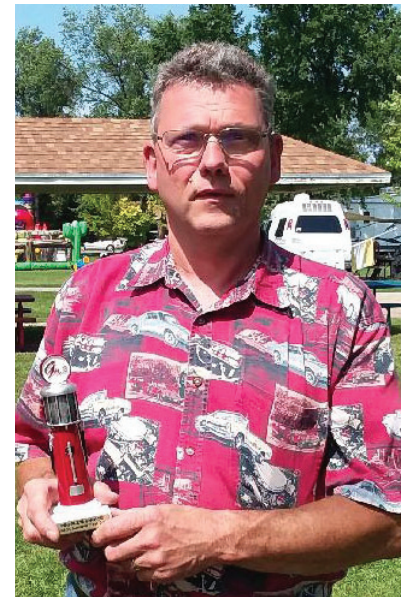
**Best of Show- Kevin & Donna Anderson-
1964 Chevrolet Corvair Rampside** (Photo by
April Abeln)



**People's Choice, third
place went to Scott
Anderson- 1946 Chevy
Fleetline** (Photo by April Abeln)



**People's Choice, first
place went to Mike
Haase- Plymouth GTX**
(Photo by April Abeln)



**People's Choice, second
place went to Jerry &
Michelle Dahl- 1969 Ford
Mustang** (Photo by April Abeln)



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12 hr. shifts - days and nights
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DIETARY OPENINGS

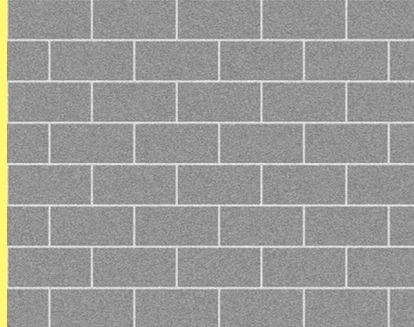
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Today in Weather History

July 25, 1961: A thunderstorm started late in the evening on the 25th and went into the early morning hours of the 26th. A sizeable area suffered 50 to 100 percent loss of crops resulting from hail over the following counties, Bison, Perkins, Faulk, Sully, and western Hand. Corn was stripped of leaves and broken off. Oats and wheat were flattened. High winds with recorded gusts of 75 to 80 miles per hour cause numerous power failures and damaged trees in Pierre.

July 25, 1972: Unofficial rainfall amounts of 8 inches caused flash flooding in Ferney and surrounding area in Brown County. Water, over two feet depth was reported in a parking area. Basements were flooded, and foundations were damaged. The torrential rains caused extensive damage to crops in the area.

July 25, 1984: Severe thunderstorms caused considerable damage to the Pierre area. Winds were gusting to 83 mph at the Pierre airport, where thirteen planes, as well as several hangars, were destroyed. In town, a home and three businesses lost their roofs, and a trailer home was destroyed. Rains of four inches in thirty minutes produced flash flooding with some streets closed for some time. Some basements were reported to have 6 to 8 inches of water in them. At Dupree, high winds caused extensive damage to the grandstand roof at the fairgrounds. Along the entire path of the thunderstorms, hail and high winds broke windows, damaged cars, downed trees, damaged crops, and caused power outages.

July 25, 1993: Lake Kampeska, near Watertown, reached near record level at 37 inches over full mark due to runoff from heavy rains in previous days. Dozens of homes and two businesses were flooded out. About 100,000 sandbags were distributed to help prevent more flood damage to lakeside property owners.

July 25, 2000: A powerful F4 tornado hit the city of Granite Falls in Minnesota. The tornado first touched down in rural parts of the county west-northwest of Granite Falls. The tornado struck the city at 6:10 pm. After tearing through the residential sections of town, the tornado lifted at approximately 6:25 PM after being on the ground for over nine miles. The tornado caused one fatality and injured more than a dozen.

1936: Lincoln, Nebraska saw an all-time high temperature of 115 degrees. The low only dropped to 91 degrees and the average temperature was 103. Many people spent the night sleeping outside to escape the heat.

2005: The citizens of Sand Point, Alaska saw a rare tornado touchdown on two uninhabited islands. Sand Point is part of the Aleutian Chain and is located about 570 miles southwest of Anchorage.

1891 - The mercury hit 109 degrees at Los Angeles, CA, marking the peak of a torrid heat wave. (David Ludlum)

1956 - The Andrea Doria sank in dense fog near Nantucket Lightship, MA. The ship was rammed by the Swedish-American liner, Stockholm, forty-five miles off the coast of Massachusetts. Fifty-two persons drowned, or were killed by the impact. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Tremendous hailstones pounded parts of South Dakota damaging crops, buildings and vehicles. Hail piled two feet deep at Black Hawk and northern Rapid City. Hail an inch and a quarter in diameter fell for 85 minutes near Miller and Huron, piling up to depths of two feet. (The Weather Channel)

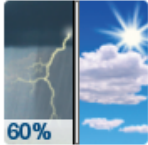




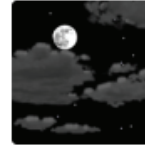

1987 - Sixteen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Beckley, WV, equalled their all-time record high of 91 degrees, established just the previous day. It marked their fourth day in a row of 90 degree heat, after hitting 90 degrees just twice in the previous 25 years of records. The water temperature of Lake Erie at Buffalo, NY, reached 79 degrees, the warmest reading in 52 years of records. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from central Kansas to western Kentucky and southern Illinois during the day. Thunderstorms produced tennis ball size hail at Union, MO, and winds gusts to 65 mph at Sedalia, MO. Five cities in Washington and Oregon reported record high temperatures for the date. Medford, OR, hit 107 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

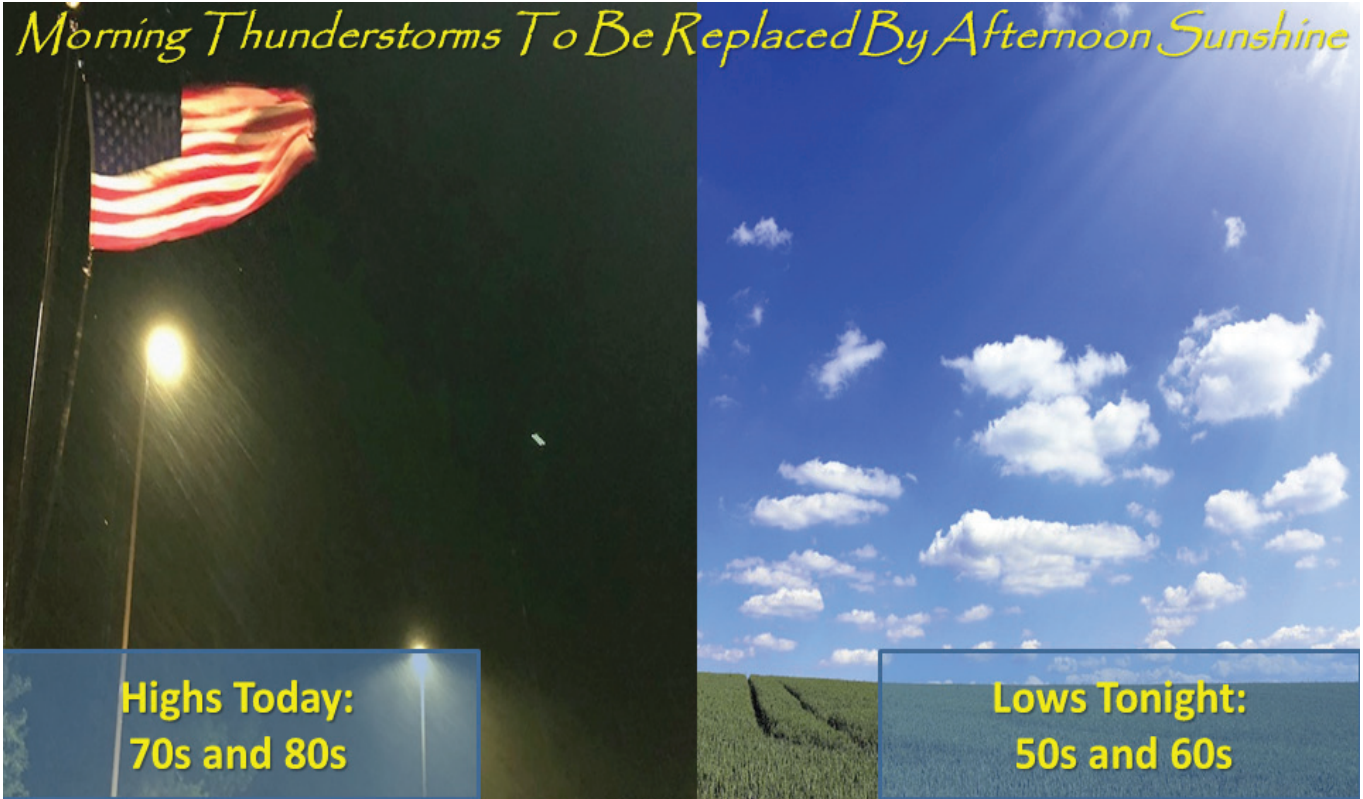
1989 - Early afternoon thunderstorms over west central Missouri drenched the town of Ferguson with four inches of rain. Early evening thunderstorms in Pennsylvania produced more than two inches of rain north of Avella in one hour. (The National Weather Summary)

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
T-storms Likely then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Slight Chance T-storms
High: 78 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 76 °F

Morning Thunderstorms To Be Replaced By Afternoon Sunshine



**Highs Today:
70s and 80s**

**Lows Tonight:
50s and 60s**

Published on: 07/25/2018 at 5:01AM

After some morning thunderstorms come to an end, dry and seasonally mild temperatures pick back up where they left off the other day. The next chance for precipitation appears to be shaping up over the weekend.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 85.0 F at 4:31 PM

Heat Index:

Low Outside Temp: 53.2 F at 5:59 AM

High Gust: 9.0 Mph at 12:09 PM

Precip: 0.15

Today's Info

Record High: 111° in 1931

Record Low: 44° in 1911

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 59°F

Average Precip in July: 2.03

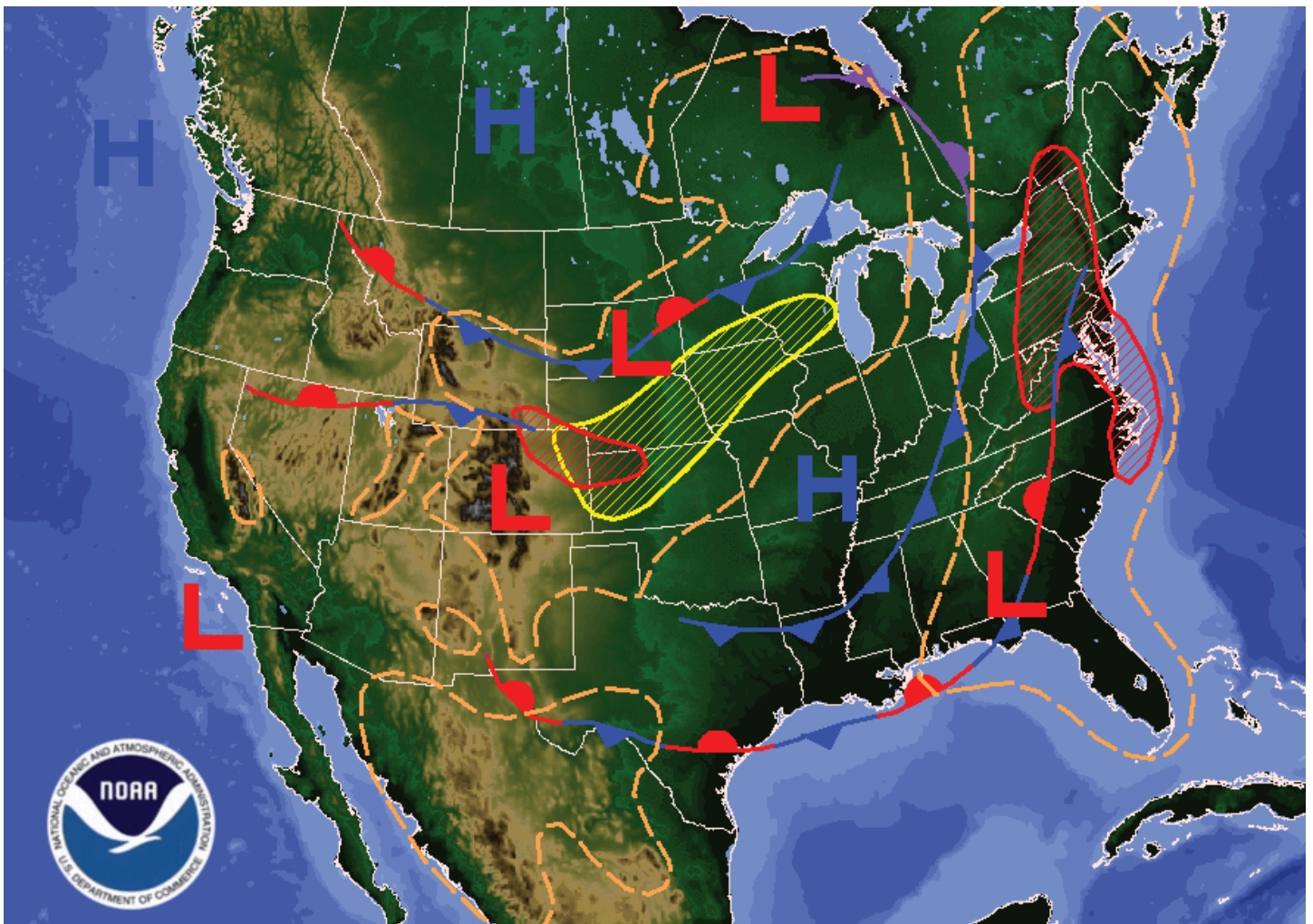
Precip to date in July: 3.99

Average Precip to date: 12.79

Precip Year to Date: 9.89

Sunset Tonight: 9:10 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:11 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Jul 25, 2018, issued 4:45 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds 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)



THE PROMISE OF PEACE

Ask someone what the word "peace" means to them and they will respond with very different answers. Some will include the "absence of war," or "an agreement to end hostilities" or "freedom from quarrels or disagreements" or "a nation at peace." Each of them has a certain sense of calmness among or between people in them. But peace in God's Word has a much different meaning to it.

