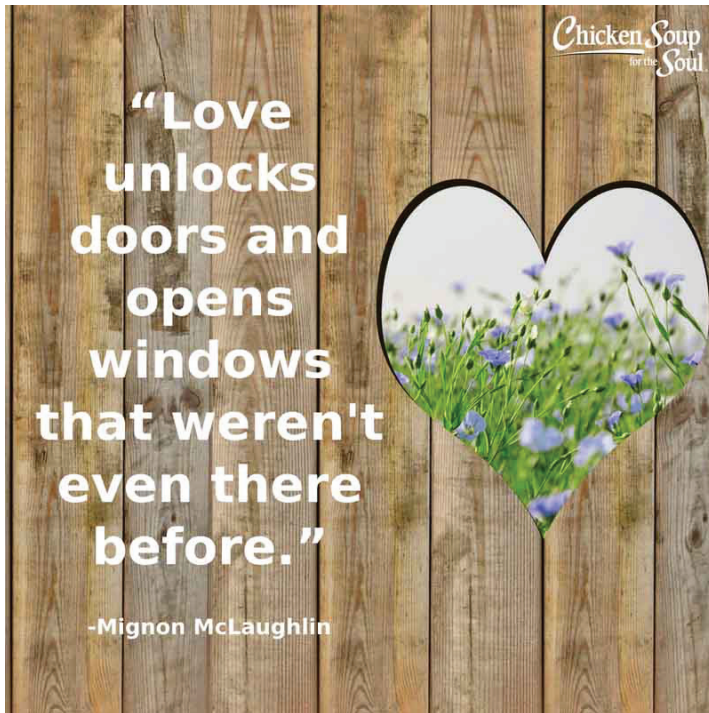


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- 1- Dakota Brush Ad
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- 9- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 10- News from the Associated Press

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



Help Wanted

Dairy Queen in Groton has openings for part-time team members – day hours during the school year and can be year round, if desired. Flexible scheduling. Stop in to apply. 11 East Hwy 12, Groton, SD.

Dakota Brush

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Wash Brushes & Squeegees

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104 N. Main, Groton

West Nile Virus — South Dakota

July 26, 2018

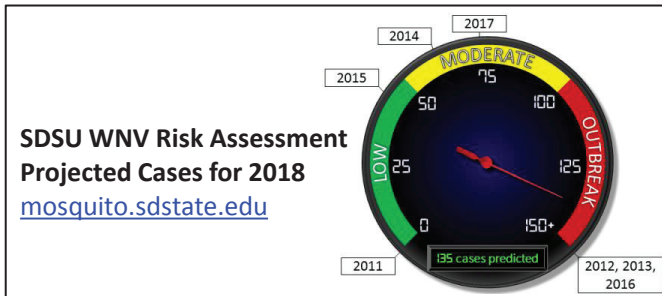
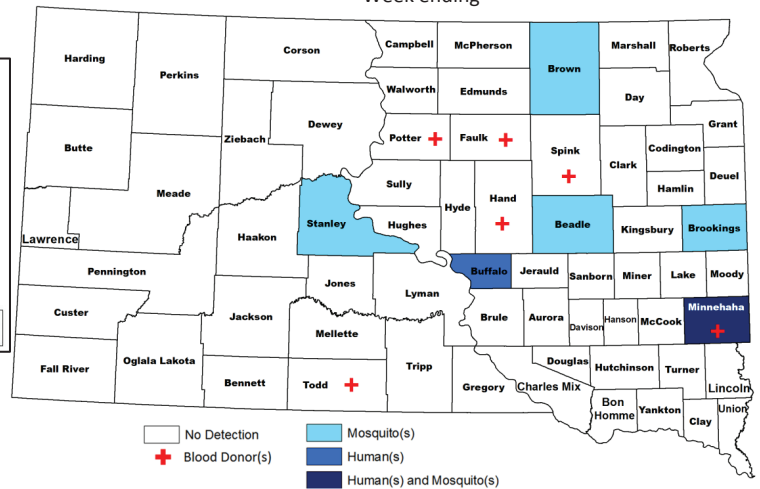
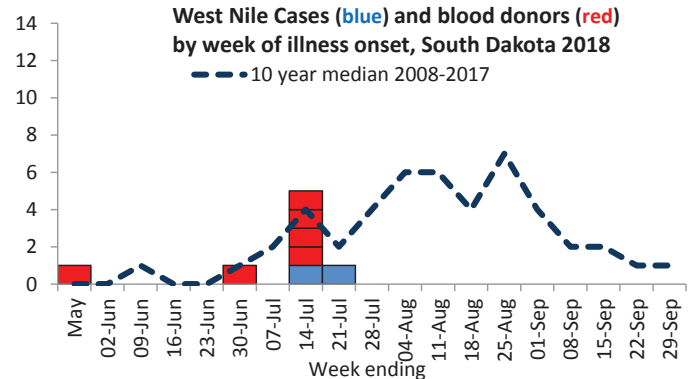


Human West Nile Virus (WNV) reported to SD Department of Health (SD-DOH)

Human cases: 2
Hospitalized: 0
Deaths: 0

Counties

Human cases: Buffalo (1), Minnehaha (1)
Viremic blood donors: Faulk (1), Hand (1), Minnehaha (1), Potter (1), Spink (1), Todd (1)
Positive mosquito detections: Beadle, Brookings, Brown, Minnehaha, Stanley



SD-DOH: Phone 800-592-1861; westnile.sd.gov
 SDSU WNV risk assessment: mosquito.sdstate.edu
 CDC West Nile: cdc.gov/westnile

West Nile Virus Risk Increasing

PIERRE, S.D. – The West Nile virus (WNV) season is under way with human or mosquito detections in 11 counties across the state, the state Health Department reported today.

“The West Nile season typically peaks during the first part of August, so individuals are being exposed to West Nile now,” said Dr. Joshua Clayton, state epidemiologist for the department. “Individuals exposed today can take up to 1-2 weeks to first develop symptoms.”

Clayton said South Dakota had the highest rate in the nation of WNV neuroinvasive disease, where the virus infects the brain and spinal cord, in 2017 and he encouraged residents to reduce their risk by taking the following actions:

- Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin.
- Reduce mosquito exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves when outdoors.
- Limit time outdoors from dusk to dawn when Culex mosquitoes, the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota, are most active.
- Get rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed.
 - Regularly change water in bird baths, ornamental fountains and pet dishes.
 - Drain water from flower pots and garden containers.
 - Discard old tires, buckets, cans or other containers that can hold water.
 - Clean rain gutters to allow water to flow freely.
- Support local mosquito control efforts.

The West Nile Weekly

What does this week look like historically?

Historically, around 25% of total cases for the year, about 1 in 4, have been transmitted by the end of this week. This week in most years is either the peak of transmission or is slightly after the peak.

What to expect?

Current estimates still indicate that 2018 is an above-average year for WNV in SD and the model suggests that we are one week after peak risk for 2018 (Fig. 1).

Just five counties are at average risk for this point in the year (Fig. 2). This still implies considerable risk of transmission, and even if risk this week is lower than risk last week, we still expect around thirteen counties to have cases transmitted during this week.

How are the mosquitoes?

With 846 pools tested, we have 18 (2.1%) of *Culex tarsalis* pools positive. This is a small drop in the rate from last week (2.3%). This is good news, since infections in mosquitoes have begun to slow down.

Current recommendations?

Every piece of evidence still indicates that this will be an above-average year for WNV in SD, except for one: the lack of human cases so far.

The Department of Health has so far reported no human cases, but reports that there have been four viremic blood donors. Keep in mind that viremic blood donors are detected and reported more rapidly than human cases, who first have to show symptoms and then see a doctor. Viremic blood donors, historically, are only 7.4% of all infections we've seen, so four viremic donors implies around 50 cases already infected, but yet to be reported, if historical patterns hold.

In other words, we still recommend mosquito control and warnings to the public when possible. It would be easy to become complacent, given the lack of human cases, but viremic blood donors have been infected, the virus is circulating, and we are just a week after the projected peak of transmission. Nearly 3 in 4 cases are still to be transmitted during the 2018 WNV season.

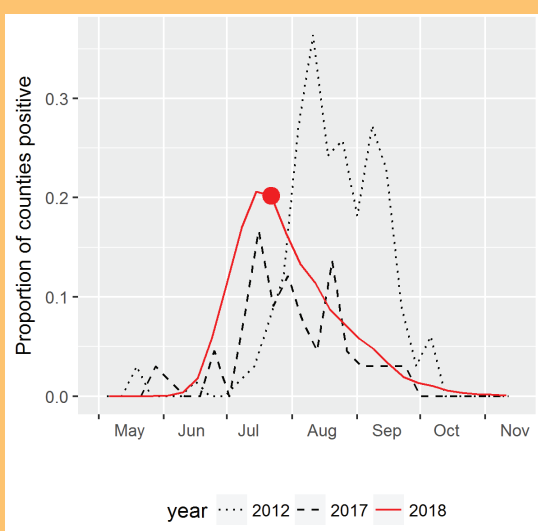


Figure 1: Estimated risk in 2018 with the week beginning 07-22 emphasized by a dot. This year is compared to observations in 2012 and 2017.

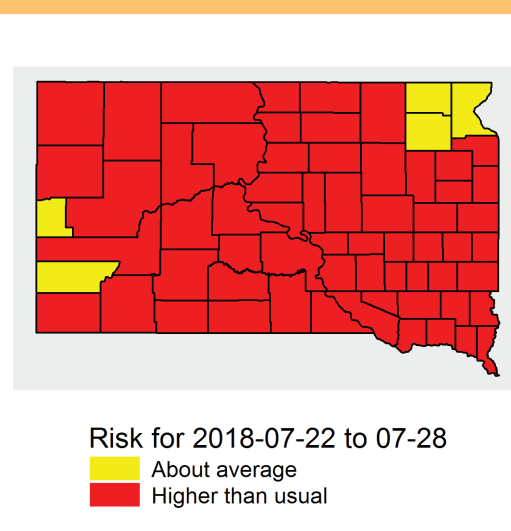
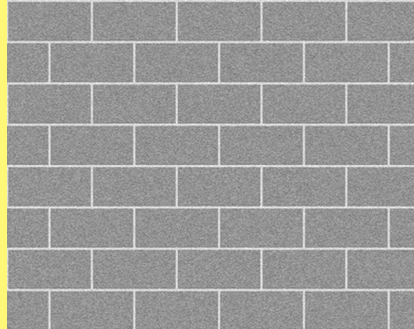


Figure 2: Risk for this week, compared to risk in this county, this week, in the average WNV year.

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Today in Weather History

July 27, 1999: Golf ball size hail and high winds destroyed hundreds of acres of crops on a farm southeast of Ipswich. Golf ball size hail and high winds caused extensive damage to the Richland Wesley Church and the pastor and associate pastor home. The hail poked numerous holes in the siding and shingles of the buildings and broke many windows. Several cars were damaged, and a large tree was also downed. An F1 tornado snapped large branches of an oak and drove them into the ground. The tornado knocked down approximately five headstones in a small cemetery and took a roof off a small outbuilding. It destroyed an empty grain bin, moved a grain auger 50 feet, and took off several large doors on a machine shed. The tornado also knocked down or snapped off numerous large trees in shelter belts and destroyed a barn and several outbuildings just north of Chelsea.