In God's Word it means something quite different. It often refers to a person's "completeness" or "well-being" or "soundness." So, even though the world may be engulfed in war, an individual may have a sense of security or well-being that the world cannot understand or enjoy.

The world has been in utter chaos through man's sin. Ever since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God there has been constant conflict - either personal, between people or nations - because of sin. And the world will be in conflict until Christ rules and reigns in the hearts of man.

"Great peace," wrote the Psalmist, "have those who love Your law, and nothing can make them stumble." For sinful man there must first be peace with God that only comes from the removal of sin through the death of Christ. This peace will permeate the life of the Christian because God will guard and guide the believer every moment of every day. First, we must let go of the "things" of this world and let God have His way in us. Then we must follow the path He has designed for us. "Great peace" and no fear of "stumbling" will then be ours. When we have a lack of peace in our hearts, it is God alerting us to sin in our lives.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the peace that is ours when our hearts are correctly aligned with Your truth. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.

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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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

01-02-04-19-29, Mega Ball: 20, Megaplier: 3

(one, two, four, nineteen, twenty-nine; Mega Ball: twenty; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$522 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$147 million

Farmers prefer Trump do trade deals than hand them cash

By DAVID PITT, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Many farmers remain critical of President Donald Trump's tariffs and the damage done to commodity prices and markets but were appreciative Tuesday that he offered to provide some cash to help offset their losses.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a \$12 billion three-part plan that would borrow money from the U.S. Treasury to pay producers of soybeans, sorghum, corn, wheat, cotton, dairy, and hogs.

The USDA also will buy the surplus of commodities that would otherwise have been exported and distribute them to food banks and other nutrition programs. That will cover fruits, nuts, rice, legumes, beef, pork and milk.

The third prong of the plan is to help farm groups develop new export markets.

"This is a short-term solution to allow President Trump time to work on long-term trade deals to benefit agriculture and the entire U.S. economy," said Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

The money comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation, a USDA agency founded in 1933. It has authority to borrow up to \$30 billion from the Treasury at any one time to "stabilize, support, and protect farm income and prices."

Farmers said they would rather have Trump settle the trade disputes with China, Mexico, Canada and the European Union and get free trade flowing again.

"A Band-Aid doesn't cure an illness, but it might make it temporarily better," said Dave Struthers who grows corn, soybeans and hay on a 1,100-acre Iowa farm near Collins, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northeast of Des Moines. He also sells about 6,000 pigs a year.

Reaction from trade partners to Trump's tariff policies have pushed soybean prices about 18 percent lower and corn and pork prices down 15 percent from the time Trump began discussing tariffs this spring.

China is the largest buyer of U.S. soybeans and one of the largest importers of U.S. pork.

U.S. farmers are expected to grow 14.2 billion bushels of corn this year and 4.3 billion bushels of soybeans, down some from last year but still huge crops. There were 73.5 million pigs on farms as of June 1, the highest number on that date since records began in 1964.

"Experience has shown that trade wars and all this tit-for-tat is devastating to the (agriculture) economy and drives prices down," said Richard Schlosser, who grows soybeans, corn and wheat in Edgeley, in southwest North Dakota. He called the Trump's tariffs "government interference at its worst."

Schlosser said he had been "transitioning" his farm to his son, but the future doesn't look good for young farmers now, he said.

"My son has a good job outside of farming," Schlosser said. "I told him he better keep that job."

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The temporary aid is more of an admission by the president of the "huge impact" the trade war is having on farmers, said Mark Watne, president of the North Dakota Farmers Union, which has more than 45,000 members in the state.

"I can't argue they are trying to help us but how long will this last?" said Watne. "Are they truly going to get us a solution that will make things better?"

Watne prefers better crop subsidies and other revenue loss protections in the massive federal farm bill that is being hammered out in a House-Senate conference committee, to guard against retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agriculture exports.

Some farmers were more skeptical of the administration's actions, believing the midterm elections in November had more to do with the announcement than concern for farmers.

"This is an election ploy. And we as farmers are playing the dupes again in this whole process," said Wisconsin farmer Michael Slattery who grows soybeans, corn, wheat and alfalfa with his wife on 300 acres in Maribel, Wisconsin.

Slattery said he didn't support Trump in the last presidential election.

Some farmers expressed concern that few details have been released. The USDA said it planned to roll out some of those details around Labor Day and the program would begin to make payouts after the fall harvest.

"I don't want free money. I don't want bailouts. I want trade. Trade is what works," said Wanda Patsche, who grows corn and soybeans and raises pigs near Welcome in southern Minnesota with her husband, Chuck.

Mark Jackson, who farms with his son and his brother on 2,000 acres in southeast Iowa near Oskaloosa was supportive of Trump's efforts to realign global trade to an improved balance for the United States. He said he agrees with the broader goal of balancing trade especially with China.

"There is a tendency for a little bit of Trump piling on," he said. "We're trying to sort through a lot of the chaff to get down to the real heart of the issue to make this thing a little more equitable."

Blake Nicholson contributed from Bismarck, North Dakota; Doug Glass from Minneapolis; Roxana Hege-man from Wichita, Kansas and Carrie Antlfinger from Milwaukee.

North Dakota regulators again ask judge to ban TigerSwan

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The board that licenses private security firms in North Dakota implored a judge on Tuesday to reconsider his decision not to ban from the state a North Carolina-based company hired by the developer of the Dakota Access oil pipeline.

North Dakota's Private Investigative and Security Board maintains that TigerSwan operated illegally without a state license in 2016 and 2017, and that an injunction is necessary to prevent the company from doing it again.

TigerSwan has argued that the work it did in the state was beyond the board's purview, "so I'm not sure why there would be any limitations in (them) coming back to the state and operating in the same way," board attorney Monte Rogneby told Judge John Grinsteiner.

TigerSwan attorney Lynn Boughey noted that CEO James Reese said in an affidavit that the company has no intention of returning to North Dakota until the dispute with the licensing board is resolved.

"They're not coming into this state after the way they've been treated by this board," Boughey said.

Texas-based pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners hired TigerSwan to handle security as thousands of pipeline opponents flocked to North Dakota to protest the \$3.8 billion project to move oil to a shipping point in Illinois.

TigerSwan maintained that it provided consulting services to ETP that don't require a North Dakota license and that any actual investigative work occurred in North Carolina, outside the board's jurisdiction.

The board sued TigerSwan and Reese in June 2017 for operating without a license. Grinsteiner in late

April rejected the board's request to order that TigerSwan stay out of the state, ruling in part that the company hadn't shown any intent to return. That opened the door for his eventual dismissal of the board's entire complaint, when he determined a month later that any decision on whether TigerSwan should be fined for its actions during the protests should be handled administratively and not through the courts.

Rogneby wants the case to continue in the courts so the board can gather evidence through the legal discovery process to further prove its claim that TigerSwan broke the law.

"We feel the court's decision started kind of a cascade of unintended consequences in this case," he told the judge.

Bougey countered that "because they don't have a case, they want to create one through this court."

Grinsteiner didn't immediately rule Tuesday. If he refuses to reconsider, the board still can appeal the case's dismissal to the state Supreme Court or pursue tens of thousands of dollars in fines against TigerSwan through an administrative process.

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

Sen. John Thune: Farm tariff relief plan 'merely a Band-Aid'

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune of South Dakota says the government's plan to help U.S. farmers hurt by retaliatory tariffs is "merely a Band-Aid."

Thune said Tuesday that he appreciates the intent of President Donald Trump's push to ensure agricultural producers get as much help as possible, but says the plan provides a "false and short-term" sense of security.

The \$12 billion plan is meant to assist farmers hurt by Trump's trade disputes with China and other trading partners.

Thune says free and fair trade is crucial for the state's farmers. Republican Sen. Mike Rounds called the plan a "partial fix," but praised the administration's recognition of the harm market instability is causing farmers.

A spokeswoman for GOP Rep. Kristi Noem says she's reviewing the plan.

Aberdeen plant to stay open after facing uncertainty

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A wind turbine blade manufacturer has secured a multi-year order to keep its South Dakota plant in business after facing closure and announcing layoffs.

Ohio-based Molded Fiber Glass's new deal finalized last month will help its Aberdeen plant stay open for years, the Argus Leader reported.

"We are happy to be in South Dakota and we hope to be a member of the Aberdeen business community as well as the state's business community for years to come," said Senior Vice President David Giovannini.

Giovannini said he couldn't disclose the identity of the client or the terms of the deal, but that it's the result of ongoing discussions with a customer it had been working with since December.

"There were a lot of stones we turned over," he said.

The manufacturer is now hiring about 50 more employees after more than 400 workers were at risk of losing their jobs following an announcement of potential layoffs in December.

The multi-year order has brought welcome relief and serves as a positive step forward for Molded Fiber Glass employees, Giovannini said.

He said employees showed their dedication to the company while continuing to work despite the layoff announcement.

"They dealt with it very well, very professionally," Giovannini said. "And they continued to do their jobs well and produce a good product."

The company is continuing to pursue new orders for its product as it hires and trains new employees for the current order.

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

For latest in orderliness, prisons look to computer tablets

By PAT EATON-ROBB, Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Allowing inmates to stare at computer tablet screens for hours each day may be just the ticket for creating calm, orderly cellblocks, prison officials say.

But tablets, growing in popularity in prisons nationwide, also can help inmates advance their education, connect with family and prepare them for life in the technology-saturated outside world, officials say.

In Connecticut, which plans to introduce tablets in its prisons this summer, Correction Commissioner Scott Semple said officials are learning from other states that cellblocks become much quieter after tablets are introduced.

"Just like when you walk in the mall, everyone is looking down at their phone," he said.

The devices, which are transparent so contraband can't be hidden in them, won't be hooked to the internet, but to an internal system. They will be preloaded with educational materials, including books, educational videos and games.

Inmates will also be able to use them — for a price — to send emails and make monitored phone calls to those on their approved communications lists. They will also be able to buy music, video games and other items to load onto the machines from kiosks in the prisons.

The company that provides the tablets will make a profit selling those materials, allowing the state to get the machines at no cost.

"We're trying to increase engagement opportunities for a population, because sometimes there is down time in prisons," Semple said. "We're also trying to keep them exposed to technology, because we hear from people that when they go back into society, the technology is so different that they struggle."

Connecticut got the idea from similar programs in Georgia and Colorado, Semple said.

Miramar, Florida-based JPay, one of the major tablet providers to prisons, said it has put them in 13 states so far. Prison officials estimate tablets are used in more than 10 percent of correctional facilities nationwide.

In January, New York announced plans to provide tablets to 51,000 inmates, and in April, New Hampshire signed a five-year contract with Reston, Virginia-based Global Tel-Link to provide tablets there.

Anthony Plant, 27, of Lancaster, New Hampshire, served 21 months for selling drugs. Tablets, he said, kept him in touch with relatives and eliminated conflicts among inmates vying for their once-a-day use of the phone.

"Talking with my family gave me a sense of keeping my head straight and motivated me to keep doing what I'm doing," he said.

Connecticut, which has about 13,500 inmates, expects to finalize its contract with a provider this summer.

The programs do have critics.

Questions have been raised about whether the tablets could lead prisons to decrease in-person visitation and whether there is enough regulation of private providers to prevent price gouging.

"If we believe that people in prison would benefit from resources that enrich their lives and allow them to contact their loved ones more, we shouldn't make those benefits contingent on who can pay, especially since we're talking about people who are disproportionately very poor," said Wanda Bertram, with the Prison Policy Initiative, a think tank.

And Connecticut state Sen. John Kissel, R-Enfield, a co-chair of the Judiciary Committee, said he doesn't understand why the state would give priority to criminals over, say, public school students.

"These folks have committed really bad crimes that have consequences and victims," he said. "It bothers me as to what message we're sending."

Plant said that he understands that criticism, but that the tablets, especially their educational content, are an important rehabilitation tool.

"If you don't want things like this, then change the name from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Holding," he said. "Because that's all you are doing."

Two lawsuits filed by South Dakota inmates allege tablets are prone to malfunctions and don't provide promised access to legal databases, making them a poor alternative to the law libraries they replaced.

The Colorado Department of Corrections said has had to deal with security issues, such as improper

sharing of devices and inmates removing a metal strip from an early model to make weapons, said spokesman Mark Fairbairn.

But, he said, overall it has been positive, and game and music subscriptions have brought in more than \$53,000 to the department's commissary service.

In Connecticut, the plan is to begin handing out the tablets in the highest-security prisons. Because they are a privilege, Semple said, they can be an incentive for inmates to behave.

Pennsylvania introduced tablets in 2016. Inmates can buy them from Global Tel-Link for just under \$150. About 16,000, or a third of the state's inmate population, have done so.

The Pennsylvania corrections department is still collecting data on violence or other conflicts, said Shirley Moore Smeal, the department's executive deputy secretary. But prison superintendents tell them the impact has been positive, she said.

"It does lead to a better environment for the population," she said. "It gives them something to look forward to. It's something that's constructive for them, and that means it's constructive for the institution itself."

The state, she said, is also looking into providing some tablets that can be loaned to prisoners who cannot afford them.

More than 70,000 people have enrolled educational programs offered on JPay's tablets, earning more than 34,000 college credits, spokeswoman Jade Trombetta said. More than 4 million courses and 5 million education videos have been downloaded.

Minnesota-Oklahoma St. game set for Final Four stadium site

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota will play Oklahoma State on Nov. 30 at U.S. Bank Stadium, the site of this season's NCAA Final Four.

The Gophers on Tuesday announced the first basketball game at the gigantic football stadium, which opened in 2016 for the Minnesota Vikings and hosted the Super Bowl less than six months ago.

The U.S. Bank Stadium Basketball Classic will include four contests over two days. St. Thomas meets Wisconsin-River Falls in a Division III game on Nov. 30. Then, on Dec. 1, North Dakota State faces Drake and South Dakota State plays Northern Iowa in a pair of matchups between Summit League and Missouri Valley conference teams.

Minnesota and Oklahoma State will also play in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 2019. The Cowboys beat the Gophers in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in 2015.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <http://www.collegebasketball.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_Top25

Sioux Falls school board sets \$190M bond election

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Sioux Falls school board is calling for a \$190 million bond to build new schools.

The Argus Leader reports that the board voted unanimously Monday to set an election for Sept. 18. Superintendent Brian Maher says more than 60 percent of voters would have to support the bond for it to pass.

If voters pass it, the district will get a new elementary school, middle school and high school by 2024. Board member Kate Parker says it's the "right thing for our district."

The district has constructed three schools since 2014 to keep up with enrollment growth, but a new high school hasn't been built in 26 years.

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

Fire extensively damages church in Bristol; no one hurt

BRISTOL, S.D. (AP) — Fire extensively damaged a church in Bristol, but no one was hurt.

Pastor Lynn Lutz tells the American News that the Friday morning fire destroyed the sanctuary, pastor study and main structure of Westside Wesleyan Church. The rest of the building has extensive smoke and water damage.

The church secretary was alone in the building at the time, and got out safely.

The cause of the fire wasn't immediately determined. Officials will decide whether to repair or replace the 50-year-old church after insurance adjusters assess the damage.

In the meantime, the congregation will be holding Sunday services in the Bristol Community Center.

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

Rapid City officer shoots, kills dog that attacked police K9

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City police officer shot and killed a dog that authorities say attacked a police dog.

Officers were tracking a suspect following a pursuit on Sunday night when authorities say a pit bull from a nearby yard attacked the police dog involved in the search.

Police spokesman Brendyn Medina says the officer shot the pit bull about three times. It died sometime Monday morning.

The police dog was taken to a veterinarian to be treated for bites to its face.

Syrian media: Suicide bombings kill 38 in southern province

By ALBERT AJI, Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — A series of suicide bombings and attacks in southern Syria, including a motorcycle bomber who struck at a busy vegetable market, killed 38 people on Wednesday, state media reported. The government blamed Islamic State militants for the carnage.

The coordinated attacks — the worst in recent months — had all the hallmarks of the Islamic State group and were reminiscent of its horrific assaults that spread mayhem over the past years in Syria, already ravaged by civil war. The bombings in the city of Sweida, a provincial capital populated by Syria's minority Druze, were apparently timed to coincide with attacks by a militant group linked to IS on a number of villages in the province, also called Sweida.

Al-Ikhbariya state-run TV showed images from several locations in the province and its capital where the bombers blew themselves up. The breakdown of the fatalities from the attacks was not immediately known and no group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombings.

The rare attacks in Sweida came amid a government offensive elsewhere in the country's south. Government forces are battling the IS-linked group near the frontier with Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and near the border with Jordan. The group also has a small presence on the eastern edge of Sweida province.

IS has been largely defeated in Syria and Iraq, but still has pockets of territory it controls in eastern Syria and in the country's south.

Since their offensive in June, Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces have retaken territories controlled by the rebels along the Golan Heights frontier and are now fighting militants in the country's southern tip.

The death toll, initially reported at 27, quickly climbed. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported a series of suicide blasts in the city of Sweida and the clashes in the province's countryside.

The Observatory said the attacks killed 56 people, including 28 pro-government fighters, four attackers and 12 militants. The discrepancy in death tolls is common in the early hours of such large attacks.

An activist-operated media platform on Facebook, Sweida News Network said a local militia was fighting the advancing IS-affiliated group and that at least 30 militiamen were killed in clashes with the militants.

Al-Ikhbariya said one of the attackers hit at a vegetable market in the city of Sweida just after 5 a.m.,

a busy time for the merchants at the start of their day.

The bomber drove through the market on a motorcycle and there detonated his explosives, the TV station said. A second attacker hit in another busy square in the city. Two other attackers blew themselves up as they were chased by security forces, the TV said.

The city of Sweida has largely been spared most of the violence that Syrian cities have witnessed in the years since the conflict started in 2011.

For the southern offensive, government forces redeployed troops from Sweida province last month to attack rebels and IS-affiliate militants in the nearby provinces of Daraa and Quneitra.

The government is now in control of Daraa, but continues to battle the IS-affiliate militants in Quneitra.

Associated Press writer Sarah El Deeb in Beirut contributed to this report.

Trump recorded discussing paying for Playboy model's story

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two months before the 2016 election, Donald Trump and his former lawyer discussed plans to pay for a former Playboy model's story of alleged an affair, according to a secretly recorded tape of the conversation released Tuesday amid an escalating feud between the president and his longtime personal attorney.

The audio recording, surreptitiously made by Trump's former personal lawyer Michael Cohen, appears to contradict the Trump campaign's later claim that Trump knew nothing about payments to a media company to keep model Karen McDougal's story from becoming public. The tape captures the soon-to-be president and his lawyer discussing logistics of financing and whether to "pay with cash," although the sound is muffled and Trump's instructions on that are unclear. Lawyers for the two men disputed what was said.

The tape was provided to CNN on Tuesday by Cohen's attorney, Lanny Davis, and signals a new level of open hostility between the president and the man who once described himself as Trump's fixer. Cohen, who is under federal investigation for potential bank fraud and campaign finance violations, has shown a growing willingness to reveal damaging information and Davis said Tuesday that Cohen "will someday speak the truth about Donald Trump."

The taped conversation between Trump and Cohen came weeks after the National Enquirer's parent company reached a \$150,000 deal to pay McDougal for her story of a 2006 affair, which it never published, a tabloid practice known as catch and kill.

The men appear to be discussing buying the rights to McDougal's story from the Enquirer's parent company. Trump's lawyers say the payments were never made.

Cohen can be heard on the tape saying that he needed to start a company "for the transfer of all of that info regarding our friend David," a possible reference to David Pecker, Trump's friend and president of the National Enquirer's parent company, American Media Inc.

When Cohen begins to discuss financing, Trump interrupts him and asks, "What financing?"

"We'll have to pay," Cohen responded.

The audio is muffled, but Trump can be heard saying "pay with cash," though it isn't clear if he is suggesting to pay with cash or not to pay with cash. Cohen immediately says, "No, no, no" and Trump can then be heard saying, "check."

Trump's current attorney, Rudy Giuliani, told The Associated Press that he's had an expert, who he did not name, enhance the recording and the president says "don't pay with cash."

"It clearly indicates that the president did not want to pay with cash. Suggesting otherwise is ridiculous and is inconsistent with the rest of the conversation, during which it was discussed doing it through a corporation," Giuliani said.

Giuliani said Cohen, as Trump's lawyer, thought it would be best if he could buy the rights to McDougal's story and the recording captures the two of them discussing how to do that.

"Cohen says I have to pay him. The president brings up cash and says don't pay with cash and says

'check,' He wants it memorialized," Giuliani said. "Cohen then says 'No, no, no, no' and he cuts off the tape. He obviously cuts it off in mid-sentence and that in itself is suspicious."

"The president wanted to do it the right way. If you wanted to hide something, you would not do it by corporation or check," he said.

Giuliani said he didn't know why the payment was never made.

Davis said he released the tape because his client has been smeared in the press and wanted to set the record straight. He noted Trump does not appear to be learning about the McDougal matter for the first time and does not appear surprised by Cohen's plans.

"Listen to the tape. Donald Trump is not shocked money is being paid about someone named Karen McDougal," Davis said during an interview with CNN.

Davis said his client "has been disparaged and insulted and called all kinds of things."

"He's got truth on his side and he'll continue to tell the truth," Davis said.

Davis did not immediately respond to a request for comment from the AP on Tuesday night.

American Media, Inc.'s payment effectively silenced McDougal through the election, though days beforehand news of the deal emerged in The Wall Street Journal. At the time, a Trump spokeswoman said his campaign had "no knowledge of any of this."

The FBI raided Cohen's office, home and hotel room in April, searching in part for information about payments to McDougal and porn actress Stormy Daniels, who says she had a sexual relationship with Trump in 2006 — which Trump denies — and was paid \$130,000 as part of a non-disclosure agreement signed days before the 2016 election.

A dozen audio recordings seized during those raids were forwarded to federal prosecutors last week after lawyers dropped challenges on attorney-client privilege grounds.

Giuliani said those recordings captured Cohen discussing the president with third parties, who he would not identify. They are also being enhanced by experts, he said.

Trump and Cohen can also be heard on the recording released Tuesday discussing other legal issues, including fighting a request by The New York Times to unseal court records concerning Trump's divorce from his first wife, Ivana.

Balsamo reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Eric Tucker in Washington and Michael R. Sisak in New York contributed to this report.

Sergio Marchionne, who saved Fiat and Chrysler, has died

By COLLEEN BARRY and TOM KRISHER, Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Sergio Marchionne, a charismatic and demanding CEO who engineered two long-shot corporate turnarounds to save both Fiat and Chrysler from near-certain failure, died Wednesday. He was 66.

The holding company of Italian automaker Fiat's founders, the Agnelli family, announced Marchionne had died after complications from surgery in Zurich. At Fiat Chrysler Automobiles headquarters in the Italian town of Turin, flags flew at half-mast, while in Rome the parliamentary committee for labor and finance observed a minute of silence.

"Unfortunately what we feared has come to pass," Fiat heir John Elkann said. "Sergio Marchionne, man and friend, is gone."

Marchionne built the dysfunctional companies into the world's seventh-largest automaker, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, almost by personal force of will, living on a corporate jet crossing the Atlantic to push employees to accomplish what most people thought was impossible amid a devastating global recession.

Marchionne, who was Italian and Canadian, had revived Fiat by 2009 when he was picked by the U.S. government to save U.S.-based Chrysler from its trip through bankruptcy protection after being owned by a private equity company.

"It's highly unlikely that Chrysler would exist today had he not taken that gamble," said Autotrader.com analyst Michelle Krebs. "The company was in such bad shape, being stripped of any kind of resources by

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the previous owners.”

Marchionne met most of his goals, even though at times he was doubted by nearly everyone in the automobile business. But he didn't live long enough to complete his last two: personally hand over the reins of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles to a hand-picked protege and lay out plans for transforming supercar maker Ferrari.

Marchionne had surgery on his right shoulder last month, and the company said last weekend that complications meant he would not be able to return. No details were released.

The manager, known for his folksy, colorful turns of phrase and for his dark cashmere sweaters no matter the occasion, was the darling of the automotive analyst community. Even when expressing doubts at his audacious targets, they showed admiration for his adept deal-making. That included getting GM to pay \$2 billion to sever ties with Fiat, key to relaunching the long-struggling Italian carmaker, and the deal with the U.S. government to take Chrysler without a penny down in exchange for Fiat's small-car technology.

Marchionne joined Fiat after being tapped by the Agnelli family to save the company. Fiat had for generations been a family-run enterprise, and having someone at the helm from outside Italy's clubby management circles - even a dynamo like Marchionne - was an enormous change.

Other key corporate moves included the spinoff of the heavy industrial vehicle and truck maker CNH and of the Ferrari supercar maker. Both deals unlocked considerable shareholder value for Agnelli family heirs led by John Elkann. Elkann, 42, came into his own under Marchionne's stewardship, taking over as chairman in 2010 having been tapped more than a decade earlier by his grandfather, the late Gianni Agnelli, to run the family business.

As Marchionne's health failed following surgery, a clearly emotional Elkann delivered what amounted to an impromptu eulogy and message of gratitude to a man he called his mentor.

“He taught us to think differently and to have the courage to change, often in unconventional ways, always acting with a sense of responsibility for the companies and their people,” Elkann said over the weekend. “He taught us that the only question that's worth asking oneself at the end of every day is whether we have been able to change something for the better, whether we have been able to make a difference.”