July 27, 2001: An F1 tornado damaged homes, public buildings, trees, and power lines in the town of Lennox, Lincoln County. The American Legion building had its entire front facade ripped off, and its windows shattered. Several vehicles near the building sustained major damage from flying debris, and one was lifted and dropped partly onto another vehicle. Damage to homes included holes in permanent siding, several roofs heavily damaged, windows were broken, fences blew down, garages damaged including at least one totally destroyed. Damage to public buildings included the pump house at the water tower being destroyed, the roof at the water plant was damaged, flag poles next to the ambulance building were broken, and an overhead door at the fire station was torn off. A fire truck at the fire station was damaged, and the window air conditioner was blown out along with some ceiling tiles inside. Power was lost to much of the city for at least an hour and a half because of the downed power lines.

1819: A hurricane affected the coast from Louisiana to Alabama. New Orleans was on the fringe of the storm and suffered no severe damage. Ships at the Balize experienced a strong gale for 24 hours that only grounded three ships. Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne rose five to six feet during the storm, with farms along the lakes flooded by the storm tide. Forty-one lives were lost on the U.S. Man of War schooner Firebrand, a 150-ton gun ship, while it lay off the west end of Cat Island. At least 43 people died in all.






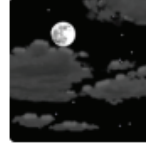

1926: A destructive Category 4 hurricane struck Nassau during the evening hours on the 25th. The hurricane passed just east of Cape Canaveral early on the 28th and made landfall near present day Edgewater, Florida.

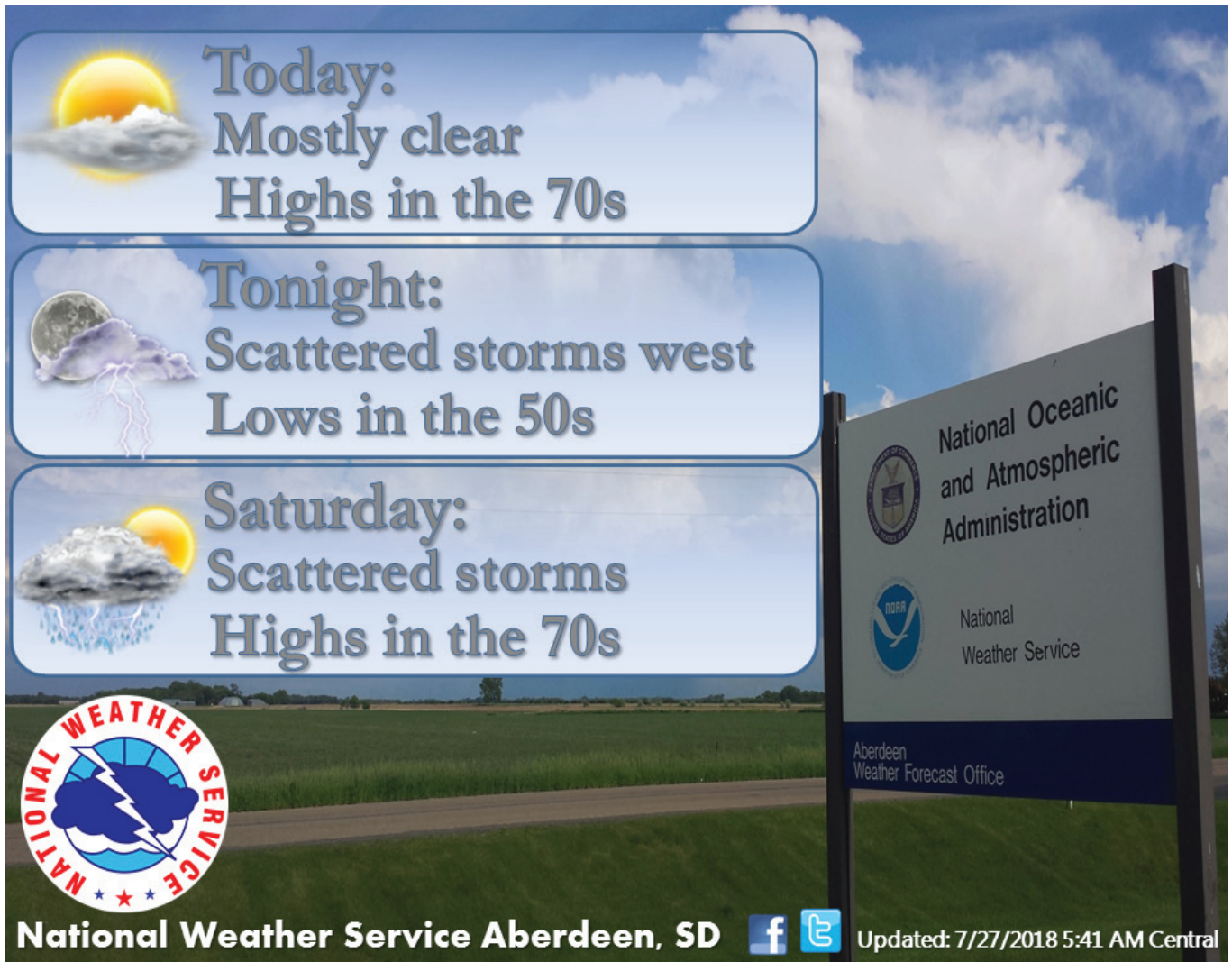
1943: A "surprise," Category 2 Hurricane moved ashore near Galveston, Texas. Due to World War II, all news underwent censorship, including any weather reports making this the surprise storm. The hurricane killed 19 people and caused millions of dollars in damages. Of particular note, Lieutenant Colonel Joe Duckworth and Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair flew an AT-6 Texan into the eye of the hurricane, becoming the first flight into the eye of the storm.

1989: Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, Arizona experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24-hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions.

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance T-storms then Chance Showers	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 76 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 81 °F



Today:
Mostly clear
Highs in the 70s

Tonight:
Scattered storms west
Lows in the 50s

Saturday:
Scattered storms
Highs in the 70s

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Aberdeen Weather Forecast Office

Updated: 7/27/2018 5:41 AM Central

High pressure will dominate through this afternoon keeping much of the region dry. As high pressure begins to shift to the east this evening, showers and thunderstorms will spread into the Missouri River valley and then into the rest of northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota on Saturday. Temperatures will remain below average through the weekend.

Published on: 07/27/2018 at 5:46AM

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 67.4 F at 5:37 PM

Heat Index:

Low Outside Temp: 52.2 F at 4:48 AM

High Gust: 17.0 Mph at 2:36 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 110° in 1931

Record Low: 41° in 2013

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 59°F

Average Precip in July: 2.20

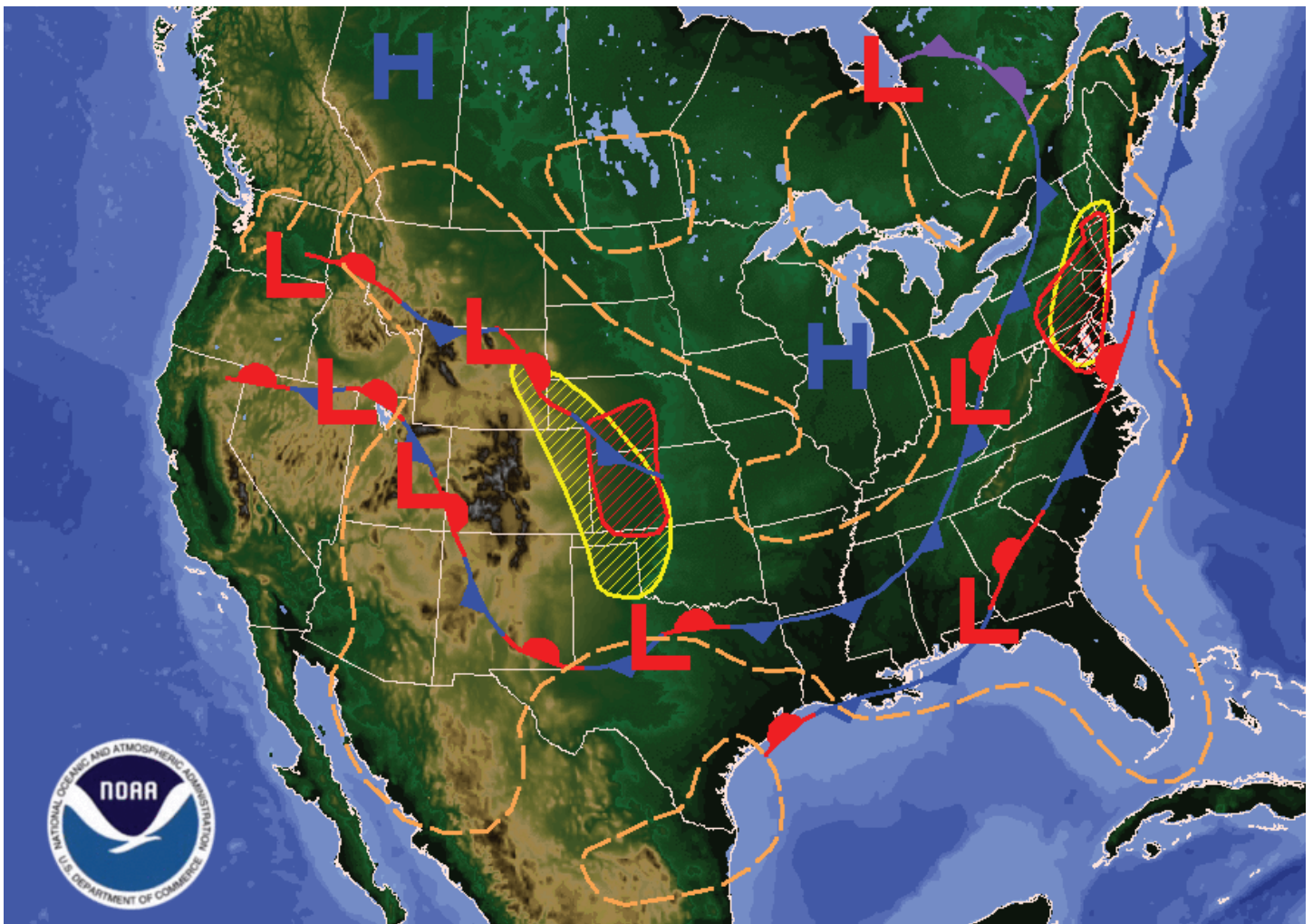
Precip to date in July: 3.99

Average Precip to date: 12.96

Precip Year to Date: 9.89

Sunset Tonight: 9:08 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:13 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Jul 27, 2018, issued 4:43 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)

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DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE?

Jerry and Joan took their daughter Jill to church to enjoy a night of music. The crowd was larger than usual and Jill became separated from her parents. Frightened, they went to the pastor and told him their predicament. He went to the pulpit and announced, "Jill Williams has been separated from her parents and is lost. If you hear me, Jill, will you please come to the front where your parents are waiting?"

Nothing happened. In great fear the parents went to the police and reported their daughter missing. Then after a time of prayer, the musical concert began. At the end of the concert, and as he was about to pronounce the benediction, the pastor noticed Jill sitting on the front row. Bursting with excitement, he shouted, "We've found Jill! Let's thank the Lord." He then went to Jill and said, "Why didn't you come to the front and let your parents know you were here?"

Looking surprised she said, "Did you mean me? You said Jill Williams was lost. I'm Jill Williams but I'm not lost. I'm right here. I knew where I was all the time so I thought it was some other Jill Williams you were looking for!"

Jill did not consider herself lost. She felt safe and secure where she was. Unfortunately, there are many others like her thinking they are safe and secure even though they are traveling through without the Lord. The Psalmist wrote, "I have strayed like a lost sheep." He was aware of his condition and recognized that he was lost. Knowing this, he wanted to get back to his "Shepherd."