It was Marchionne's success in turning around a pair of Swiss businesses that drew the attention of the Agnelli family. He joined Fiat's board in May 2003, four months after the death of Gianni Agnelli. He became CEO in June 2004, following the death of Gianni Agnelli's brother, Umberto, Fiat's chairman, leaving a family void in the company.

As an outsider, Marchionne was unfettered by local loyalties and he set about cutting jobs and expenses, slimming management ranks and increasing shareholder value along the way. He brought in other outsiders to key positions and relaunched the iconic 500, which became one of the new Fiat's calling cards as it expanded abroad.

While he started small with limited industrial alliances, his ambitions soon grew. The bankruptcy of Chrysler gave him the opportunity to create a global car company with brands including Jeep, Ram, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari and Maserati that he envisioned would grow to 6 million cars a year. A global economic crisis that bottomed out car sales in key U.S. and European markets prevented him from reaching that goal, but his industrial vision never faltered as he spun off CNH and Ferrari into stand-alone entities.

His most quoted presentation to analysts, titled “Confessions of a Capital Junkie,” argued that consolidation was inevitable in the investment-heavy car industry. But though he tried for another merger with General Motors, talks never led to a deal. Still, newspaper photographs of a chain-smoking Marchionne awaiting talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel outside the Chancellery in Berlin on the role of GM's then-subsiidiary, Opel, made clear just how personally he took the negotiations.

Marchionne had planned to step down as CEO of FCA after the close of 2018. He always insisted that his successor would come from inside — so it was no surprise when British manager Mike Manley, who helped boost Jeep to global success and get Fiat a foothold in Asia, was named as his successor as Marchionne's health failed.

He had never indicated plans for Ferrari or CNH, leaving many to speculate that the tireless manager

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known for his short sleep cycles and globe-trotting style would use those positions to keep a foothold in the automotive world.

In June, he laid out FCA's five-year plan — raising the eyebrows of analysts who pointed out he would not be the one to execute the plans. He responded by expressing confidence in his hand-picked team that helped draft the targets.

The plans included launching electrified powertrains across Fiat brands — a tacit acknowledgement that the company had lagged in introducing hybrid, hybrid-electric and full-electric engines. They also were to put Ferrari engines in Maserati cars as Marchionne sought to take on electric-car pioneer Tesla — but unlike at Tesla, which has so far failed to turn a profit, earnings were fundamental at FCA.

Marchionne's penchant for numbers was always clear in his attentive quarterly presentations. He let his real satisfaction show during the June 2018 presentation when he announced the company had reached zero debt, by donning a necktie for the first time in a decade — albeit briefly.

His next major move was to be the presentation of a new business plan in September for Ferrari, which he aimed to turn into a luxury company beyond just cars to further boost earnings.

At his last public appearance in his role as CEO, Marchionne in June attended a ceremony in Rome where a Jeep was presented to the paramilitary Carabinieri police. Marchionne began his brief remarks noting that he grew up in a household where his father was a Carabinieri officer.

He said he recognized in the Carabinieri "the same values at the basis of my own education: seriousness, honesty, sense of duty, discipline and spirit of service."

Marchionne was divorced. He is survived by his companion, Manuela Battezzato, and two grown sons, Alessio and Tyler.

Krisher reported from Detroit. Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this report.

Suicide blast kills 31 as Pakistan holds general elections

By KATHY GANNON, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A suicide bomber struck outside a crowded polling station in Pakistan's southwestern city of Quetta, killing 31 people as Pakistanis cast ballots Wednesday in a general election meant to lead to the nation's third consecutive civilian government.

The attack in Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan, also wounded 35 people and several were reported to be in critical condition, raising concerns the death toll could rise further, according to hospital official Jaffar Kakar, a doctor.

A witness who was waiting to cast his ballot, Abdul Haleem, said he saw a motorcycle drive into the crowd of voters just seconds before the explosion. Haleem's uncle was killed in the blast.

"There was a deafening bang followed by thick cloud of smoke and dust and so much crying from the wounded people," he told The Associated Press.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for Wednesday's bombing.

Baluchistan also saw the worst violence during election campaigning earlier this month, when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a political rally, killing 149 people, including the candidate Siraj Raisani. Another 400 were wounded. Voting in that constituency has been suspended.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for that attack, though Baluchistan has seen relentless attacks, both by the province's secessionists and Sunni militants who have killed hundreds of Shiites living there. In recent years, the IS affiliate in the region has emerged as a major force behind violence, often using local Sunni radicals from the outlawed Lashkar-e-Jhangvi to carry out its attacks.

Citing security concerns, Pakistan's election commission announced that internet and cellphone services in several Baluchistan districts have been suspended. Election commission secretary Babar Yaqub told reporters that threats against polling stations, staff and even candidates have been received.

Militants on Tuesday lobbed grenades and opened fire at a military convoy escorting election staffers and voting material in Baluchistan's district of Turbat, killing four troops.

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At the request of the election commission, Pakistan's military deployed 350,000 troops countrywide at polling stations.

Also on Wednesday, police said a shooting between supporters of two opposing political parties killed one person and wounded two in a village near the northwestern city of Swabi. Later, more clashes between rival political parties killed another person and wounded 15 across the country.

Early voting was heavy at some polling stations in Islamabad, the capital, and also in the Punjab provincial capital, with several political party leaders standing in line to cast their ballots.

Local television reported scattered incidences of police arresting people with pre-marked ballots.

Rights groups have warned that a rancorous election campaign and widespread allegations of manipulation imperil the wobbly transition to democratic rule and raise the specter of bitter challenges of fraud after the elections.

The unprecedented participation in these elections of radical religious groups, including those banned for terror links but resurrected and renamed, has also raised concerns — especially for minorities and women — ahead of the voting.

Jibran Nasir, an independent candidate from Pakistan's financial hub of Karachi, said he received death threats and even had a fatwa, or religious edict, issued against him after he refused to condemn Ahmadis, reviled by mainstream Muslims as heretics because they believe the messiah promised in Islam arrived over a century ago. Pakistan in 1974 declared Ahmadis non-Muslims.

"I am speaking for the millions of Pakistanis who are too afraid to confront religious bigotry," Nasir said, adding that no arrests have been made of those who threatened him.

The leading contenders in Wednesday's polling are former cricket star Imran Khan and his right-of-center Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party, and the right-of-center Pakistan Muslim League, the party of disgraced Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is in jail serving 10 years on corruption charges. His younger brother Shahbaz Sharif took control of the party.

Khan's supporters showered his vehicle with rose petals as he arrived to vote at a polling station near his home suburb in Islamabad. After voting, he appealed on Pakistanis to come out and vote in huge numbers "to save future generations."

The third-largest party in the running is the left-leaning Pakistan People's Party, headed by Bilawal Bhutto, the son of late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, assassinated by the Pakistani Taliban, whom she had vowed to eradicate.

Election officials say more than 11,000 candidates are vying for 270 seats in Pakistan's law-making Lower House of Parliament and 577 seats in four provincial assemblies.

The 85,307 polling stations opened at 8 a.m. and will continue for 10 hours, an hour longer than in the 2013 polls. Voting for two parliamentary seats and six seats in provincial assemblies has been postponed due to attacks on candidates or disqualifications. First results are expected early Thursday.

There are more than 105 million eligible voters in Pakistan, 59 million men and 46 million women.

Pakistan's election commission reminded candidates their elections will be nullified if the female voter turnout does not reach 10 percent. The requirement was imposed after the 2013 elections, when several areas banned voting by women, mostly in Pakistan's religiously conservative northwest. Some candidates were elected without a single woman marking a ballot.

The commission issued its reminder Tuesday after veteran rights activist Tahira Abdullah said local jirgas, or councils, of elders from 60 areas of the country, representing 16 different constituencies, had signed agreements banning women from voting despite the new ruling. While some areas have refused to relent, others were allowing women to cast ballots.

In Pakistan's deeply tribal and religiously conservative North Waziristan, where Taliban insurgents have found safe havens, women voted for the first time on Wednesday, said Mohamad Ayaz Khan, a government administrator.

"We made history today," said Khan. "It is the first time that women have come out of their homes to cast their vote."

Voting is segregated throughout Pakistan with even single polling stations divided between men and women, including separate election officials.

Results will trickle in after polling ends, with the outcome expected early Thursday, according to election officials.

International and domestic election observers will monitor the voting. The European Union Election Observation Mission has 120 monitors at polling stations in major centers across Pakistan, with the exception of Baluchistan.

Under Pakistani law, separate seats are reserved for women and for non-Muslim minorities, which comprise 4 percent of the population.

Associated Press writer Zarar Khan in Islamabad, Abdul Sattar in Quetta, Baluchistan, Zaheer Babar, in Lahore Adil Jawad in Karachi, Pakistan and Riaz Khan in Peshawar, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

Report: 'Law and order' Trump soft on corporate offenders

By TAMI ABDOLLAH, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — While Donald Trump has positioned himself as a tough, "law and order" president, he has mostly excluded one group of offenders from his sights: those of the corporate class, according to a report released Wednesday by Washington-based watchdog Public Citizen.

The report found that in 11 of the 12 federal agencies led by a Trump-appointed official during the president's first year, penalties imposed on corporate violators dropped, in the majority of cases by more than 50 percent.

Penalties dropped at the Justice Department by 90 percent, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission by 80 percent and the Securities and Exchange Commission by 68 percent.

The largest drop was at the Environmental Protection Agency, formerly led by Scott Pruitt, where overall penalties dropped by 94 percent, from nearly \$24 billion in President Barack Obama's last year in office to \$1.5 billion. Penalties at the Federal Communications Commission dropped overall by 85 percent.

The EPA and FCC data doesn't break out actions against corporations as well as municipalities and individuals. The FCC's data was mostly made up of corporate offenders while the EPA's data was mostly a mix of municipalities and corporate offenders, according to Public Citizen.

Reducing regulations on business, in general, was one of Trump's earliest campaign promises. And the Public Citizen report found that it was indeed a promise kept.

"Despite all his various tics and tantrums, he's a corporate CEO," said Rick Claypool, who co-wrote the report. "So he's coming into it with that corporate mindset, and his sympathies are going to be with the companies on the receiving end of that enforcement action."

Claypool said he found it striking that federal agency heads are willing to work with companies to bring them into compliance and avoid harsh penalties while their attitude toward low-level drug offenses and first-time border crossings has been zero tolerance.

One example given in the report was the case of Minnesota-based Syngenta Seeds LLC. In the last full month of the Obama administration, the EPA announced it would be seeking nearly \$4.9 million in penalties against the company for violating pesticide regulations meant to protect agricultural workers at its farm in Hawaii.

Two months later, in the first full month of the Trump administration, the EPA agreed to have the company's penalty lowered to \$150,000 and have it spend \$400,000 on a worker safety curriculum and training program.

Of the agencies on the list, one did have a sizable increase in penalty sums. The amount of penalties issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control increased its penalty sums by 465 percent, from \$22 million to \$124.2 million. The increase is representative of a more overtly robust stance on the issue.

Trump has used the threat of sanctions in his diplomacy efforts, including against Chinese institutions in its dealings with telecom giant ZTE — which ultimately became a bargaining chip for Trump's own

business operations. The president also allowed the threat of sanctions to loom in a recent tweet about “consequences” against Iran for its behavior. The agency under Trump has added more than 100 people and entities connected to North Korea to its blocked persons.

And yet, enforcement actions otherwise have dropped in 10 of 12 agencies under the Trump administration in 2017, according to the Public Citizen report.

There was a 48 percent drop in enforcement actions — from 27 to 14 — during Trump’s first year in office. Enforcement dropped by 44 percent for the SEC and 39 percent for the FCC.

Since enforcement actions span years, the report credited the administration in power with the action. The researchers also noted that because these are ongoing processes that aren’t susceptible to abrupt changes, given typically unchanged career staffs, the findings are more notable.

The report was released with Violation Tracker, a corporate enforcement database produced by the Corporate Research Project of Good Jobs First, and only included agencies with reliable public data and where a Trump-appointed leader or commission chair was in charge for at least half of 2017.

Follow Tami Abdollah on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/latams>

Georgia GOP’s choice for governor sets up historic contest

By **BILL BARROW** and **BEN NADLER**, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia Republicans have chosen Brian Kemp to face Democrat Stacey Abrams for governor. Their November matchup will test history and highlight the widening gulf between the two major parties in style and substance in the era of President Donald Trump.

Kemp, a two-term secretary of state, trounced longtime Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle in a runoff Tuesday after campaigning as a “politically incorrect conservative” and welcoming Trump’s endorsement. The intraparty tussle was marked by hard-line rhetoric on guns, immigration, and government spending.

Abrams, who has become a national Democratic celebrity in her bid to become the United States’ first black female governor, dominated her primary in May after pledging to expand Medicaid insurance and spend more on education, infrastructure, and job training.

The results have animated bases on the left and the right, leaving voters who consider themselves somewhere in the middle to decide one of the country’s most closely watched midterm contests.

Both national parties opened their coffers ahead of Tuesday’s GOP runoff; and the outcome will reverberate into 2020 as Democrats try to prove that GOP-controlled Georgia, after decades of population growth has made the electorate more urban and less white, has evolved into a presidential battleground.

To test that theory, Georgians set up a compelling juxtaposition between candidates that both sides eagerly cast as extremist:

Will a Deep South state — led by white, male governors since 1776 and not long removed from having Confederate insignia on its flag — elect as governor a self-declared progressive black woman from Atlanta as its chief executive?

Or will an increasingly urban, diversifying state — now the eighth most populous and home to The Coca-Cola Company, Delta, Home Depot, UPS and the 1996 Summer Olympics — embrace a brash, gun-wielding, chain saw-cranking Republican who says he’ll “round up criminal illegals” in his own pickup truck?

Kemp, 54, immediately set the race against the national backdrop, thanking Trump for his endorsement while linking Abrams’ to a “radical left” he says threatens Georgia’s “red-state” values. “Do you want a governor who is going to answer to Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton?” Kemp boomed in his victory speech, referring to the House Democratic leader from California and the 2016 presidential nominee who lost Georgia by 4.5 percentage points.

That echoed a Republican Governors Association ad unveiled before GOP runoff votes were tallied. The 30-second spot joins Abrams’ picture alongside Clinton and Pelosi, with a voiceover warning that Abrams is “the most radical liberal to ever run for governor.”

Abrams, 44, was more circumspect with a Twitter fundraising appeal that mentioned Kemp only by his

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last name. "Service, faith & family guide our vision for GA: Affordable health care. Excellent public schools for every child. An economy that works for all," she wrote.

Other Democrats more eagerly fingered Kemp as the dangerous option.

"The craziest Republican emerged," said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, in an interview. DGA recently steered \$250,000 to the Georgia Democratic Party for its fall efforts.

Inslee said Kemp's message, including his attacks on national Democrats, make him little more than "a sycophant for Donald Trump," while Abrams answers with a "real economic agenda for working families."

If Kemp "wants to run against Nancy Pelosi," Inslee added, "he should move to San Francisco."

Beyond the pitched rhetoric, both candidates have weaknesses to exploit. Kemp is roundly criticized because the personal data of millions of registered Georgia voters was twice compromised during his tenure as secretary of state. Kemp blamed an employee and the contractor running the state's elections system. Republicans hit Abrams for reporting \$170,000 in credit card and student loan debt along with owing \$50,000 to the IRS — liabilities she attributes to her Yale law education and her financial support for several relatives.

Republicans, like party strategist and pollster Mark Rountree argue that Abrams' policy agenda means higher taxes — anathema to the suburban voters she'll need. Rountree said her support for removing Confederate monuments from state ground will ensure conservative turnout.

Still, some Republicans lamented that a long primary battle will leave their nominee broke. "Casey's spent all of his bullets on Brian and vice-versa, while Stacey Abrams is just collecting money," said Jack Kingston, a former congressman who endorsed Cagle.

At least the matchup deviates from Georgia's recent penchant for establishment, predictable governors, regardless of party. Outgoing Republican Gov. Nathan Deal — who once served north Georgia as a Democratic congressman — backed Cagle over Kemp, a tacit acknowledgment that Kemp is to the right of the typical GOP governor here.

Four years ago, Democrats nominated Jason Carter, a grandson of former president and Georgia governor Jimmy Carter, but the younger Carter lost to Deal by 8 percentage points. This year, many of Carter's old-guard backers initially sided with Abrams' primary opponent, also a former state lawmaker. Stacey Evans hammered Abrams for making too many deals with Republicans — including Deal — but party elders still viewed Evans, who is white, as the more moderate choice.

Abrams' 3-to-1 victory obliterated that supposedly safe course.

"The most important thing about any candidate is matching the moment, and Stacey Abrams has clearly done" this, Jason Carter told the AP.

The question, Carter said, is whether she can "connect with enough voters" beyond the Democratic base, capitalizing on the historic nature of her candidacy "without being consumed by it."

Associated Press writers Brinley Hineman in Sandy Springs, Georgia, Jeff Martin in Athens, Georgia, and Jonathan Landrum in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Follow Barrow and Nadler on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP> and <https://twitter.com/benjaminrnadler> .

Georgia lawmaker who shouted racial slur on TV to resign

ATLANTA (AP) — A Georgia lawmaker will resign after exposing himself and yelling racial slurs on pro-vocateur Sacha Baron Cohen's cable TV show, a spokesman for House Speaker David Ralston said.

Rep. Jason Spencer had vowed to serve out his term despite the fallout. Now he'll step down at month's end, spokesman Kaleb McMichen told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution late Tuesday.

In Sunday night's broadcast of Cohen's Showtime series "Who Is America?" Cohen poses as an Israeli military expert who persuades Spencer to take part in several outlandish exercises. The lawmaker is told

they're making a counterterrorism video.

Spencer repeatedly shouts a racial slur for black people after Cohen tells him the tactic is useful for drawing bystanders' attention to an unfolding attack.

He also drops his pants, then his underwear, before backing his exposed rear end toward Cohen while shouting "USA!" and "America!" Cohen told Spencer this would incite fear in homophobic jihadists. The segment also shows Spencer speaking with a mock Asian accent while using a selfie-stick to surreptitiously insert a camera phone between the legs of a woman dressed in traditional Muslim clothing.

Ralston and others had called for his immediate resignation.

In a statement Monday, Spencer apologized for the "ridiculously ugly episode," but he initially refused to step down.

Spencer lost the Republican primary in May, but he could have remained in public office through the November election.

Heart of Yosemite to close as crews battle raging wildfire

CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Campsites and lodges emptied out after disappointed tourists were ordered to leave the heart of Yosemite National Park by noon Wednesday, as firefighters battled to contain a huge wildfire just to the west that has threatened the park's forest and sent up smoke that obscured grand vistas of waterfalls and sheer granite faces.

Yosemite Valley will be closed until at least Sunday, along with a winding, mountainous, 20-mile (32-kilometer) stretch of California's State Route 41 that leads in, park spokesman Scott Gediman said.

At least a thousand campground and hotel bookings will be canceled — to say nothing of the impact on day visitors, park workers and small businesses along the highway, Gediman said. Rangers went to campsites one at a time to inform visitors of the closures. Hotels guests got phone calls and notes on their doors.

"This is the prime visitor season, so this wasn't an easy decision to make," Gediman said. "This was purely for safety's sake."

Officials were quick to point out that Yosemite wasn't under imminent danger from the Ferguson Fire. Authorities decided on the closure to allow crews to perform protective measures such as burning away brush along roadways without having to deal with traffic in the park that welcomes 4 million visitors annually.

The last time the 7.5-mile-long (12-kilometer-long) valley was closed because of fire was 1990, he said.

Yosemite Valley is the centerpiece of the visitor experience, offering views of landmarks such as Half Dome, Sentinel Dome, Bridal Veil Fall, El Capitan and Yosemite Falls. The glacial valley has been enveloped by a choking haze of smoke from the Ferguson Fire.

Visitors are advised to "limit activity during the periods of poor air quality," the park said in a statement. "Some facilities and services are closed or diminished."

Over nearly two weeks, flames have churned through more than 57 square miles (148 square kilometers) of timber in steep terrain of the Sierra Nevada just west of the park. The fire was just 25 percent contained Tuesday.

Mandatory evacuations are in place in several communities while others have been told to get ready to leave if necessary.

More than 3,300 firefighters are working the fire, aided by 16 helicopters. One firefighter was killed July 14, and six others have been injured.

Rhonda Salisbury, CEO of Visit Yosemite/Madera County, said the regional visitors bureau has been relocating tourists statewide following the closure.

"People are heartbroken," she said. "Some want to ride it out for a few days and see if they can get back in the park." Others want help finding places to stay away from Yosemite.

Gediman suggested valley visitors divert to Tuolumne Meadows, on Yosemite's northern edge, or to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to the south.

"There are wonderful places to visit in the region, so we're asking people to consider alternative plans," he said.

In the state's far north, a nearly 4-square-mile (10-square-kilometer) wildfire has forced the evacuation of French Gulch, a small Shasta County community that dates to the Gold Rush.

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Rep: Pop star Demi Lovato awake and recovering with family

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A representative for Demi Lovato says she is awake and recovering with her family after the pop singer was reportedly hospitalized Tuesday for an overdose.

"Demi is awake and with her family who want to express thanks to everyone for the love, prayers and support," Lovato's representative said in a statement Tuesday evening. "Some of the information being reported is incorrect and they respectfully ask for privacy and not speculation as her health and recovery is the most important thing right now."

The statement did not provide any details on what led to the singer's hospitalization.

Emergency officials confirmed they transported a 25-year-old woman who lives on Demi Lovato's block to the hospital after receiving a call at 11:22 a.m. Tuesday.

TMZ was the first to report that Lovato had been hospitalized for a drug overdose, based on its sources, and other outlets including People magazine also reported her hospitalization based on sources.

Lovato indicated in a new song released last month that she relapsed after six years of sobriety. On the song "Sober," she sings the lyrics: "Momma, I'm so sorry I'm not sober anymore/And daddy please forgive me for the drinks spilled on the floor."

In her YouTube documentary released last year called "Demi Lovato, Simply Complicated," she openly discusses her cocaine use and battles with alcohol.

Fox said it would pull its episode of "Beat Shazam" featuring Lovato, which was to air Tuesday night.

"We have decided to replace the episode of Beat Shazam with another all-new episode. Our thoughts go out to Demi and her family," the network said.

Lovato was scheduled to perform in Atlantic City on Thursday.

News crews gathered outside Lovato's home in the Hollywood Hills, where vehicles were seen entering and leaving Tuesday afternoon. Their occupants did not stop to speak to reporters.

The hashtag #PrayForDemi trended on Twitter and several celebrities posted supportive words Tuesday, including Missy Elliott, Ariana Grande, Brad Paisley, Kesha, Bebe Rexha, Meghan Trainor, Maren Morris, Kehlani and British electronic group Clean Bandit, whose current single "Solo" features Lovato.

Ellen DeGeneres tweeted that "it breaks my heart that she is going through this. She is a light in this world, and I am sending my love to her and her family."

The singer-actress, who entered rehab in 2010, struggled with an eating disorder, self-mutilation and other issues. She has spoken out about her battles with drugs and alcohol over the years, and she's become a role model for young women and men who have faced their own issues.

Lovato, who was a child actress on the TV series "Barney & Friends," broke on the scene as a teen on the Disney Channel film "Camp Rock" and the network series "Sonny with a Chance." She went on to become a multi-platinum pop star, launching Top 10 hits like "Sorry Not Sorry," "Skyscraper," "Heart Attack." Her 2015 album, "Confident," earned her a Grammy nomination for best pop vocal album.

Associated Press Writer Pablo Arauz Pena contributed to this report.

Family says Oakland murder suspect mentally ill

By LORIN ELENI GILL and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ, Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — A paroled robber who allegedly stabbed to death an 18-year-old woman in an unprovoked attack at a California train station is mentally ill and failed to receive proper treatment, his family said Tuesday.

John Cowell, 27, was arrested Monday night on a Bay Area Rapid Transit train in the San Francisco Bay Area, about a dozen miles from the Oakland station where Nia Wilson was fatally attacked and her sister wounded Sunday night.

It wasn't immediately known if Cowell had a lawyer. He was scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday and could be charged with first-degree murder.

Authorities haven't released a motive for the attack but Cowell's family told KRON-TV in a statement that he has suffered from mental illness "most of his life."

Cowell had been in and out of jail without receiving proper treatment, the family contended.

Records indicate Cowell recently served two years for second-degree robbery and also had convictions for battery, being under the influence of a controlled substance and assault with a deadly weapon, the East Bay Times reported.

Cowell was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, the family said.

He was released from the Atascadero state mental hospital in May but "there was not a place for him to go with most of the mental institutions being shut down," the family said, adding that "the system has failed in this instance."

"We had to get a restraining order at one time as well for our own protection. He was living on the streets without the proper treatment," the family said. "This is in no way an excuse for this senseless and vicious attack."

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokeswoman Vicky Waters said Cowell had been under "active parole supervision and had no arrest warrants."

She said the agency is conducting a review and also cooperating with BART and local law enforcement in their investigation.

Cowell's family said it was "heartbroken" and mourning for the victims' family.

"This horrific tragedy never should have happened," the statement said.

Information from: San Francisco Chronicle, <http://www.sfgate.com>

Judge: Release immigrant held after Army base pizza delivery

By LARRY NEUMEISTER, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A judge on Tuesday ordered the immediate release of an Ecuadorean immigrant who was held for deportation after he delivered pizza to a Brooklyn Army installation.

"Although he stayed in the United States unlawfully and is currently subject to a final order of removal, he has otherwise been a model citizen," U.S. District Judge Paul Crotty wrote of Pablo Villavicencio.

The Manhattan judge said Villavicencio, who was being held at a New Jersey lockup, can remain in the United States while he exhausts his right to try to gain legal status. Villavicencio applied to stay in the U.S. after he married a U.S. citizen, with whom he has two young girls.

The judge cited those children and said they are U.S. citizens.

"He has no criminal history," the judge wrote. "He has paid his taxes. And he has worked diligently to provide for his family."

The U.S. government, which had wanted the case moved from New York to New Jersey, did not immediately comment on the judge's action.

Villavicencio walked out of the immigration detention center shortly before 9 p.m. Tuesday and was greeted with hugs from his jubilant wife and two young daughters. He thanked supporters and the media before being whisked away in an SUV.

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Adriene Holder, the attorney-in-charge of the civil practice at the Legal Aid Society, said the rule of "law, humanity and morality" prevailed and the Villavicencio family has "finally received a crucial measure of relief from their 53-day nightmare."