Prayer: Lord, we often think we are where You want us to be. May we take time to make sure we are with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:176 I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands.

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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

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News from the Associated Press

3 more statues added to Trail of Governors in Pierre

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Bronze statues of three more South Dakota governors have been added to the Trail of Governors in Pierre.

KCCR radio reports that former Govs. Ralph Herseith, William McMaster and Merrell Sharpe were honored on Tuesday.

Their statues join the 19 others on the trail that goes through Pierre and the state Capitol grounds. Three are commissioned each year by the trail's nonprofit foundation using donations.

Next year's class is to include current Gov. Dennis Daugaard. Two more will be announced later.

Information from: KCCR-AM, <http://www.todayskccr.com/>

West Nile virus spreads to 11 South Dakota counties

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials say the West Nile virus season is nearing its peak. The state Health Department reported Thursday that West Nile virus has been detected in humans or mosquitoes in 11 counties across South Dakota.

State epidemiologist Dr. Joshua Clayton says the West Nile season typically peaks during the first part of August, so people are being exposed to the virus now.

Clayton says people exposed today can take up to one to two weeks to develop symptoms.

He encourages South Dakotans to reduce their risk of exposure by applying mosquito repellents to clothes and exposed skin, wearing pants and long sleeves when outdoors, limiting time outdoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active, and getting rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed.

Online:

Visit the department's website at westnile.sd.gov for more information.

SD high court upholds sentence of man who flipped off judge

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's Supreme Court has rejected an appeal from a man who got a harsher prison sentence after he flipped the bird at the judge in his case.

The high court on Wednesday upheld the sentence of 39-year-old Shawn Ross, who had agreed to plead guilty to burglary for trying to pry a change machine off a Chamberlain car wash wall in 2017.

The circuit judge sentenced Ross to five years in prison with 3½ years suspended. But after the judge saw Ross flip him off as he left the courtroom, he re-imposed the suspended time.

When Ross filed for re-sentencing, the judge relented but reduced the suspended portion by two months. The high court upheld that sentence.

Ross could be released in November.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

American News, Aberdeen, July 24

Mobridge engages area artist, to great success

Mobridge has found a friend in John Lopez, an artist who lives in nearby Lemmon.

And Lopez has created another reason why tourists should continue to make their way to Mobridge: a stunning scrap metal sculpture.

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With another one on its way.

Lopez helped his neighboring community of Mobridge recently dedicate his "Walleye Up" sculpture, which depicts a cowboy riding a walleye. The piece is near the walking path south of Main Street by the Missouri River.

It is breath-taking, especially in full sun when light is bouncing off the different types of scrap metal Lopez used to create the \$45,000 piece.

And then with the river as a backdrop, and just the genius of a cowboy riding a broncing walleye like a rodeo horse or bull. It is pure South Dakota. A must see, just like Chamberlain's recently installed 50-foot, stainless steel "Dignity" statute, depicting a Native American woman draped in a star quilt.

Saws, different types of chains, cutting blades from farm equipment, wires, hooks, wheels and other metals comprise the sculpture in Mobridge. Looking close up at the materials Lopez used in the 8-foot high piece of art is fascinating.

Not to mention captivating.

Just like "Dignity," Mobridge now has an instant South Dakota landmark. Something that really highlights what the community already had in its walleye fishing, cowboy heritage and friendly folks.

Mobridge will use Lopez again in creating a \$50,000 Tiger for its school. The Mobridge-Pollock School uses the nickname Tigers for its athletic teams.

Lopez creates his three-dimensional sculptures from bronze cast pieces and found objects. He has history in Aberdeen, being a former Northern State student.

Lopez animal forms give the impression of mechanical workings, gears and Industrial Revolution robotics — quintessential to the sub-genre art form that is steampunk.

"The steampunk community has really latched onto my style of work," said Lopez, whose art can be seen not only across South Dakota but the nation. "I call it hybrid metal art. Because there's parts I sculpt in clay and then cast in bronze."

We applaud the good folks of Mobridge for your forward thinking.

Aberdeen once talked about creating a sculpture walk using the talents of former resident and another world-famous artist in Ben Victor.

Aberdeen should follow Mobridge's lead.

Wouldn't it be great to have an Aberdeen sculpture park featuring works from Lopez, Victor and some of the many other talented artists from this area?

We think it would be a game-changer for a community like Aberdeen that highly values arts, tourists and uniqueness.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, July 24

Life jackets: debate and the numbers

The terrible duck-boat tragedy near Branson, Missouri, late last week appears to have been a perfect storm (so to speak) of bad decisions, bad weather and badly designed (in terms of safety) watercraft. Our hearts ache for the 17 people who died, and the survivors who must now cope with the aftermath.

This incident has also spawned a couple of debates, one of which could be directly applied to what we see on the waters of Lewis & Clark Lake literally every summer day.

According to reports, none of the 17 victims (or the 14 survivors for that matter) wore life jackets on this lake cruise. Also, survivors said they were told about the life jackets but were advised that they wouldn't need them. As the lake waters grew choppy in the face of an oncoming storm, some survivors said they tried to retrieve a jacket from overhead compartments, but the jackets were, as one person put it, "stuck" and couldn't be pulled out.

Oddly enough, this has become a small flashpoint for discussion, as some debate whether, in this situation, life jackets would have helped or would have made things worse.

A duck boat is an enclosed, amphibious vehicle, and since it has a canopy or hood, life jackets are not always recommended because of the fear that a person wearing such a device might float toward the top

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of the canopy and become trapped by the rising water.

Gary Haupt, an ex-captain of the former Missouri Water Patrol, discussed the differing views in a USA Today story,

"I think you could ask 10 experts and they'd all have different opinions," he said. "There's the possibility that life jackets could cause more loss of life but, then at the same time, they could help someone get to the surface if they make it out and actually save their life."

Nevertheless, life jackets should be viewed as important, even essential, gear when boating on the water — whether that craft is a motor boat or a kayak.

A study by the U.S. Coast Guard of 2016 boating accident statistics nationwide showed there were 701 deaths and 2,903 injuries as a result of recreational boating accidents. In the cases in which the cause of death was known, 80 percent of the deaths were caused by drownings, and 83 percent of those were not wearing a life jacket.

Water recreation is growing in popularity. In particular, kayaking has become omnipresent in this region, with the lightweight craft being deployed everywhere. Wearing the jackets is considered a must, and for good reason.

Their use may be open to debate at times, but Chicago lawyer Robert Clifford, who specializes in maritime cases, was quite clear on the matter when he was interviewed for the aforementioned USA Today story.

"You can certainly conjure up scenarios where a life jacket could have trapped someone but the same can be said with seat belts in cars," he said. "At the end of the day, on average, you're better off and your survival rate is better if you're wearing a life vest."

That applies to anyone who ventures on the water. The safe thing to do is to wear a life jacket. It's also statistically the smart thing to do.

The best rule of thumb is to play it safe and smart.

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, July 24

Rapid City gets a windfall for its landfill

GOOD: One million dollars is still a lot of money for Rapid City's government. So, it was good news last week when the city announced it had received that amount of money from the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Solid Waste Management Program. The money will be used to help cover the cost of the city's \$4.5 million expansion at the landfill and extend its life another eight to 10 years. It also means the city saved \$1 million for other Solid Waste Department projects. It's a good thing, too. The city says it now gets 450 tons of trash a day at the landfill, which means another expansion might be coming sooner rather than later.

BAD: Among the basic tenets of journalism are the questions who, what, where, when and why. They are particularly relevant when it concerns an upcoming event. In South Dakota — as in all states — elected bodies and government boards and commissions are required by law to notify the public of upcoming meetings, which includes the precise location down to the meeting room. Yet, the Board of Regents whose president is a former U.S. attorney and whose attorney is a former judge failed to do this for a meeting that featured interviews of candidates for the important position of executive director. In addition, the Regents failed to post the meeting agenda on the appropriate state government website in what appears to be a clear violation of the Open Meetings Law. But not everyone was left in the dark. Various stakeholders attended the meeting held at an undisclosed Sioux Falls hotel. Whether the public was intentionally shielded from the meeting or not, this sends the wrong message to those who expect state officials to obey laws intended to inspire public trust in government.

UGLY: The intent of the initiative-and-referendum process is to give voters an opportunity to have their voices heard, otherwise often referred to as direct democracy. Recently, a South Dakota circuit court judge rejected a number of signatures for a ballot measure that would have prohibited the state from paying more than the Department of Veteran Affairs for prescription drugs. In a statement after the ballot measure was rejected, a spokeswoman for South Dakotans Against the Deceptive Rx Ballot Issue — which challenged

the signatures — said the ballot measure was “about deception from the beginning” and was “funded with contributions from an out-of-state health care organization.” What she failed to mention, however, is that her organization received \$100,000 from Bristol-Myers Squibb, which has its headquarters in Illinois, and \$205,000 from Novo Nordisk, which has its headquarters in Denmark.

Sioux Falls denies knowing \$50M project developer’s ties

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls officials said they were unaware that guarantors on a \$50 million mixed-use parking project were also owners of a now-bankrupt company facing multiple lawsuits.

City councilors said this week that they weren’t told most of the Village on the River’s guarantors had ties to Hultgren Construction, the Argus Leader reported.

Bankruptcy documents filed last week show Hultgren Construction is owned by Norm Drake, Larry Canfield, Paul Cink and Aaron Hultgren. All but Hultgren are guarantors on the Village on the River development, which includes a hotel, commercial space and parking garage downtown.

The three guarantors are also executives at Legacy Developments, the developer connected to the 2016 Copper Lounge collapse, which killed one person. Hultgren Construction was also the construction company involved in the Copper Lounge project.

Sioux Falls awarded Legacy the Village on the River project earlier this year.

Councilor Greg Neitzert said he was “shocked” to learn that Hultgren Construction’s owners were also Legacy’s owners. He noted that Hultgren was removed from being a personal guarantor on the project because of concerns over his liability in potential lawsuits. The same logic should have applied to the other guarantors who were also owners of the construction company, Neitzert said.

“Now it seems that that was done, essentially, for show,” he said.

Legacy spokeswoman Stacy Jones said Legacy and Hultgren Construction are separate companies and their ownership isn’t relevant to the Village on the River project. She didn’t comment on why the ownership ties weren’t disclosed to City Council.

Councilor Theresa Stehly said the blame should be placed on City Council for not figuring out the information before approving the largest public-private partnership in the city’s history.

“This comes down to the council,” she said. “We’re supposed to be vetting things out for the citizens. We’re the guardians for the citizens and we failed.”

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

Judge says Dakota Access developer can’t sue BankTrack

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal judge has ruled that the developer of the Dakota Access oil pipeline has no claim under federal racketeering law for damages against a Dutch environmental group that urged banks not to finance the \$3.8 billion project.

U.S. District Judge Billy Roy Wilson in an order dated Tuesday dismissed Netherlands-based BankTrack as a defendant in a lawsuit that Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners filed in August against that group, Greenpeace and Earth First. In separate rulings this week, he also cast doubt on whether the lawsuit will succeed against the other two groups.

ETP contended in its lawsuit that BankTrack used “disinformation and extortive schemes” to try to get banks not to fund the company, threatening the banks with “brand damaging campaigns.” More broadly, the lawsuit connects BankTrack with what ETP says was a campaign by pipeline opponents to incite acts of terrorism by protesters such as arson fires.