"This decision should serve as a rebuke against the Trump Administration and its merciless crusade to tear families apart," Holder said in a statement.

The judge ruled after hearing arguments earlier Tuesday, when he put a government lawyer on the spot over the effort by immigration authorities to enforce a 2010 deportation order. He questioned the need to detain and quickly deport Villavicencio, who's 35 years old.

"Well, the powerful are doing what they want, and the poor are suffering what they must," the judge said after hearing Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Cordaro defend the government's actions.

"I mean, is there any concept of justice here or are we just doing this because we want to?" the judge asked. "Why do we want to enforce the order? It makes no difference in terms of the larger issues facing the country."

Cordaro argued for the case to be transferred to New Jersey because Villavicencio is detained there. He said legal precedent dictated that New Jersey was the proper venue, an argument the judge rejected.

Cordaro said Villavicencio would still be able to pursue his application to become a legal U.S. resident after he is deported.

The case has attracted widespread attention amid a crackdown by the administration of President Donald Trump on illegal immigration. Trump, a Republican, has said his policies are designed to keep the country safe.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, said the federal government has "cruelly" kept Villavicencio from his wife, Sandra Chica, and two daughters "for no legitimate reason."

Villavicencio was arrested on June 1 while making a delivery to the garrison in Fort Hamilton. When he arrived at Fort Hamilton, guards requested identification, and he produced a city identification card. A background check showed he had been ordered to leave the United States in 2010 but stayed.

Villavicencio's two girls, ages 2 and 4, played with toys on Tuesday as courtroom spectators around them observed the legal arguments. Villavicencio was not in court.

Another judge had already temporarily blocked his deportation.

Associated Press writer Claudia Torrens contributed to this report.

GOP, Dems focus on messages as summer recess, elections near

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One House bill, backed mostly by Republicans, would repeal a tax imposed on some medical devices to help pay for President Barack Obama's health care law, a statute they despise. With another, still a bare-bones outline, the GOP would make last year's \$1.5 trillion tax cut permanent and expand reductions for families, homeschooling and businesses.

House Democrats have a plan for helping students afford the growing costs of college, in part by creating a partnership with states to provide two years of tuition-free community college. It would also expand the size of Pell Grants, which largely go to undergraduates from lower-earning families.

Lawmakers promoted each of these proposals Tuesday, though none seems likely to become law soon. But they typify a time-sensitive priority for both parties: honing their messages for elections, just over 100 days away, in which congressional control is the prize.

The House starts summer recess at week's end, and lawmakers need arguments to take home for town halls and campaign advertising and to rev up voters and contributors. Democrats need to gain 23 seats in November's midterms to capture House control, which is widely seen as doable, so both parties are producing bills to shore up political weak spots or play offense.

For House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., who is retiring, that meant giving Republicans credit for the strengthening economy and using Democrats as a foil, perhaps offering a GOP playbook for fall campaigns.

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"They've scoffed at Americans who've benefited from more money in their paychecks," he told reporters, a reference to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's comparison of GOP tax cuts for the wealthy to the "crumbs" that went to lower earners. "They're determined to erase this progress. Even more, they want to take this country to a dramatically different place, to the far left."

As evidence, Ryan cited recent proposals from Democrats' liberal wing to abolish U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement and push for "Medicare for All," or government-paid health care. Many Democrats have distanced themselves from both ideas.

Democrats happily returned the favor. They announced their "Aim Higher Act," which would make higher education more affordable and restrict federal aid for for-profit schools often criticized for huge student loan defaults. They contrasted it with a GOP bill that would create new partnerships between colleges and industry but also limit how much federal education money students could borrow.

"We want a world where parents don't have to choose between college for their kids or paying the rent," said Rep. Susan Davis, D-Calif.

A critical challenge facing GOP messaging plans is President Donald Trump, who dominates the political stage by abruptly swerving onto issues that put Republicans on the defensive. In recent days, that's included extolling Russian President Vladimir Putin while challenging his own intelligence and law enforcement agencies, defending tariffs he's imposed that threaten trade wars and considering the removal of security clearances for political opponents. He's since said he trusts U.S. intelligence, but he also invited Putin to the White House.

With their latest tax cut push, Republicans hope to draw attention to an age-old GOP priority and appeal to key constituencies, including businesses, high-earners and conservative homeschooling families.

Republicans are paying particular attention to health care, which polls show remains a major concern to voters. Democrats see it as their issue, thanks to lingering resentment over GOP efforts to dismantle Obama's now-popular law. With most states planning to unveil 2019 premiums just before the elections and many expecting significant increases, Republicans who have dominated Washington since January 2017 say they need to show progress, or at least blame Democrats for lack of it.

"Moderates and independents, that group right now is not in love with Republicans," said Rep. Barry Loudermilk, R-Ga. He said Republicans must show those voters that "we're trying to head in the right direction" but are being blocked by Democrats.

Addressing that concern, Republicans pushed a bill through the House on Tuesday eliminating the 2.3 percent tax on many medical devices. The measure seems unlikely to survive in the Senate, where Democrats have enough votes to derail it.

The tax doesn't apply to devices like eyeglasses or hearing aids but does hit items used or provided by professionals, including X-ray equipment and hip implants. It's estimated to raise less than \$20 billion over the coming decade — a tiny portion of the health care law's costs. Republicans call it a job killer, which Democrats and some outside analysts say is overblown.

Also moving in the House this week are a GOP bill helping people buy health insurance with skimpier coverage than Obama's law allows and a measure letting people use tax-advantaged health savings accounts to buy over-the-counter drugs.

In the Senate, which is planning a shorter recess, the brewing fight over Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh is becoming another messaging battlefield. Republicans are using Kavanaugh's record on issues like gun rights and religious liberty to energize conservative voters, while Democrats are reaching out to their supporters by citing their expectation that he would rule against abortion rights and Obama's health law.

Some GOP lawmakers critical of relief program for farmers

By KEN THOMAS, PAUL WISEMAN and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration says it will provide \$12 billion in emergency relief to ease the pain of American farmers slammed by President Donald Trump's escalating trade disputes with

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China and other countries.

However, some farm-state Republicans quickly dismissed the plan, declaring Tuesday that farmers want markets for their crops, not payoffs for lost sales and lower prices.

The Agriculture Department said it would tap an existing program to provide billions in direct payments to farmers and ranchers hurt by foreign retaliation to Trump's tariffs.

With congressional elections coming soon, the government action underscored administration concern about damage to U.S. farmers from Trump's trade tariffs and the potential for losing House and Senate seats in the Midwest and elsewhere.

The administration said the program was just temporary.

"This is a short-term solution that will give President Trump and his administration the time to work on long-term trade deals," said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue as administration officials argued that the plan was not a "bailout" of the nation's farmers.

But that provided little solace to rank-and-file Republicans, who said the tariffs are simply taxes and warned the action would open a Pandora's box for other sectors of the economy.

"I want to know what we're going to say to the automobile manufacturers and the petrochemical manufacturers and all the other people who are being hurt by tariffs," said Sen. John Kennedy, R-La. "You've got to treat everybody the same."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., said the plan would spend billions on "gold crutches," adding, "America's farmers don't want to be paid to lose — they want to win by feeding the world. This administration's tariffs and bailouts aren't going to make America great again, they're just going to make it 1929 again."

The program is expected to start taking effect around Labor Day. Officials said the direct payments could help producers of soybeans, which have been hit hard by retaliation to the Trump tariffs, along with sorghum, corn, wheat, cotton, dairy and farmers raising hogs.

The food purchased from farmers would include some types of fruits, nuts, rice, legumes, dairy products, beef and pork, officials said.

Trump did not specifically reference the plan during a speech to veterans in Kansas City, but asked for patience as he attempts to renegotiate trade agreements that he said have hurt American workers.

"We're making tremendous progress. They're all coming. They don't want to have those tariffs put on them," Trump told the Veterans of Foreign Wars national convention. "We're opening up markets. You watch what's going to happen. Just be a little patient."

Agriculture officials said they would not need congressional approval and the money would come through the Commodity Credit Corporation, a wing of the department that addresses agricultural prices.

The officials said payments couldn't be calculated until after harvests come in. Brad Karmen, the USDA's assistant deputy administrator for farm programs, noted that the wheat harvest is already in, so wheat farmers could get payments sooner than other growers.

Soybeans are likely to be the largest sector affected by the programs. Soybean prices have plunged 18 percent in the past two months.

Trump declared earlier Tuesday that "Tariffs are the greatest!" and threatened to impose additional penalties on U.S. trading partners as he prepared for negotiations with European officials at the White House.

Tariffs are taxes on imports. They are meant to protect domestic businesses and put foreign competitors at a disadvantage. But the taxes also exact a toll on U.S. businesses and consumers, which pay more for imported products.

The Trump administration has slapped tariffs on \$34 billion in Chinese goods in a dispute over Beijing's high-tech industrial policies. China has retaliated with duties on soybeans and pork, affecting Midwest farmers in a region of the country that supported the president in his 2016 campaign.

Trump has threatened to place penalty taxes on up to \$500 billion in products imported from China, a move that would dramatically ratchet up the stakes in the trade dispute involving the globe's biggest economies.

The moves have been unsettling to lawmakers with districts dependent upon manufacturers and farmers

affected by the retaliatory tariffs.

Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., said the proposal was raised a month ago when senators visited the White House for a broad discussion on trade. He said the lawmakers told the president "that our farmers want markets, and not really a payment from government. And he said, 'I'm surprised, I've never heard of anybody who didn't want a payment from government.'"

Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., who has been critical of the president in the past, said the tariffs "are a massive tax increase on American consumers and businesses, and instead of offering welfare to farmers to solve a problem they themselves created, the administration should reverse course and end this incoherent policy."

Republican Sen. Charles Grassley, whose family operates a farm in eastern Iowa, said the administration's move was "encouraging for the short term" but farmers needed "markets and opportunity, not government handouts."

The Agriculture Department predicted before the trade fights that U.S. farm income would drop this year to \$60 billion, or half the \$120 billion of five years ago.

Mark Martinson, who raises crops and cattle in north-central North Dakota and is president of the U.S. Durum Growers Association, said the \$12 billion figure "sounds huge" but there are many farmers in need. "I don't think this will cover us for a very long time — and it might not even buy me a tank of diesel. I think it will only put out the fire a little bit."

"We are just kind of being played," added Tom Giessel, who was cultivating his fields when he stopped his tractor to take a cell phone call from a reporter seeking his reaction to the plan.

Giessel, who grows wheat and corn near the western Kansas community of Larned, said he was "glad they are trying to be doing something, but I don't know when the day is over how much difference it is going to make. The underlying problem is still there."

The imposition of punishing tariffs on imported goods has been a favored tactic by Trump, but it has prompted U.S. partners to retaliate, creating risks for the economy.

Trump has placed tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, saying they pose a threat to U.S. national security, an argument that allies such as the European Union and Canada reject. He has also threatened to slap tariffs on imported cars, trucks and auto parts, potentially targeting imports that last year totaled \$335 billion.

The president is meeting with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on Wednesday. The U.S. and its European allies are meeting as the dispute threatens to spread to automobile production.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Kevin Freking and Matthew Daly in Washington, James MacPherson in Bismarck, North Dakota, and Roxana Hegeman in Wichita, Kansas, contributed.

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

Trump-backed candidate Kemp wins Georgia GOP governor runoff

By BEN NADLER and BILL BARROW, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — With a damning secret recording of his opponent and a late endorsement from President Donald Trump's White House, Secretary of State Brian Kemp won a decisive victory Tuesday in the Republican runoff for Georgia governor.

A self-described "unapologetic conservative" whose campaign ran an eyebrow-raising ad that said he could use his own pickup truck to "round up criminal illegals," Kemp rode conservatives' contempt for the establishment to capitalize on his bare-knuckled, outsider politics.

He now faces Democrat Stacey Abrams, who could become the country's first black female governor, in a race that will test Democrats' assertion that changing demographics are turning Georgia from a GOP stronghold into a swing state. Among the most closely watched of the November midterms, the race already has drawn significant financial investments from both national parties.

Kemp thanked supporters at a party in his hometown of Athens, Georgia, and he credited Trump's back-

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ing for sealing his win. "They poured gasoline in the fire and fueled the Kemp surge to victory," Kemp said.

Kemp portrayed the race against Abrams as a battle with the "radical left" as Georgia's future hangs in the balance. "Do you want a governor who is going to answer to Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton?" he asked.

Abrams tweeted her reaction to Kemp's win Tuesday, saying "Tonight, I have an opponent: Kemp. The race for #GAGov may change, but our values never will. Service, faith & family guide our vision for GA: Affordable health care. Excellent public schools for every child. An economy that works for all."

"Stand with us," she wrote, followed by a link to a fundraising page.

Kemp beat once heavily favored Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, who outraised Kemp more than 2-to-1 and had a Rolodex of endorsements from establishment Republicans including outgoing Gov. Nathan Deal, who was blocked by term limits from seeking a third term.

In a tweeted endorsement last week, Trump pointed to Kemp's tough stance on illegal immigration and support for gun rights. With days left in the race, Vice President Mike Pence also stumped for Kemp on the campaign trail. Both reiterated their support for Kemp in tweets Tuesday.

Kemp's victory is another endorsement success for Trump. He backed South Carolina congressional candidate Katie Arrington ahead of her upset of Republican Rep. Mark Sanford, and he helped Rep. Martha Roby of Alabama withstand a GOP primary challenge. That run could embolden the president to get even more involved in looming Republican primaries, including gubernatorial contests in Kansas, Tennessee, and Florida.

Nichole Jacobs went to Sandy Springs Christian Church to vote Tuesday for Kemp, citing his stance on immigration. Jacobs sends both her children to private schools, and feels her affluent Atlanta suburb is overrun with "illegal immigration."

"People are moving out of Sandy Springs to get into a better school district or putting their kids in private schools," Jacobs said.

Cagle began to lose ground after the release of a secret recording in June in which he says he helped pass a "bad public-policy" bill for political gain. The recording was made without Cagle's knowledge during a private conversation with former GOP gubernatorial rival Clay Tippins, who last week endorsed Kemp.

"Trump is a very powerful man," Cagle told watch party attendees Tuesday night in Atlanta after conceding to Kemp. He pumped his fist in the air, saying he put his best foot forward in the race as he congratulated Kemp.

"We have to rally behind him, so he can before the next governor of the state of Georgia," Cagle said of Kemp. "He is a person who is undeniably ready to lead this state."

Kemp had received widespread criticism — and national headlines — with television ads in which he pretends to intimidate a young man interested in his daughter with a shotgun and says he has a big pickup truck "just in case I need to round up criminal illegals and take 'em home myself."

Kemp's opponents also hammered his record of securing voter data as secretary of state, in a line of attack likely to become a refrain for Abrams during the general election.

Cagle labeled Kemp "inKempetent," pointing to a 2015 incident in which Kemp's office inadvertently released Social Security numbers and other identifying information of millions of Georgia voters on disks sent to members of the media and political parties. Kemp said a member of his staff was responsible for the error, that person was fired, and procedures were changed.

Kemp's office made headlines again last year after security experts disclosed a gaping security hole that wasn't fixed until six months after it was first reported to election authorities. Personal data was again exposed for Georgia's 6.7 million voters, as were passwords used by county officials to access files.

Kemp's office blamed Kennesaw State University, which managed the system.

The general election campaign opens with Kemp presumed as the favorite in a state where Republican nominees typically garner about 52-53 percent of the statewide vote. But Democrats look to the enthusiasm — and money — behind Abrams, while arguing that Kemp's hard-line approach could turn off enough moderates and independents.

That strategy could turn on voters like Keenan Rogers, a 25-year-old Cagle supporter, who wasn't yet ready Tuesday night to heed his preferred candidate's endorsement of Kemp.

"My knee-jerk reaction is to vote for Stacey Abrams," Rogers said, but added that he wanted to do more research. "She might be a step forward for millennials ... But right now, I'm a little apprehensive."

Associated Press writers Brinley Hineman in Sandy Springs, Georgia, Jeff Martin in Athens, Georgia, and Jonathan Landrum in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Officials: No risk to national security in Toronto rampage

By **ROB GILLIES** and **TAMARA LUSH**, Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Investigators said Tuesday there was no national security risk following the mass shooting that killed two people and wounded 13, as they continued to probe the life of the 29-year-old gunman for clues to what prompted the deadly rampage in a popular Toronto neighborhood.

Authorities also identified the 10-year-old girl who was one of those slain as Julianna Kozis of Markham, Ontario. Toronto police released a photo of the smiling, young girl, and said her family had asked for privacy during their time of grief. Police previously identified the other person killed in the shooting as 18-year-old Reese Fallon of Toronto.

The assailant, Faisal Hussain, died after an exchange of gunfire with police. His family has said he suffered from lifelong "severe mental health challenges" but they never imagined he would do such a thing. It was not immediately clear whether he took his own life or was killed by police during the attack Sunday night.

"At this stage, based on the state of the investigation, which is led by the Toronto police service, there is no connection between that individual and national security," Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale said.

The mass shooting in Toronto's Greektown neighborhood stunned people in a normally safe city, already unsettled by an attack just three months ago when a man used a van to plow over pedestrians on a downtown sidewalk, killing 10 people and injuring 14 in an attack apparently aimed at women.

Hussain's family issued a statement saying their son had a long history of psychosis and depression and had not responded to numerous treatment approaches, including therapy and medication.

"While we did our best to seek help for him throughout his life of struggle and pain, we could never imagine that this would be his devastating and destructive end," the family said. "Our hearts are in pieces for the victims and for our city as we all come to grips with this terrible tragedy. We will mourn those who were lost for the rest of our lives."

Investigators searched the low-income apartment that Hussain shared with his parents and siblings on Thorncliffe Park Drive in the eastern part of the city, and removed boxes of potential evidence overnight. An autopsy on Hussain was expected Tuesday.

Where Hussain got his handgun remains unknown.

Canada overhauled its gun-control laws after the country's worst mass shooting in 1989, when gunman Marc Lepine killed 14 women and himself at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique college. It is now illegal to possess an unregistered handgun or any kind of rapid-fire weapon. Canada also requires training, a personal risk assessment, two references, spousal notification and criminal record checks.

During a debate in City Council on Tuesday, Councilman Joe Cressy asked if Toronto could outright ban guns and was informed it would be up to the federal government to change the laws. Mayor John Tory has also questioned why anybody would need a gun in Toronto and said he supported a motion urging the federal government to ban the sale of handguns in Toronto. It passed on a 41-4 vote.

"People in the city of Toronto don't need handguns," Tory said.

Goodale earlier said Ottawa was already considering tightening handgun laws even before Sunday's shooting.

Adam Vaughan, a member of the federal Liberal government, said handguns should be banned outright in large urban centers but noted he was speaking for himself and not the minister or government.

"It's time to get rid of handguns in cities. We have 10 year olds and 2 year olds being shot at in this city," said Vaughan, parliamentary secretary responsible for housing and urban affairs.

But he said the rules should be different for people living in rural areas.

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"There are two different environments. In rural Canada guns are a needed tool. In urban Canada they are a hobby," Vaughan said. "I get it. My sister ran a logging camp in northern British Columbia. Without a gun, grizzlies are coming for your work mates, but nobody in urban Canada needs a gun."

Canadians have long taken comfort in the peacefulness of their communities and are nervous about anything that might indicate they are moving closer to their American counterparts.

Still, though mass shootings are rare in Canada's largest city, Toronto police had deployed dozens of additional officers over the weekend to deal with a recent rise in gun violence. The city has seen 23 gun homicides so far this year, compared to 16 fatal shootings in the first half of 2017.

Police Chief Mark Saunders said he would not speculate on the motive for Sunday's attack. "We do not know why this has happened yet," he said. "It's going to take some time."

Among those killed, was Fallon, a recent high school graduate who volunteered for Canada's Liberal Party and was to attend McMaster University in the fall. Officials have not released the names of any of the 13 wounded. The wounded ranged in age from 17 to 59.

Anthony Parise, who taught Fallon's Grade 12 English class, remembered her as "a leader among her peers" who planned to become a nurse.

"She was so excited to be accepted into the McMaster program for nursing. I know that her plan was to become a mental health nurse," he said.

Flags at Toronto City Hall as well as at Fallon's former high school, Malvern CI, were lowered to half-staff. Not much is known yet about Kozis, the 10-year-old victim.

According to videos and witness accounts, the assailant, clad all in black, was seen walking quickly down a sidewalk on Danforth Avenue, firing a handgun into shops and restaurants in Greektown, a district of expensive homes, eateries and cafes.

At the corner of Danforth and Logan, where some of the shots were fired, about 50 people milled about on a small square Monday evening, talking in several languages. They expressed shock at a shooting in such a neighborhood.

Some hugged, some wept, and many said they wondered how the attacker obtained a gun in a country with far stricter gun laws than in the neighboring U.S. People signed a makeshift memorial reading: "We are Danforth strong."

"I'm out of my mind just thinking about it. It's Toronto," said Augustino Speciale, who paused to smell a bouquet of white lilies attached to a lamppost.

Ontario's police watchdog agency said there was an exchange of shots between the attacker and two officers on a side street before the gunman was found dead.

Toronto has long prided itself as being one of the safest big cities in the world.

"We were so used to living in a city where these things didn't happen," the Toronto mayor said. "This is an attack against innocent families and our entire city."

Associated Press writer Jennifer Peltz in New York contributed to this report.

Browns rookie QB Mayfield signs contract, avoids holdout

By TOM WITHERS, AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Baker Mayfield's first win was beating the clock.

The No. 1 overall pick in this year's NFL draft signed his rookie contract on Tuesday with the Cleveland Browns, who believe the quarterback from Oklahoma can lead them back to respectability and more.

Mayfield finalized his four-year, \$32 million deal a day before Cleveland's players are scheduled to report to training camp and avoided being a holdout. Mayfield's contract includes a \$22 million signing bonus.

Rookie cornerback Denzel Ward, selected with the No. 4 overall pick, remains unsigned. But the Browns are hopeful they can also get the former Ohio State star under contract before their first practice on Thursday.

One of college football's most popular and polarizing players, Mayfield is not expected to start in his first season for Cleveland. The Browns acquired former Buffalo quarterback Tyrod Taylor during an offseason

trade and coach Hue Jackson has made it clear that the veteran will play until Mayfield is ready.

That doesn't mean Mayfield won't try to beat out Taylor.

"I'm always competitive," he said during rookie camp. "It wouldn't matter what (Jackson) was saying in regards to the competition. I'm still going to compete and try and win that job."

Mayfield, who was a two-time walk-on in college, won the Heisman Trophy last season after he passed for 4,627 yards and 43 touchdowns. Despite some questions about his character after an off-field incident and some well-publicized antics during games, the Browns chose him over several other top-tier college QBs in April's draft.

Mayfield impressed coaches and teammates with his attitude and work ethic during spring workouts, but he still has a ways to go before he can unseat Taylor, who ended the Bills' long playoff drought last season.

Cleveland has spent nearly the past two decades searching for its franchise quarterback and hope Mayfield can finally end its quest.

The Browns are coming off a 0-16 season, but there is renewed optimism following an offseason roster overhaul that included the acquisition of Taylor, wide receiver Jarvis Landry and linebacker Mychal Kendricks.

After transferring from Texas Tech, Mayfield started 39 games for the Sooners. He finished his career with 14,607 yards passing and 131 touchdowns. He also ended ranked second in FBS history in passing efficiency rating (175.4), third in yards per attempt (9.7) and tied for fourth in touchdown passes.

For more NFL coverage: www.pro32.ap.org and www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Ivanka Trump is shutting down her clothing company

By BERNARD CONDON, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Ivanka Trump is shutting down her fashion line of dresses, shoes and handbags that became a target of political boycotts and spurred concerns about conflicts of interest after her father was elected.

The president's daughter said in a statement she made the decision so she could focus more on work as a White House adviser. She had stepped away from the day-to-day management of her company when she joined President Donald Trump's administration.

"After 17 months in Washington, I do not know when or if I will ever return to the business, but I do know that my focus for the foreseeable future will be the work I am doing here in Washington," she said. She called the move the "only fair outcome for my team and partners."

The Ivanka Trump brand has been buffeted by politics since she joined the White House early last year. Sales appeared to surge at times due her celebrity as the U.S. president's daughter — White House adviser Kellyanne Conway once urged on Fox News for people to "go buy Ivanka's stuff" — only to get battered as those who disliked her father's policies urged shoppers to boycott the line.

Nordstrom dropped the Ivanka Trump line last year, citing slowing sales, and recently Hudson Bay reportedly did the same.

The company said that its business was strong, and the decision to shut down had nothing do with its performance. Shutting down the brand means 18 people will lose their jobs.

Analyst Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, said that "while the company is still viable, doing business has become far more challenging and these problems will only increase."

Ivanka Trump recently has been encouraging U.S. companies to pledge to hire American workers. Her own company has been criticized for making its products in Chinese factories, for the conditions in those factories, and for being granted trademarks by foreign governments such as China that would want to curry favor with the president.

Her announcement comes amid a worsening trade fight between the United States and China. President Trump is seeking to drive China to the negotiating table and rectify what he sees as years of unfair trade practices.

The White House has imposed tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese imports and has itemized a list of \$200

billion more in goods that may face tariffs by September. Neither of those tariffs would cover the clothing and handbags Ivanka Trump sells. But if the president were to make good on his threat to tax all \$500 billion in Chinese imports, that would raise the price of everything her company imports from that country.

Since it is a private company, it is difficult to judge just how well Ivanka Trump's business has been faring. The bulk of her assets — more than \$50 million worth — is contained in a trust that holds her business and corporations. The trust generated over \$5 million in revenue last year, according to a financial disclosure report filed with the government.

When Ivanka Trump joined the White House as adviser to her father, she agreed to several restrictions so that her financial interest in the business would not conflict with her public role as a White House adviser.

Still, the company drew criticism for benefiting from her White House ties.

In April last year, the Chinese government granted her company provisional approval for three new trademarks, the same day she and her husband Jared Kushner dined with the president of China and his wife at President Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort. The approvals have continued. In three months through May this year, China granted final approval for 13 of her trademarks and provisional approval for another eight.

Ivanka Trump's company has said the 2017 Chinese trademarks were filed defensively to protect against squatters using her name. China has said its trademarks policy regarding Ivanka Trump's company is in line with normal legal practice.