Wilson said the lawsuit “vaguely attempts” to connect BankTrack to acts of radical ecoterrorism, but he concluded that the group’s conduct amounted to “writing a few letters” and said ETP did not have a valid claim against the group under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

“None of BankTrack’s actions promoted, assisted or condoned violent criminal conduct,” he wrote.

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ETP did not respond to a request for comment. The company has said previously it does not comment on pending litigation.

BankTrack Director Johan Frijns in a statement said the judge's ruling "confirms that this type of advocacy work is legitimate."

"Energy Transfer's allegations about our supposed involvement in directing acts of 'radical ecoterrorism' were hard to take seriously from the outset, and we are pleased that the judge has confirmed that these were sweeping statements without any basis in fact," he said.

ETP sued BankTrack, Greenpeace and Earth First for up to \$1 billion, alleging they worked to undermine the pipeline that has been moving oil from North Dakota to Illinois for the past year. The groups said the lawsuit was an attack on free speech.

The lawsuit alleges the groups disseminated false and misleading information about the project and interfered with its construction. The company maintained that the groups' actions interfered with its business, facilitated crimes and acts of terrorism, incited violence, targeted financial institutions that backed the project and violated defamation and racketeering laws.

Wilson ruled that BankTrack "did not get money, property, or anything of value from Energy Transfer through the mailings and (online) postings," and that "Energy Transfer's application of RICO to BankTrack is dangerously broad."

Wilson in a Wednesday ruling denied Greenpeace's motion to be dismissed as a defendant. However, he also ordered ETP to file an amended complaint, saying the current lawsuit is "vague" and that its "factual basis for the claims appears intentionally obscured."

"To avoid dismissal, Energy Transfer must file an amended complaint containing concise and direct allegations against each named defendants," he wrote.

"We remain confident that this meritless lawsuit by Energy Transfer Partners will ultimately be thrown out of court," Greenpeace attorney Deepa Padmanabha said Thursday.

In a Monday ruling, Wilson gave ETP until Aug. 1 to properly serve Earth First.

The Center for Constitutional Rights maintains Earth First is an unstructured social movement or philosophy, similar to Black Lives Matter, and can't be sued. ETP had tried to serve the lawsuit on Earth First Journal, but the Florida-based environmental publication effectively argued it was not the same as the movement.

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

Black Hills forest project approved despite logging concerns

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A new project has been approved to strengthen the Black Hills National Forest's resilience to natural threats despite objections from conservation groups who say it'll lead to over-logging.

Forest Supervisor Mark Van Every announced approval of the Black Hills Resilient Landscapes Project on Monday, the Rapid City Journal reported. The project intends to create conditions in the forest that'll make it better able to withstand mountain pine beetle epidemics, such as the one that killed millions of trees between 1996 and 2016.

"With the mountain pine beetle epidemic now over, this project will allow us to begin management actions that will help get the forest back in line with the forest management goals and objectives," Van Every said in a written statement.

The project, which has been under review since 2016, will also protect the forest from wildfires.

The project aims to encourage growth of non-pine species, diversify pine-tree stands and reduce the amount of vegetative material that could fuel wildfires. Other goals include stopping tree encroachment on grasslands and improving and building roads in the forest.

The Forest Service will try to meet these goals through a variety of efforts, including logging, trimming and prescribed burns. The project's full effect will take up to 40 years to realize, according to Van Every.

The Norbeck Society views the project approval as "unfortunate." The conversation nonprofit said the

initiative will result in unnecessary and even harmful harvesting of trees from areas that don't pose a threat of insect infestation or wildfires.

The amount of logging approved in the project is unsustainable considering that millions of trees died or were removed during the mountain pine beetle epidemic, the society said.

A specific budget for the project hasn't been provided. Project goals will be accomplished with money from the forest's annual funding program, said Scott Jacobson, a spokesman for the Black Hills National Forest.

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

Littering dispute leads to machete threat

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police say a dispute over littering resulted in a man threatening his accuser with a machete.

The incident happened Wednesday afternoon when a man sitting in a car outside an apartment complex dropped some trash out of his window.

The Argus Leader reports police say an apartment resident saw the littering and yelled at the man in the car. The accused litterer then pulled out a machete and threatened the resident, who went inside and called police.

Officers are looking for the driver.

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

Sioux Falls faces lawsuit over girl's drowning at Falls Park

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The city of Sioux Falls is facing a wrongful death lawsuit after a 5-year-old Iowa girl drowned in the Big Sioux River at Falls Park.

The Argus Leader reports Sioux Falls attorney Brendan Johnson filed the federal lawsuit Thursday alleging the city failed to provide sufficient safety precautions at the park. Maggie Zaiger died March 18 after falling into the water from the river bank rocks.

Johnson is seeking damages on behalf of Zaiger's mother, Courtney Jayne. The lawsuit claims the city had ignored recommendations to put up barriers to more clearly distinguish where the rock ends and the water starts.

Officials have since approved building viewing platforms and railings to improve safety. T.J. Nelson, the mayor's deputy chief of staff, declined to comment on the pending litigation.

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

Bristol mechanic gets prison for elderly scam, tax crimes

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Bristol mechanic who scammed an 83-year-old man, filed fraudulent sales tax returns and underreported his income has been sentenced to serve eight years in prison.

The attorney general's office says 60-year-old Gary Podzimek did unauthorized and unnecessary mechanical work on the elderly man's pickup truck, and filed false or fraudulent business tax returns.

A jury in April convicted him of grand theft by deception, failing to pay taxes and other charges. He was sentenced Wednesday. He also must surrender his sales tax license and will not be eligible to reapply for it for 10 years following his release from prison.

He was ordered to make restitution of \$39,800 to the victim's family.

Company denies fault in crash that killed girl, grandfather

MISSION, S.D. (AP) — A Colorado construction company denies it was at fault in an accident that killed a 4-year-old girl and her grandfather in South Dakota.

The family of 76-year-old Roger Emery and his granddaughter, Selena Loretta-Lynn Medicine Eagle, is suing PJH Cos., its owner and the driver of the truck that struck the two as they walked across a highway in the pedestrian crossing in Mission.

The lawsuit says driver James Rickert failed to make a complete stop at the crossing where he struck the two on Oct. 3, 2017.

The Argus Leader says PJH claims the grandfather “assumed the risk of injury” in the accident, so the plaintiffs are not entitled to recover any damages. The lawsuit was filed in the District of South Dakota federal court.

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

Ipswich man pleads guilty to felony bestiality charges

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — An Ipswich man accused of bestiality has admitted engaging in sexual acts with two calves.

The American News reports that 57-year-old James Schumacher pleaded guilty Wednesday to two charges of felony bestiality, after unsuccessfully arguing earlier this year that the charges he faced were unconstitutional.

Prosecutors will drop four other charges under terms of the plea agreement.

Authorities say the incidents happened in 2016 and 2017 on a Bath-area farm. Schumacher faces up to four years in prison and \$8,000 in fines. Sentencing wasn't immediately scheduled.

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

Deadwood hotel/casino closes, putting 23 people out of work

DEADWOOD, S.D. (AP) — A hotel and casino that employed nearly two dozen people in the Old West gambling town of Deadwood has closed.

The Black Hills Pioneer reports that Celebrity Hotel and Casino General Manager Ken Gienger cited insufficient gambling revenue. The property is being turned over to a bank, and people with reservations are being contacted.

The business owned by a Nebraska man and his daughter employed 15 full-time and eight part-time workers. It opened 20 years ago.

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

Eagle Butte woman pleads not guilty to tribal theft charge

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — An Eagle Butte woman has pleaded not guilty to stealing from a tribal organization on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

The U.S. attorney's office says 28-year-old Ashley Traversie is accused of embezzling more than \$1,000 from the Lakota Thrifty Mart between December 2016 and August 2017.

Traversie is scheduled for trial Sept. 18. She faces up to five years in federal prison if convicted, along with restitution.

Airport boardings in Rapid City on a record pace

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Boardings at the Rapid City Regional Airport are on a record pace.

The Rapid City Journal reports that through June there were 131,147 enplanements. That was about 1 percent more than the previous record for the first six months of the year, set in 2010.

The Rapid City airport recently added service to New York/Newark on Saturdays through the summer, bringing the total destinations to 11.

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

US government: Over 1,800 migrant kids reunited by deadline

By ELLIOT SPAGAT, COLLEEN LONG and ANITA SNOW, Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Shy children were given a meal and a plane or bus ticket to locations around the U.S. as non-profit groups tried to smooth the way for kids reunited with their parents as a deadline loomed following their separations at the U.S. Mexico border.

The Trump administration said Thursday that more than 1,800 children 5 years and older had been reunited with parents or sponsors hours before the deadline. That included 1,442 children who were returned to parents who were in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, and another 378 who were released under a variety of other circumstances.

But about 700 more remain separated, including 431 whose parents were deported, officials say. Those reunions take more time, effort and paperwork as authorities fly children back to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

The court-ordered deadline has passed and now the federal judge in San Diego who ordered the reunifications must decide how to address the hundreds of still-separated children whose parents have been deported, as well as how much time, if any, reunified parents should be allowed to file asylum claims.

Lee Gelernt, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union representing separated parents, said Thursday it was unclear how long it might take to find the parents returned to their homelands. "I think it's just going to be really hard detective work and hopefully we're going to find them," he said.

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw will also consider the ACLU's request to give reunified parents at least a week to consider if they wish to seek asylum. The government opposes the waiting period, and Sabraw has put a hold on deporting reunified families while the issue is decided.

On a parallel legal front over treatment of immigrant children, U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee in Los Angeles will be asked Friday to appoint a special monitor to oversee detention facilities.

Children described horrid conditions in a voluminous report filed this month over whether the Trump administration is meeting its obligations under a long-standing settlement governing how young immigrants should be treated in custody.

As the deadline neared, small groups of children were led in and out of Lutheran Social Services in Phoenix all day Thursday, sometimes holding hands with a worker from the center. Children and parents wore matching hospital-like identification bracelets and carried belongings in white plastic bags. The men sported shoes without laces that were taken away while in immigration detention.

Support worker Julisa Zaragoza said some kids were so afraid of losing their parents again they didn't want to go to the bathroom alone. "These families have been through a lot," she said.

The federal government was supposed to reunify more than 2,500 children who were separated from their parents under a new immigration policy designed to deter immigrants from coming here illegally, but the policy backfired amid global outrage over crying children taken from their parents.

President Donald Trump ended the practice of taking children from parents and Sabraw ordered the government to reunite all the families by the end of Thursday, nevertheless indicating some flexibility given the enormity of the effort.

Chris Meekins, the head of the office of the assistant secretary for preparedness and response for Health and Human Services, said the government would continue to reunify families with eligible parents

throughout the evening.

In most cases the families are released and the parents typically get ankle-monitoring bracelets and court dates to appear before an immigration judge. Faith-based and other groups have provided meals, clothing, legal advice, plane and bus tickets and even new shoe laces.

A charitable organization called FWD.US, founded by technology leaders including Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Dropbox founder Drew Houston was paying for the airline tickets, the bus tickets and the lodging for all the families newly reunited in the Phoenix area to get them to relatives living all over the United States, said Connie Phillips of Lutheran Social Services. She said a phone company donated 500 mobile phones for the migrants, each with six months of free service.

There were scattered reunions in various locations Thursday, including about 15 in Phoenix, said Phillips. The main immigrant-assistance center in El Paso, Texas, has been receiving about 25 reunified families daily.

Some children who had not seen their parents in weeks or months seemed slow to accept that they would not be abandoned again.

Jose Dolores Munoz, 36, from El Salvador, was reunited with his 7-year-old daughter last Friday, nearly two months after they were separated, but he said his daughter cries when he leaves the house.