The Ivanka Trump brand has also come under criticism for conditions at factories where its products were made. The Associated Press spoke with workers last year at an Ivanka Trump shoe factory in Ganzhou, China, who described long hours, low pay and abuse.

The company said at the time that the "integrity" of its supply chain was a "top priority" and that it takes such allegations "very seriously."

AP business writers Matt Ott and Christopher Rugaber in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Laos dam disaster leaves 19 dead, over 6,000 homeless

By HAU DINH, Associated Press

PAKSE, Laos (AP) — Rescuers were searching Wednesday for villagers left missing when part of a newly built dam broke in southeastern Laos, flooding the surrounding countryside and killing at least 19 people.

More than 6,000 people lost their homes when the dam gave way on Monday, flooding surrounding villages.

Hundreds took shelter in nearby towns, traveling by bus and pickup trucks and sleeping on plastic sheeting.

"The water came so quick we just left the house and ran away," said Phon Vuongchonpu, whose family of 12 fled as the floodwater rose to roof-level. "We've lost everything: motorbike, furniture our cows and pigs."

Initially, the official Lao news agency KPL reported that hundreds of people were missing. Its latest report was of 19 confirmed killed.

The state-run Vientiane Times said in a report on its website that 49 people were believed missing as of Wednesday. It said the focus was on finding survivors and until they were all located the number of casualties would remain unclear.

Photos and videos posted on social media showed people sitting on rooftops to escape the surging water, while others were carried to safety or rescued by boat.

One of five auxiliary earth-fill dams at the project began visibly weakening on Friday, said Korea Western Power, one of two South Korean partners in the hydroelectric project.

SK Engineering & Construction, the other Korean joint venture partner, said the top of the dam was swept away Sunday as workers were struggling to control the damage amid heavy rain. The situation worsened on Monday as water cascaded out of the reservoir, flooding seven out of 12 villages in the area, SK E&C said. It was helping to evacuate and rescue residents and sent its president and a team of 30 people to the disaster zone.

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Continued heavy rain and strong winds forecast for the area could hinder rescue efforts, and risks from flooding persisted in the mountainous region. A report by the intergovernmental Mekong River Commission said storms had caused water levels along the river to rise by 3-5 meters (9-15 feet) in the past week.

Provincial authorities issued a call for emergency aid, and residents in Paksong were streaming to the evacuation shelter bringing food, as doctors attended to those needing help.

"I feel safe here, but worry for my husband and son who are still in the village," said Tem Namsakhunpiraded, who escaped the floodwaters with three of her children and a 6-month-old grandchild.

The International Red Cross said food was a concern because village food supplies were drenched in the flooding. It was arranging for water purification units to be sent to the area to ensure supplies of clean drinking water.

The presidential office in South Korea said President Moon Jae-in had ordered an emergency relief team to help with the disaster.

The \$1.02 billion project encompassing several river basins in a remote corner of southeastern Laos is the first hydroelectric dam to be built by a South Korean company, and it was unclear how severe the damage would be to the overall plan. The dam was due to begin operating in 2019, with 90 percent of the power generated going to Thailand.

Shares of companies affiliated with SK E&C sank on Wednesday on concerns over potential costs for compensation and other financial setbacks from the disaster.

Laos has dozens of hydroelectric projects under construction and plans for sales of power to neighboring countries, now accounting for about a third of its exports, to grow substantially.

But dam building along the Mekong River and its tributaries, including those affected by this disaster, has raised concerns over environmental impact and other problems.

International Rivers, a nongovernmental group generally critical of such projects, said the catastrophe showed the need to improve warning systems.

"With over 70 hydropower projects currently built, under construction and planned across Lao PDR — most of them owned and operated by private companies — authorities must immediately review how dams are being planned, designed and managed," the group said in a statement.

Associated Press writers Tong-hyung Kim and Youkyung Lee in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump overlooks Europe's role in NASA capsule

By CALVIN WOODWARD and SETH BORENSTEIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the star products of President Donald Trump's Made in America showcase this year, NASA's Orion crew capsule, will ride through space thanks to Europe.

With its four solar-array wings, the European Service Module supplies propulsion, power and the essentials of life for the capsule's space travels and marks a departure for NASA that Trump did not mention at Monday's event celebrating American manufacturing.

"For the first time," the agency says, "NASA will use a European-built system as a critical element to power an American spacecraft." Airbus, Boeing's prime competitor in commercial air travel, leads an array of European companies that made the service module.

The actual Orion crew capsule, made by Lockheed Martin as the prime contractor with more than 1,000 companies across the U.S. contributing, sat on the South Lawn of the White House as one of most striking exhibits of products made in the U.S. The multinational nature of space industry and exploration — and of the spacecraft itself — went unacknowledged.

"On the South Lawn, you have the space capsule," Trump said. "And every part is made right here, in America."

His only reference to Europe was in the context of the trade war he is pursuing. "The European Union's been very tough on the United States," he said, adding "we'll have to do something" to curb imports of

European cars if negotiations don't work out.

The globalization of manufacturing has made it difficult to isolate products entirely made in the U.S. Vehicles typically have some or many foreign parts, for example, and in a long-integrated auto manufacturing industry, Canadian-built vehicles may be counted as domestic by the U.S.

In his Made in America event last year, Trump posed by a Boeing jet that was 30 percent foreign-made. For purposes of the showcase, the White House cites a standard of the Federal Trade Commission that defines a U.S.-made product as having no or negligible foreign content and as going through final assembly or processing in the country. Additionally, the White House says it only selects products from companies that are American owned and operated.

Under those criteria, it appears the Orion crew capsule that was on the display meets the made-in-U.S. standard. But the spacecraft, exhibited as a model at Monday's event, would not.

NASA counts the European module as one of three primary elements of the spacecraft. The crew module and launch abort system are the others.

"Orion's service module is the powerhouse of the spacecraft, supplying it with the electricity, propulsion, thermal control, air and water it needs in space," NASA says. "After the Space Launch System rocket gives Orion the push it needs to venture toward deep space and detaches from it, the service module will propel the uncrewed spacecraft on its mission 40,000 miles (64,000 kilometers) beyond the moon and help it return to Earth, detaching before the crew module re-enters Earth's atmosphere."

The Trump administration envisages a test launch without a crew in 2020 and Orion's first crewed mission three years later. Orion is designed to replace the space shuttle in time and take humans into deeper space.

A 2014 test flight used a different service module. The European Service Module is for future flights.

Associated Press writers Tom Krisher in Detroit and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

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Asian markets mostly higher after Wall Street gains

By **JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer**

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stock markets were mostly higher Wednesday after Wall Street gained on strong corporate earnings.

KEEPING SCORE: Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index gained 0.4 percent to 22,610.83 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.6 percent to 28,831.39. The Shanghai Composite Index was off 2 points at 2,904.39 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 shed 0.2 percent to 6,254.40. Seoul's Kospi lost 0.1 percent to 2,277.18. Benchmarks in New Zealand and Southeast Asia rose while Taiwan declined.

WALL STREET: Gains by technology companies and health care stocks outweighed losses in consumer goods manufacturers, retailers and other sectors. Smaller-company stocks turned sharply lower as investors weighed the impact of the Trump administration's decision to send emergency aid to farmers hurt by tariffs in a trade dispute with China. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 0.5 percent to 2,820.40. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.8 percent to 25,241.94. The Nasdaq composite lost 1.11 points to 7,840.77.

US-CHINA TRADE: Farmers welcomed government cash to help offset lost exports but said they would rather have President Donald Trump settled trade disputes with China, Mexico, Canada and Europe. The Department of Agriculture announced a \$12 billion plan to pay producers of soybeans, sorghum, corn, wheat, cotton, dairy, and hogs. The USDA also will buy the surplus of commodities that would otherwise have been exported and distribute them to food banks and other nutrition programs. That will cover fruits, nuts, rice, legumes, beef, pork and milk.

ANALYST COMMENT: Trump's comment on Twitter that "Tariffs are the greatest!" suggests "relief will be

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short-lived," said Vishnu Varathan of Mizuho Bank in a report. Trump's aid to farmers "points to staying the course on tariffs for now; or at least turning up the heat" ahead of possible U.S.-Chinese negotiations.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude gained 27 cents to \$68.79 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 63 cents on Tuesday to close at \$68.52. Brent crude, used to price international oils, added 47 cents to \$73.91 per barrel in London. It advanced 38 cents the previous session to \$73.44.

CURRENCY: The dollar gained to 111.30 yen from Tuesday's 111.17 yen. The euro declined to \$1.1679 from \$1.1686.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 25, the 206th day of 2018. There are 159 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 25, 1994, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Jordan's King Hussein (hoo-SAYN') signed a declaration at the White House ending their countries' 46-year-old formal state of war.

On this date:

In 1866, Ulysses S. Grant was named General of the Army of the United States, the first officer to hold the rank.

In 1917, Nikon Corp. had its beginnings with the merger of three optical manufacturers in Japan.

In 1943, Benito Mussolini was dismissed as premier of Italy by King Victor Emmanuel III, and placed under arrest. (However, Mussolini was later rescued by the Nazis, and re-asserted his authority.)

In 1946, the United States detonated an atomic bomb near Bikini Atoll in the Pacific in the first underwater test of the device.

In 1952, Puerto Rico became a self-governing commonwealth of the United States.

In 1956, the Italian liner SS Andrea Doria collided with the Swedish passenger ship Stockholm off the New England coast late at night and began sinking; 51 people — 46 from the Andrea Doria, five from the Stockholm — were killed. (The Andrea Doria capsized and sank the following morning.)

In 1960, a Woolworth's store in Greensboro, North Carolina, that had been the scene of a sit-in protest against its whites-only lunch counter dropped its segregation policy.

In 1961, in a televised address on the Berlin Crisis, President John F. Kennedy announced a series of steps aimed at bolstering the military in the face of Soviet demands that Western powers withdraw from the German city's western sector.

In 1972, the notorious Tuskegee syphilis experiment came to light as The Associated Press reported that for the previous four decades, the U.S. Public Health Service, in conjunction with the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, had been allowing poor, rural black male patients with syphilis to go without treatment, even allowing them to die, as a way of studying the disease.

In 1984, Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya (sah-VEETS'-kah-yah) became the first woman to walk in space as she carried out more than three hours of experiments outside the orbiting space station Salyut 7.

In 2000, a New York-bound Air France Concorde crashed outside Paris shortly after takeoff, killing all 109 people on board and four people on the ground; it was the first-ever crash of the supersonic jet.

In 2002, Zacarias Moussaoui (zak-uh-REE'-uhs moo-SOW'-ee) declared he was guilty of conspiracy in the September 11 attacks, then dramatically withdrew his plea at his arraignment in Alexandria, Va.

Ten years ago: An oxygen tank exploded aboard a Qantas Boeing 747-400, ripping a hole in the fuselage and forcing an emergency landing in the Philippines. President George W. Bush signed an executive order expanding sanctions against individuals and organizations in Zimbabwe associated with the regime of President Robert Mugabe. Computer science professor Randy Pausch (powsh), whose "last lecture" about facing terminal cancer became an Internet sensation and a best-selling book, died in Chesapeake, Va. at age 47. The Federal Communications Commission formally approved Sirius Satellite Radio Inc.'s

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\$3.3 billion buyout of rival XM Satellite Radio Holdings Inc. California became the first state to ban trans fats from restaurant food.

Five years ago: Pope Francis, dubbed the "slum pope" for his work with the poor, received a rapturous welcome from one of Rio de Janeiro's most violent shantytowns and demanded the world's wealthy end the injustices that had left the poor on the margins of society.

One year ago: A bitterly-divided Senate voted to move forward with Republican legislation to repeal and replace "Obamacare." Sen. John McCain, returning to the Capitol for the first time since he was diagnosed with brain cancer, cast a decisive "yes" vote. (Three days later, McCain joined with two other Republican senators and Democrats in defeating the repeal effort.) House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, who was critically wounded in a shooting at a baseball practice on June 14, was released from a Washington hospital.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Barbara Harris is 83. Folk-pop singer-musician Bruce Woodley (The Seekers) is 76. Rock musician Jim McCarty (The Yardbirds) is 75. Rock musician Verdine White (Earth, Wind & Fire) is 67. Singer-musician Jem Finer (The Pogues) is 63. Model-actress Iman is 63. Cartoonist Ray Billingsley ("Curtis") is 61. Rock musician Thurston Moore (Sonic Youth) is 60. Celebrity chef/TV personality Geoffrey Zakarian is 59. Actress-singer Bobbie Eakes is 57. Actress Katherine Kelly Lang is 57. Actress Illeana Douglas is 53. Country singer Marty Brown is 53. Actor Matt LeBlanc is 51. Actress Wendy Raquel Robinson is 51. Rock musician Paavo Lotjonen (PAH'-woh LAHT'-joh-neh) (Apocalyptica) is 50. Actor D.B. Woodside is 49. Actress Miriam Shor is 47. Actor David Denman is 45. Actor Jay R. Ferguson is 44. Actor James Lafferty is 33. Actress Shantel VanSanten is 33. Actor Michael Welch is 31. Actress Linsey (cq) Godfrey is 30. Classical singer Faryl Smith is 23. Actress Meg Donnelly (TV: "American Housewife") is 17. Actor Pierce Gagnon is 13.

Thought for Today: "Advertising is a valuable economic factor because it is the cheapest way of selling goods, particularly if the goods are worthless." — Sinclair Lewis, American author (1885-1951).