"She is afraid," Munoz said. "Yesterday I left her crying, she is telling me, 'You are not coming back.'"

Those who remain separated from their children include Lourdes de Leon of Guatemala. She surrendered to authorities at the border and was deported on June 7, while her 6-year-old son, Leo, remained in the U.S.

De Leon said Guatemalan consular officials told her signing a deportation order would be the easiest way to reunite with Leo.

"He is in a shelter in New York," de Leon said. "My baby already had his hearing with a judge who signed his deportation eight days ago. But I still do not know when they are going to return him to me."

At the Lutheran center, Phillips said the parents and kids have opened up as they go through an assessment process with workers. She said the outpouring of donations has been comforting.

"We have seen a lot of people come together over this, we're seeing the best of what Americans can be," she said.

Long reported from Washington and Snow reported from Phoenix. Associated Press writers Roxana Hegeman in Wichita, Kansas, Astrid Galvan in El Paso, Texas, Alan Fram in Washington and Sonia Perez D. in Guatemala City contributed to this report.

Senators spar on access to Kavanaugh's staff secretary work

By JESSICA GRESKO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than a decade after he served as what's been called the president's "inbox and outbox," Brett Kavanaugh's role as White House staff secretary to President George W. Bush has become a flashpoint as Republicans push his confirmation to the Supreme Court.

Democrats want to see records from the time, portraying the potentially millions of documents as vital to understanding his approach to the law. Republicans disagree and have accused Democrats of using the issue to try to delay Kavanaugh's confirmation.

The debate could interfere with Republicans' goal of swiftly confirming President Donald Trump's pick for the court in time for the start of the new term Oct. 1. With the Senate control slimly held by Republicans 51-49, Democrats can't block Kavanaugh's nomination outright if Republicans hold together. Instead, Democrats are trying to delay the proceedings in hopes that time spent reviewing the judge's record could unearth fresh concerns to sway senators' opinions and upend voting.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee tasked with holding hearings on Kavanaugh's nomination, said this week that Democrats' "bloated demands are an obvious attempt to obstruct the confirmation process."

But Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Thursday that Kavanaugh himself has portrayed

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his three years as Bush's staff secretary as "the most interesting and, in many ways, among the most instructive" to his work as a federal appeals court judge. Schumer said if Kavanaugh sees it that way, "why shouldn't the American people see what instructed him?"

Kavanaugh spent nearly three years, from July 2003 to May 2006, as staff secretary, the person who controls the flow of documents to and from the president, including ensuring relevant people have weighed in and channeling the president's questions and comments on that material to the right people. As staff secretary, Kavanaugh was also a key part of the president's speechwriting process, helped put together legislation and worked on drafting and revising executive orders, he has said. He also traveled with the president, at points sitting in on meetings between the president and foreign leaders.

While Kavanaugh was staff secretary, Bush made a range of controversial decisions including signing into law a partial-birth abortion ban and backing a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Democrats say that time is relevant to Kavanaugh's views and philosophy as a judge.

But Republicans argue the staff secretary documents aren't useful because Kavanaugh's job wasn't to provide his own advice but to ensure others' views were presented to the president. They say the papers contain the most sensitive White House documents, advice sent directly to the president. Republicans say they support, as Democrats do, making public documents related to Kavanaugh's time in the White House counsel's office, which immediately preceded his staff secretary job. And they say the up to 1 million pages of records they expect to release will be the largest number of documents produced in connection with a Supreme Court nomination.

Karen Hult, a political science professor at Virginia Tech and the co-author of a paper on the staff secretary position for which Kavanaugh was interviewed in 2008, took a middle-ground view of the staff secretary documents' value to lawmakers. Hult said the documents could include Kavanaugh's notes and memos he wrote or commented on that went directly to the president or chief of staff, but she said it could be difficult to distill Kavanaugh's own views from them. Kavanaugh's judicial opinions would be more helpful in that respect, she said.

Still, "I wouldn't say it's a waste of time," she said of looking at the documents. "I would say it's not a high-priority use of time."

Kavanaugh, for his part, has described his role as staff secretary as being an "honest broker for the president, someone who tries to ensure that the range of policy views on various subjects are presented to the president in a fair and even-handed way." In a 2008 interview with Hult's co-author, Kathryn Dunn Tenpas, Kavanaugh said it was important that he maintain "strict neutrality and impartiality" in bringing disagreements about the wording of proposals or decisions to the president.

Kavanaugh also said that during his tenure they started weekly meetings with Bush and a few others to discuss speeches. He said that allowed him to "better perform my function as referee" between speechwriters and policy advisers.

The debate over the staff secretary documents has gone back and forth between the parties all week. On the Republican side, Grassley has said the most valuable documents revealing Kavanaugh's legal thinking are his more than 300 judicial opinions while documents from Kavanaugh's time as staff secretary are the "least relevant" to his legal thinking. Describing the staff secretary position as the "inbox and outbox of the Oval Office," he said the occupant's job is not to "provide his own substantive work product" but to ensure the president "sees memos and policy papers" produced by other White House offices. Reviewing the documents would be a "waste of time" and taxpayers' money, he said.

On the Democratic side, Schumer wrote in a letter to Grassley on Tuesday that there is "simply no basis to withhold Judge Kavanaugh's staff secretary record" from senators' review. He accused Republicans of being against transparency. He said Wednesday of the position Kavanaugh is nominated for: "This is one of the most important positions in the world and certainly in America. Shouldn't we know everything?"

Associated Press Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko>

Remains said to be US war dead repatriated from North Korea

By **AHN YOUNG-JOON, KIM TONG-HYUNG and LOLITA BALDOR, Associated Press**

PYEONGTAEK, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Friday returned the remains of what are believed to be U.S. servicemen killed during the Korean War, the White House said, with a U.S. military plane making a rare trip into North Korea to retrieve 55 cases of remains.

The handover follows through on a promise North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made to President Donald Trump when the leaders met in June and is the first tangible result from the much-hyped summit. Trump welcomed the repatriation and thanked Kim in a tweet.

The United Nations Command said 55 cases of remains were retrieved from North Korea. The White House earlier confirmed that a U.S. Air Force C-17 aircraft containing remains of fallen service members had departed Wonsan, a Northern coastal city, on its way to the Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek, near the South Korean capital of Seoul. A formal repatriation ceremony will be held there Wednesday.

At the air base, U.S. servicemen and a military honor guard lined up on the tarmac to receive the remains, which were carried in boxes covered in blue U.N. flags.

About 7,700 U.S. soldiers are listed as missing from the 1950-53 Korean War, and 5,300 of the remains are believed to still be in North Korea. The war killed millions, including 36,000 American soldiers.

U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, in a statement from the U.N. Command, called the retrieval mission successful. "Now, we will prepare to honor our fallen before they continue on their journey home."

Following the honors ceremony on Wednesday, the remains will be flown to Hawaii for scientific testing. A series of forensic examinations will be done to determine if the remains are human and if the dead were American or allied troops killed in the conflict.

Trump late Thursday tweeted the repatriation was occurring and said, "After so many years, this will be a great moment for so many families. Thank you to Kim Jong Un."

Officials in North Korea had no comment on the handover on Friday, the 65th anniversary of the end of the Korean War, which the country celebrated as the day of "victory in the fatherland liberation war."

Despite soaring rhetoric about denuclearization before Kim and Trump met in Singapore, their summit ended with only a vague aspirational goal for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula without describing when and how that would occur.

The repatriation of remains could be followed by stronger North Korean demands for fast-tracked discussions to formally end the war, which was stopped with an armistice and not a peace treaty. South Korea's Defense Ministry also said the North agreed to general-level military talks next week at a border village to discuss reducing tensions across the countries' heavily armed border.

The U.S. military last month said that 100 wooden "temporary transit cases" built in Seoul were sent to the Joint Security Area at the Korean border as part of preparations to receive and transport remains in a dignified manner. U.S. Forces Korea spokesman Col. Chad Carroll also said, at the time, that 158 metal transfer cases were sent to a U.S. air base and would be used to send the remains home.

The remains are believed to be some of the more than 200 that North Korea has held in storage for some time, and were likely recovered from land during farming or construction. The vast majority of the war dead, however, have yet to be located and retrieved from cemeteries and battlefields across the countryside.

Efforts to recover American war dead had been stalled for more than a decade because of a standoff over North Korea's nuclear program and a previous U.S. claim that security arrangements for its personnel working in the North were insufficient.

From 1996 to 2005, joint U.S.-North Korea military search teams conducted 33 recovery operations that collected 229 sets of American remains. The last time North Korea turned over remains was in 2007, when Bill Richardson, a former U.N. ambassador and New Mexico governor, secured the return of six sets.

The North marked Friday's anniversary with ceremonies at war-related memorials; the capital Pyongyang and other cities were decked out in national flags and bright red banners. For the first time since 2015, Kim Jong Un has announced a general amnesty will be granted for prisoners who have committed crimes

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against the state.

North Korea has held out the return of remains as a symbol of its goodwill and intention to improve ties with Washington. Officials have bristled, however, at criticism from the U.S. that it seeks to profit from the repatriations by demanding excessive fees for handling and transporting the remains.

Pyongyang has nevertheless expressed its willingness to allow the resumption of joint search missions in the country to retrieve more remains. Such missions had been held from 1996 until they were cancelled by President George W. Bush amid heightening tensions over the North's nuclear program in 2005.

Post Kim-Trump summit talks between U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and senior North Korean officials got off to a rocky start earlier this month, with the North accusing the Americans of making "unilateral and gangster-like" demands on denuclearization. The North also said U.S. officials came up with various "conditions and excuses" to backtrack on the issue of formally ending the war.

"The adoption of the declaration on the termination of war is the first and foremost process in the light of ending the extreme hostility and establishing new relations between the DPRK and the U.S.," the North's Korean Central News Agency said in a statement on Tuesday, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "Peace can come only after the declaration of the termination of war."

Pompeo said Wednesday that a great deal of work remains ahead of a North Korea denuclearization deal, but he dodged requests to identify a specific denuclearization timeline in testimony to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Experts say a declaration to officially end the war, which could also involve Seoul and Beijing, would make it easier for Pyongyang to steer the discussions with Washington toward a peace treaty, diplomatic recognition, security assurance and economic benefits. Some analysts believe that North Korea would eventually demand that the United States withdraw or dramatically reduce the 28,500 troops it keeps in South Korea as a deterrent.

Washington has maintained Pyongyang wouldn't get sanctions relief and significant security and economic rewards unless it firmly commits to a process of completely and verifiably eliminating its nuclear weapons. There are lingering doubts on whether Kim would ever agree to fully relinquish his nukes, which he may see as a stronger guarantee of survival than whatever security assurance the United States could offer.

Kim reported from Seoul and Baldor from Washington. AP journalists Eric Talmadge in Pyongyang, North Korea, Kim Yong-ho in Pyeongtaek and Foster Klug in Seoul contributed to this report.

Emails: Lawyer who met Trump Jr. tied to Russian officials

By RAPHAEL SATTER, AP Cybersecurity Writer

LONDON (AP) — The Moscow lawyer said to have promised Donald Trump's presidential campaign dirt on his Democratic opponent worked more closely with senior Russian government officials than she previously let on, according to documents reviewed by The Associated Press.

Scores of emails, transcripts and legal documents paint a portrait of Natalia Veselnitskaya as a well-connected attorney who served as a ghostwriter for top Russian government lawyers and received assistance from senior Interior Ministry personnel in a case involving a key client.

The data was obtained through Russian opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky's London-based investigative unit, the Dossier Center, that is compiling profiles of Russians it accuses of benefiting from corruption.

The AP was unable to reach Veselnitskaya for comment. Messages from a reporter sent to her phone were marked as "read" but were not returned.

Veselnitskaya has been under scrutiny since it emerged last year that Trump's eldest son, Donald Jr., met with her in June 2016 after being told by an intermediary that she represented the Russian government and was offering Moscow's help defeating rival presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Veselnitskaya has denied acting on behalf of Russian officialdom when she met with the Trump team, telling Congress that she operates "independently of any government bodies."

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But the Dossier Center's documents suggest her ties to Russian authorities are close — and they pull the curtain back on her campaign to overturn the sanctions imposed by the U.S. on Russian officials.

For example, the emails show that Veselnitskaya was mixed up in the Russian government's attempt to extract financial information from the former law firm of Bill Browder, the American-born British businessman who was a longtime critic of the Kremlin.

An Oct. 31, 2017, email shows Veselnitskaya's office preparing a draft version of Russian Deputy General Prosecutor Mikhail Alexandrov's affidavit to Cypriot authorities. "This is needed by tomorrow," she wrote a subordinate.

Two weeks later, a finalized version of the same document was sent by a Russian diplomatic staffer to a Cypriot counterpart, the Dossier Center's files show.

Browder, who has often clashed with Veselnitskaya in and out of court, said this reinforced the idea that she was enmeshed with Russian officialdom.

"If her office is drafting replies for Russian-Cyprus law enforcement cooperation, in my opinion that effectively shows that she's an agent of the Russian government and not an independent lawyer as she claims," he said in a telephone interview.

In a written statement, the Russian Embassy in Cyprus called the AP's question a "provocation" and said it had "no idea who is Nataliya Veselnitskaya and what she sends or doesn't send to the Cypriot Officials." Alexandrov, reached at the prosecutor-general's office, refused to speak to the AP.

Veselnitskaya appears to have gotten government support too.

When Swiss officials arrived in Moscow on September 2015 to interrogate Denis Katsyv, one of her key clients, they were met not just by Veselnitskaya but by Lt. Col. A. V. Ranchenkov, a senior Interior Ministry official previously known for his role investigating the Russian punk band Pussy Riot.

Ranchenkov devoted a chunk of the interview to questions about the legality of Browder's actions, according to a transcript of the interrogation reviewed by AP.

The Russian Interior Ministry did not return messages seeking comment.

The emails also show how Veselnitskaya tried to extend her influence to the United States, where she was working to overturn the Magnitsky Act, a sanctions law that was championed by Browder after his lawyer, Sergei Magnitsky, died under suspicious circumstances in a Russian prison.

Moscow responded to the sanctions with a ban on U.S. adoptions of Russian orphans. That prompted lobbyists to court groups such as Families for Russian and Ukrainian Adoption Including Neighboring Countries, or FRUA, a charity that supports families who adopt children from former Soviet bloc nations. The idea was to use the issue of adoptions to help them reverse the sanctions.

Jan Wondra, FRUA's chairman, said she attended a meeting in Washington on June 8, 2016 with a group of people that included Rinat Akhmetshin, a Russian-American lobbyist who was working with Veselnitskaya to overturn the sanctions.

The group told her there was evidence that the Magnitsky Act was propelled by bogus claims spread by Browder, Wondra said. It promised that the revelation could lead to the overturning of the Russian adoption ban.

Wondra told the AP she was suspicious and feared that the lobbyists wanted FRUA's endorsement for their own purposes.

"My antennae were out. I looked at this as an attempt to put public pressure on Congress to rescind all or a part of the Magnitsky Act," she said, emphasizing that she spoke only for herself, not her organization. "The conclusion I drew was that FRUA should not participate. And we didn't."

Akhmetshin, who would join Veselnitskaya at the Trump Tower meeting the next day, declined comment. The emails obtained by AP leave some unanswered questions.

In particular, the Dossier Center's investigation turned up almost no messages about the Trump Tower meeting itself. The group said it received only a few messages dealing with the media queries when the meeting became public in mid-2017.

There's no mention either of the Russian hack-and-leak operation that began rattling the Democrats

immediately following Veselnitskaya's visit.

Angela Charlton, Francesca Ebel and Varya Kudryavtseva in Moscow, Justin Myers in Chicago and Desmond Butler in Washington contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Raphael Satter's father, David Satter, is a Russia specialist who has been critical of the Kremlin. He was involved in a 2011 arbitration claim against filmmaker Andrei Nekrasov over the production of a documentary. A subsequent film by Nekrasov, which was critical of British investor Bill Browder, was promoted by Natalia Veselnitskaya.

Fatal wildfire rips through California towns; residents flee

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and AMANDA LEE MYERS, Associated Press

REDDING, Calif. (AP) — An explosive wildfire tore through two small Northern California communities Thursday before reaching the city of Redding, killing a bulldozer operator on the fire lines, burning three firefighters, destroying dozens of homes and forcing thousands of terrified residents to flee.

Flames swept through the communities of Shasta and Keswick before jumping the Sacramento River and reaching Redding, a city of about 92,000 people and the largest in the region.

The so-called Carr Fire is "taking down everything in its path," said Scott McLean, a CalFire spokesman for the crews battling the blaze.

"It's just a wall of flames," he said.

Residents of western Redding who hadn't been under evacuation orders were caught off guard and had to flee with little notice, causing miles-long traffic jams as flames turned the skies orange.

"When it hit, people were really scrambling," McLean said. "There was not much of a warning."

Many firefighters turned their focus from the flames to getting people out alive.

"Really we're in a life-saving mode right now in Redding," said Jonathan Cox, battalion chief with Cal Fire. "We're not fighting a fire. We're trying to move people out of the path of it because it is now deadly and it is now moving at speeds and in ways we have not seen before in this area."

Some residents drove to hotels or the homes of family members in safer parts of California, while other evacuees poured into a shelter just outside of town.

A reporter with KRCR-TV choked up as she reported live updates about the fire before the station had to go off the air later. Two news anchors told viewers that the building was being evacuated and urged residents to "be safe."

Journalists at the Record Searchlight newspaper tweeted about continuing to report on the fire without electricity in their newsroom, and a reporter at KHSL-TV wrote on Twitter that the station's Redding reporters were "running home to gather their things."

Mike Mangas, a spokesman at Mercy Medical Center, said the hospital was evacuating five babies in its neonatal intensive care unit, which cares for premature newborns, and taking them to medical facilities outside of the area.

He said the hospital was preparing high-risk patients to be evacuated but there were no immediate plans to do so.

He said several burn patients were admitted to the emergency room but that most were being treated and released.

Late Thursday, crews found the body of a bulldozer operator who was hired privately to clear vegetation in the blaze's path, McLean said.

The fire burned over the operator and his equipment, making the man the second bulldozer operator killed in a California blaze in less than two weeks.

Three firefighters and an unknown number of civilians had burns, but the extent of their injuries wasn't immediately known, McLean said.

"It's just chaotic. It's wild," he said. "There's a lot of fire, a lot of structures burning."

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Firefighters tried in vain to build containment around the blaze Thursday but flames kept jumping their lines, he said.

"It's just a heck of a fight," he said. "They're doing what they can do and they get pushed out in a lot of cases. We're fighting the fight right now."

He said the fire behavior was so erratic, there were tornadoes within the fire "tossing around equipment, blowing windows out of Cal Fire pickup trucks."

The 45-square-mile (115-square-kilometer) fire that began Monday tripled in size overnight Thursday amid scorching temperatures, low humidity and windy conditions. It was sparked by a mechanical issue involving a vehicle, Cal Fire said.

Brett Gouvea, incident commander of the crews battling the fire, urged residents to pay close attention to the blaze.

"This fire is extremely dangerous and moving with no regard for what's in its path," he said.

Earlier in the day with flames exploding around Whiskeytown Lake, an effort to save boats at a marina by untying them from moorings and pushing them to safety, wasn't swift enough to spare them all.

Dozens of charred, twisted and melted boats were among the losses at Oak Bottom Marina.

"The boat docks down there — all the way out in the water — 30 to 40 boats caught fire when the fire laid down on top of them last night and burned those up," said fire Chief Mike Hebrard of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Wildfires throughout the state have burned through tinder-dry brush and forest, forced thousands to evacuate homes and caused campers to pack up their tents at the height of summer. Gov. Jerry Brown declared states of emergency for the three largest fires, which will authorize the state to rally resources to local governments.

The wildfires have dispatched firefighters to all corners of the state amid an oppressive heat wave.

A huge forest fire continued to grow outside Yosemite National Park. That blaze killed 36-year-old Braden Varney, a heavy equipment operator for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection whose bulldozer rolled over into a ravine July 14.

Hundreds of miles to the south, the Cranston Fire grew to 7.5 square miles (19 square kilometers) and about 3,000 residents remained under evacuation orders in Idyllwild and several neighboring communities. That fire, which destroyed five homes, is believed to have been sparked by arson.

Myers reported from Los Angeles. AP reporters Noah Berger in Redding, Brian Melley in Los Angeles, Olga Rodriguez in San Francisco, Alina Hartounian in Phoenix, Marcio Jose Sanchez in Idyllwild and John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed.

2 minutes, 8 barrels: Surfer takes an epic ride into history

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

To say Koa Smith was at the right place at the right time is perfectly accurate.

To say he got lucky — that's missing the point.

Perched precariously on his surfboard, the 23-year-old from Hawaii rode a wave off the coast of Namibia, on the western shore of Africa, for 120 straight seconds. He stayed upright for nearly a mile (1.5 kilometers) as he traveled through an unheard-of eight barrels — the hollow formed by the curve of the wave as it breaks over the rider's head.

Almost as amazing — Smith and videographer Chris Rogers filmed the entire ride using both a drone that hovered overhead, and a GoPro attached to a mouthpiece that Smith wore while he rode.

"I'd like to think that everything I've done my whole life led up to that moment," Smith said of his masterpiece over a one-of-a-kind wave last month, the likes of which has never been documented before.

Smith owes his success to being every bit as much a calculated scientist as a devil-may-care risktaker.

Much as a meteorologist tracks storms several days before they hit, Smith and many world-class surfers have mastered the art of reading weather charts to predict when and where the greatest sized ocean

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swells will hit. It's one thing to know they're coming, quite another to get to where the action is, and Smith is more than willing to drop everything in search of the perfect wave.

"He can be in one place one day, and you call him and he says, 'I'm taking off for Africa tomorrow,'" says Smith's publicist, Ryan Runke.

The locale of his greatest triumph is called Skeleton Bay — a mystic stretch of beach fronting the South Atlantic on the western coast of Africa.

Don't bother trying to go unless you know someone who knows the area. It's a two-day plane ride from Hawaii, followed by a car ride through the desert, culminating with a journey down a stretch of sandy, unmarked roads that lead to the ocean. The final stop is at a stretch of beach where a lucky handful of surfers share space with hundreds of aggressive seal colonies, thousands of jackals and, once in the water, the occasional great white shark.

"When you're out there, you're really out there, and you're kind of on your own," Smith said. "But when you're out there, you're not thinking about it. You know you're sacrificing your life for this."

Smith grew up on Kauai and said he got into surfing the way many Hawaii kids do.

"There's not much to do there," he said. "My parents would drop us off at the beach. You start playing in the sand, playing in the ocean, body surfing, boogie boarding and it keeps evolving. I started surfing when I was 3. My brother is four years older. When he started, it was, 'If he can do this, I can do this.'"

Smith qualified for 10-and-under nationals when he was 6; he had his first Nike contract by age 12.

Though surfing has been around much longer than its distant action-sports cousin of snowboarding, athletes in the ocean sport are now faced with some of the same questions the snowboarders dealt with 20 years ago.

Surfing is making its debut at the Olympics in 2020 and there figures to be a divide between those who want to keep it as a lifestyle sport — chasing waves and footage — and those who see a more lucrative path on a competitive side, which, in surfing's case, already has a well-established history.

Though the Olympics are not his immediate goal, Smith does surf in plenty of contests — "If you compete, you have to be really good at riding bad waves," he says — and has not ruled them out.

"There's something about performance pressure that allows you to dig deep and feel something you couldn't real feel any other way," he said.

In a way, though, he's won his gold medal. That day on Skeleton Bay will live on, both in his mind and on the video, for a very long time.

"There was a point where I was at four barrels and I was already like, 'This is amazing,'" he said. "It looked like the wave was over, but it formed again. I figured, the drone's there, I might as well stay on. And I was like, 'Whoa!' This went from a good wave to like a life-changing wave."

Cricket star Imran Khan wins in Pakistan but needs coalition

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Official results show cricket star Imran Khan won in Pakistan's polls but he will have to seek out allies to form a coalition government.

After a tediously slow count, Pakistan election officials Friday announced Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won 109 of the 269 seats being contested in the National Assembly. The election Wednesday gave his nearest rival, Shahbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League 63 seats. Sharif who heads the party of jailed ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif has rejected the results charging widespread fraud and manipulation.

Khan declared his victory on Thursday and dismissed the allegations of fraud calling it the most transparent election in Pakistan's history.

Third place went to the left of center Pakistan People's party with 39 seats. Results from 20 seats were still being counted.

Facebook's day of reckoning: Blip or sign of broader turn?

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook faced a day of reckoning Thursday as its shares plunged in the biggest one-day drop in stock-market history.

The 19 percent drop vaporized \$119 billion of the company's stock-market value; CEO Mark Zuckerberg saw his net worth fall by roughly \$16 billion as a result. It was Facebook's worst trading day since going public in 2012; the collapse eclipsed Intel's decline of \$91 billion in September 2000, without adjusting for inflation.

The plunge followed Facebook's warning late Wednesday that its revenue growth will slow down significantly for at least the remainder of the year and that expenses will continue to skyrocket.

In a sign of just how bullish investor expectations were, though, the collapse merely returned Facebook shares to a level last seen in early May. At that point, the stock was still recovering from an earlier battering over its big privacy scandal, in which a political consulting firm with ties to President Donald Trump improperly accessed the data of tens millions of Facebook users.

Now come the big questions: Is this a temporary setback, or the start of a painful new road for the giant social network? And does a similar comeuppance await other high-flying technology behemoths?

Both the slower growth forecast and heavier spending reflect problems largely of Facebook's own making.

New European privacy rules, inspired in part by Facebook's relentless mining of its own users' data, are starting to hamper the company's advertising business. And the increased spending aims, among other things, to prevent a replay of the fake news and propaganda that Russian agents unleashed on an unguarded Facebook in an attempt to sway the 2016 presidential election.

Zuckerberg even noted during a call with analysts that "we're investing so much in security that it will significantly impact our profitability."

Overall, technology giants — Facebook, Apple, Google, Amazon and others — have enjoyed almost unprecedented growth in revenue and stock price for years. They have seemed unstoppable, even in the face of regulatory pressure, user dissatisfaction and broader existential questions about their impact on society. Technology companies account for six of the 10 biggest companies in the S&P 500 Index.

Some see the Facebook selloff as clear evidence that nothing can grow forever, especially not the world's biggest companies, especially not at the rate of nimble, promising startups. Facebook revenue is still growing at a rate double that of Twitter. A decade ago, almost no one could have imagined that Facebook would have more than 2 billion users, much less that its family of apps — Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger — would also count members in the billions.

"Nobody knows where the top is, where that growth slows down," said Phil Bak, CEO of Exponential ETFs and a former managing director of the New York Stock Exchange who said he's been warning investors of a potential sell-off in large tech stocks.

Things could get rougher still. Those European privacy regulations, known as the General Data Privacy Regulation, or GDPR, went into effect with just one month left in the second quarter. That means Facebook could feel its effects more strongly later this year.

For more than a year — ever since Zuckerberg published a 5,000 word manifesto arguing that Facebook needs to make the world a better place by bolstering civic engagement and addressing social ills — the company has seemed torn between its philosophical mission and its economic one. Wednesday may have been the first time this tension really broke into the open, probably because it threatened the one thing all investors care about: Money.

Michael Connor, whose Open Mic group helps investors push tech companies to address privacy, abuse and other issues, said it's "far too early" to see if Facebook's efforts to improve itself will prove fruitful. But the real question, he said, is whether the company can "continue to do what they are doing in the face of criticism from Wall Street."

Siva Vaidhyanathan, a media studies professor at the University of Virginia and author of the new book, "Antisocial Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy," dismissed the significance

of the stock plunge.

"Mark Zuckerberg isn't panicking," he said. "The Facebook board isn't panicking. Most of its large institutional investors aren't panicking. They know they're in it for the long game."

AP technology writer Matt O'Brien contributed to this report from Providence, Rhode Island.

White House defends decision to bar CNN reporter from event

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Thursday defended its decision to bar a CNN correspondent from attending an open press event but contended it had nothing to do with the questions she asked.

Deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley said Kaitlan Collins was denied access to Trump's Rose Garden event with the European Commission president on Wednesday because of her refusal to leave the Oval Office during a previous availability with the president. She and her employer, CNN, said she was barred because White House officials found her questions "inappropriate," which Gidley disputed.

"It had nothing to do with the content of the question," Gidley told reporters aboard Air Force One as President Donald Trump headed back to Washington from Iowa and Illinois.

Collins had served as a representative of the television networks during an earlier "pool spray" availability in the Oval Office. She and a handful of other reporters peppered the president with questions, including many focused on his former lawyer, Michael Cohen. A day earlier, CNN had obtained and aired a secret audio recording that captured Trump and Cohen discussing a potential payment to a former Playboy model who claims she had an affair with Trump.

Gidley said Collins "was told repeatedly to leave the Oval Office." She refused and stayed "despite staff, Secret Service, everyone trying to usher everyone out of the room," Gidley said. "And that can't happen."

Other journalists who were in the room disputed the White House account.

Numerous reporters, including many from the European Union delegation, had been shouting questions, and, as usual, it took some time for the pack of journalists to file out the doors. Trump frequently answers reporters' questions even as staffers try to usher them out of the room, creating sometimes-chaotic scenes where low-level press officers shout at reporters as the president tries to speak.

Press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders on Wednesday said the White House had made clear that other CNN journalists were welcome at the Rose Garden event, just not Collins.

"To be clear, we support a free press and ask that everyone be respectful of the presidency and guests at the White House," she said.

Earlier Thursday, White House communications chief Bill Shine quibbled with the use of the word "ban" in describing the action taken against Collins.

"Would you ask her if we ever used the word 'ban'?" Shine told reporters.

And Trump counselor Kellyanne Conway said the incident showed the need broadly for more "civility" between reporters and the White House.

"I think it should start here at the White House and just show a little bit more respect," she said.

Asked whether Trump had directed the decision, Gidley replied: "The president does feel strongly about this."

CNN, in a statement Wednesday, objected to the White House decision, calling it "retaliatory in nature" and "not indicative of an open and free press."

"Just because the White House is uncomfortable with a question regarding the news of the day doesn't mean the question isn't relevant and shouldn't be asked," the network said.

The White House Correspondents' Association also issued a harshly worded statement condemning "the White House's misguided and inappropriate decision ... to bar one of our members from an open press event after she asked questions they did not like."

Associated Press writer Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

Follow Jill Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

US to hit NATO-ally Turkey over detained pastor, Trump says

By SUSANNAH GEORGE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump declared on Thursday the United States will impose sanctions on Turkey, a crucial NATO ally, in retaliation for the detention of an American pastor on terror and espionage charges.

Turkey's response was both harsh and dismissive, calling his words "unacceptable" and a "cheap threat." Trump's promise of unspecified punishing action marks the latest deterioration in relations between Turkey and the U.S. as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers expand two years after a failed coup against his government.

Trump also has praised his counterpart, saying Erdogan's leadership is "getting very high marks."

The U.S. has long depended on a key air base in Turkey's south, most recently to launch airstrikes against the Islamic State group.

Pastor Andrew Craig Brunson was first detained by Turkish authorities in the aftermath of the failed 2016 coup. On Wednesday, he was let out of jail after 1 1/2 years, transferred to house arrest because of "health problems," according to Turkey's official Anadolu news agency.

Trump said that was insufficient.

"He is suffering greatly. This innocent man of faith should be released immediately!" Trump wrote on Twitter.

The announcement of sanctions — though no details of how or when — came as the State Department was holding a three-day event promoting religious freedom. Brunson's case has become a cause for conservative Christians who form an important part of Trump's political base.

Turkey responded that Brunson's detention falls within the jurisdiction of its independent judiciary. "Rule of law is for everyone; no exception," said Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, also via Twitter.

And an Erdogan spokesman warned the U.S. to "reconsider its approach and adopt a constructive position before inflicting further damage to its own interests and its alliance with Turkey."

Vice President Mike Pence announced the threat of action at the religious freedom conference, then Trump tweeted that his government "will impose large sanctions on Turkey for their long time detainment of Pastor Andrew Brunson."

Trump could impose certain sanctions unilaterally or try to act through Congress. Senators have previously taken steps toward blocking the sale of F-35 jets to Turkey, citing Brunson's detention as an instance of Erdogan's disregard for the rule of law.

White House spokesman Hogan Gidley declined Thursday to discuss the timing of a sanctions announcement or the decision-making process.

"The president was clear on Twitter today, as was the vice president, that they fully expect, the president expects and wants Pastor Brunson to be returned immediately to the United States and, if not, they can expect sanctions," Gidley said.

Brunson, 50, an evangelical Christian pastor originally from North Carolina, could face up to 35 years in prison if convicted of espionage and "committing crimes on behalf of terror groups without being a member," references to outlawed Kurdish militants and the network of a U.S.-based Muslim cleric blamed for the failed coup attempt.

Brunson denies the charges.

"Brunson is an innocent man, there is no credible evidence against him," Pence said in his remarks Thursday.

Trump said on Twitter last week that the pastor's detention was "a total disgrace." One of Brunson's attorneys is Jay Sekulow, who also represents Trump in the federal Trump-Russia investigation.

Ties between NATO ally Turkey and the United States have been strained by other issues.

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Turkey recently finalized a deal to purchase Russia's long-range S-400 missile defense system, refusing to back down despite strong opposition from the U.S. and other NATO members.

The U.S. and Turkey have also clashed over American backing of Kurdish fighters in Syria who Ankara considers "terrorists."

At the conference, Pence highlighted cases of what he said were religious repression in Nicaragua, Iran, North Korea, China and Myanmar. He also condemned Islamic State group violence toward religious minorities and what he described as rising anti-Semitism in Europe.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also spoke. He announced additional aid for a region of Iraq previously held by the Islamic State group. Pompeo said the U.S. would provide \$17 million for de-mining efforts in Nineveh, an area of Iraq historically home to many of the country's religious minorities.

Erdogan has previously linked Brunson's return to the U.S. to the extradition of cleric Fethullah Gulen, the man Turkey's government holds responsible for the failed 2016 coup.

Gulen, who denies orchestrating the coup attempt, lives in Pennsylvania. Turkish requests for his arrest and extradition have not been granted.

More than 77,000 people have been arrested across Turkey since the government declared a state of emergency in the failed coup's aftermath. The crackdown has targeted journalists, activists and opposition figures.

Brunson has lived in Turkey for 23 years and served as pastor of Izmir Resurrection Church, a small Protestant congregation.

During a recent hearing, Brunson he rejected charges against him.

"I believe in and support Turkey's territorial integrity," he told the court. "I forgive those who lie and bear false witness against me."

Brunson's case has been adjourned until Oct. 12.

Associated Press writer Cinar Kiper in Istanbul contributed to this report.

Ryan opposes Rosenstein impeachment try, dooming it for now

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Paul Ryan spoke out against an effort by a small group of conservatives to impeach Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein on Thursday, dooming the endeavor for now and easing a months-long standoff between House Republicans and the Justice Department.

Ryan said the tussle over document requests between House Republicans and Rosenstein, who oversees the federal Trump-Russia investigation, doesn't rise to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors" that could warrant impeachment under the Constitution.

"I don't think we should be cavalier with this process or with this term," Ryan said. He also said he is encouraged by progress on the document production.

Ryan made the comments a day after the group of 11 House Republicans sharply escalated the extended clash with the Justice Department by filing articles of impeachment against Rosenstein, who oversees special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation.

Their move late Wednesday came after months of criticism aimed at the department — and the Russia investigation in particular — from President Donald Trump and his Republican allies in Congress. Trump has fumed about Mueller's probe and has repeatedly called it a "witch hunt," a refrain echoed by some of the lawmakers.

Mueller is investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election and whether Trump's campaign was involved.

The impeachment effort was led by North Carolina Rep. Mark Meadows, the chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus who talks to Trump frequently and often defends him to colleagues.

As Ryan voiced his disapproval, Meadows acknowledged that he didn't currently have the votes to pass

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the impeachment resolution and said he wouldn't use procedural maneuvers to trigger an immediate vote — something he had threatened to do. The House left Thursday afternoon for a five-week recess.

Instead, Meadows said he had a commitment from leaders to vote on holding Rosenstein in contempt of Congress when the House returns in September if certain documents are still outstanding. The agreement came after discussions on the House floor with Judiciary Committee Chairman Robert Goodlatte, R-Va., and the No. 3 House GOP leader, Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana.

The contempt resolution would first have to move through the Judiciary Committee, according to Republican aides.

Meadows said the five-week delay would give the department "one last chance" to deliver. He didn't rule out trying for an impeachment vote in the future.

"Now it's in Rod Rosenstein's court," Meadows said.

Ryan's tone was far different.

"We do not have full compliance, and we have to get full compliance, but we have been making tremendous progress to that point," he said of multiple document requests.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Jeff Sessions defended Rosenstein in a Boston speech, saying he has the "highest confidence" in his top deputy. Rosenstein has overseen the Russia investigation since last year, when Sessions recused himself following reports of his own meeting with the Russian ambassador.

Asked in May about rumblings that House Republicans might move to impeachment, Rosenstein was defiant.

"I think they should understand by now, the Department of Justice is not going to be extorted," he said.

The White House was ambivalent about whether Trump supported the effort to impeach Rosenstein. "The president has been clear that he wants the DOJ to be transparent and cooperate with Congress," spokesman Hogan Gidley told reporters.

Meadows, Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan and the other Republicans who introduced the resolution have criticized Rosenstein and Justice Department officials as not being responsive enough as House committees have demanded documents related to the Russia investigation's inception and a now-closed investigation into Democrat Hillary Clinton's emails.

The five articles of impeachment would charge Rosenstein with failing to produce information, though the department has provided lawmakers with more than 800,000 documents. The resolution notes that Rosenstein was one of several department officials who approved what some Republicans say was improper surveillance of Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

The impeachment resolution also criticizes Rosenstein for refusing to produce a memo that outlines the scope of the investigation and questions whether the investigation was started on legitimate grounds.

It is highly unusual, if not unprecedented, for lawmakers to demand documents that are part of an ongoing criminal investigation.

At a House hearing last month, Rosenstein, along with FBI Director Christopher Wray, faced angry Republicans who alleged bias at the FBI and suggested the department has conspired against Trump. Still, some GOP lawmakers said they would draw the line at impeachment.

"Impeachment is a punishment; it's not a remedy," said House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Trey Gowdy, who has led one of several House GOP investigations into the department and has complained of anti-Trump bias. "If you are looking for documents, then you want compliance, and you want whatever moves you toward compliance."

The impeachment resolution came about two hours after Meadows, Gowdy, Goodlatte and other GOP lawmakers met with Justice Department officials about the documents. The department has created new search systems, set up classified reading rooms and tasked dozens of employees to produce the hundreds of thousands of documents that Republican lawmakers have requested over the past year.

Democrats on the House Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform and intelligence committees called the impeachment effort a "panicked and dangerous attempt to undermine an ongoing criminal investigation in an effort to protect President Trump as the walls are closing in around him and his associates."

So far, the special counsel has charged 32 people and three companies. That includes four Trump cam-

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paign advisers and 12 Russian intelligence officers.

Democratic Reps. Jerrold Nadler of New York, Elijah Cummings of Maryland and Adam Schiff of California said Rosenstein "stands as one of the few restraints against the overreaches of the president and his allies in Congress."

In addition to Meadows and Jordan, the Republican lawmakers who sponsored the impeachment articles are Reps. Jody Hice of Georgia, Jeff Duncan of South Carolina, Andy Biggs of Arizona, Louie Gohmert of Texas, Matt Gaetz of Florida, Scott DesJarlais of Tennessee, Paul Gosar of Arizona, Bill Posey of Florida and Scott Perry of Pennsylvania.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Kevin Freking and Lisa Mascaro in Washington and Philip Marcelo in Boston contributed to this report.

Avenatti to attend event frequented by presidential hopefuls

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

Michael Avenatti, who has gained national attention as the lawyer for porn actress Stormy Daniels, is scheduled to speak next month at an Iowa Democratic fundraiser that has been a frequent stop for those seeking the presidential nomination.

Avenatti announced Thursday on Twitter that he will be speaking at the Iowa Democratic Wing Ding in on Aug. 10 in Clear Lake, Iowa, a state with caucuses that play a pivotal role in winnowing the presidential field. Previous speakers included Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

"Extremely honored to be included as one of the speakers," Avenatti tweeted. "It promises to be a great event as always!"

Avenatti is best known for representing Daniels in her lawsuit against President Donald Trump. For months, he has dominated cable news shows, taunting Trump in interviews and baiting him and his lawyers in tweets.

Earlier this month, Avenatti tweeted that he would run against Trump if the president seeks re-election and no one else with a good chance of defeating him steps up.

"IF (big) he seeks re-election, I will run, but only if I think that there is no other candidate in the race that has a REAL chance at beating him. We can't relive 2016. I love this country, our values and our people too much to sit by while they are destroyed. #FightClub #Basta," he tweeted.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, has said she had sex with Trump in 2006, when he was married, but Trump has denied it. Days before the 2016 presidential election, she was paid \$130,000 to stay silent in a deal handled by Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen. She is suing to invalidate the nondisclosure agreement.

Other speakers at the Wing Ding will include U.S. Rep. John Delaney, a Democrat from Maryland who announced his presidential campaign last year, Andrew Yang, a businessman who has also announced a run in 2020 and U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, an Ohio Democrat.

Secret tape may not add to legal jeopardy for Trump or Cohen

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A secret recording of Donald Trump discussing payments to a Playboy model has brought renewed attention to the question of whether — and how — he might have tried to block politically damaging stories ahead of the 2016 presidential election. But it's not clear that the tape, on its own, creates additional legal problems for the president.

The September 2016 conversation between Trump and his then-lawyer, Michael Cohen, took place weeks after the National Enquirer's parent company reached a \$150,000 deal to pay former Playboy model Karen McDougal for her story of a 2006 affair she says she had with Trump. The recording captures Trump and Cohen discussing acquiring the rights to McDougal's story and whether to pay by cash or check.

At issue is whether the payment the men are discussing was campaign-related and intended to influence

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the election, in which case it would likely be regarded as a contribution, or whether it was merely meant to shield the married Trump from an embarrassing revelation harmful to his personal life. Also important is whether the payment to McDougal from the Enquirer's parent company, American Media Inc., functioned as a backdoor campaign contribution or as a legitimate media company expense.

"It's a piece of evidence. It's not a smoking gun," Rick Hasen, a campaign finance law expert at the University of California, Irvine, said of the recording. "It's relevant to the investigation, and it's relevant to considering whether Trump or Cohen or AMI committed campaign finance violations, but on its own, it does not constitute proof of any violation."

He added, "It does not establish either a motive to spend illegal or unreported money in violation of the campaign finance laws, and it doesn't establish that any money was actually paid for this purpose."

Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani has said the conversation wasn't campaign-related and that Trump and Cohen didn't make a payment to buy the rights.

The Justice Department has been investigating Cohen for months, raiding his home, office and hotel room in search of documents related to McDougal and a separate \$130,000 payment the attorney facilitated before the election to Stormy Daniels, an adult-film actress who says she had sex with Trump in 2006.

Cohen, long a loyal counselor to the president, has more recently signaled that he'd be open to cooperating with prosecutors.

His lawyer, Lanny Davis, released the recording to CNN in a reflection of open discord with Trump. Trump's lawyers circulated a transcript of the call that challenged Davis' assessment of it.

Legal experts say the case raises murky issues, especially as investigators discern the motivations behind AMI's payment and the extent to which Cohen was involved in the arrangement.

Prosecutors could conclude that the Enquirer, which did not publish McDougal's story as part of a tabloid strategy known as "catch and kill," made the payment to aid Trump's election bid in violation of campaign finance regulations that bar corporations from making coordinated contributions.

"If they coordinated to suppress this story in order to help Trump's presidential campaign, that would be a campaign finance violation," said Andrew Herman, a Washington lawyer. "It could be a civil violation. It could be a criminal violation."

AMI, however, could argue that it was acting as a legitimate news organization and in the best interest of its readers by acquiring McDougal's story and withholding it from publication.

A key question for investigators will be whether the arrangements would have taken place even if Trump weren't a candidate because the primary purpose was to protect his reputation. Election references in the recording, including discussion of polls and anxiety over the possible release of Trump's divorce records from first wife Ivana, may create circumstantial evidence that the campaign was a central focus.

The brief recording is unclear as to the purpose of any proposed transaction.

"I think the election was certainly on everybody's mind, but that doesn't make anyone's acts an election contribution or expenditure," said Craig Engle, former general counsel to the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Daniel Petalas, former general counsel at the Federal Election Commission, said the recording could be valuable to prosecutors to the extent it reveals Trump's and Cohen's intent. A former Justice Department prosecutor, Petalas said it was notable Trump seemed concerned that divorce papers could be unsealed, suggesting sensitivity to not wanting embarrassing information out before the election.

He said even if the conversation alone doesn't establish wrongdoing, it could nonetheless be valuable to investigators reviewing the separate payment to Daniels as they examine a potential pattern to subvert campaign finance laws.

Lawyers for Trump and Cohen have made different representations about whether the recording shows Trump wanting to make the payment via cash or check. The Trump team's transcript says he said "don't pay with cash" and wanted it done by check. Davis has disputed that.

But that distinction probably doesn't matter.

"The question comes down to whether or not there's a payment, by any means, that violated the amount

and source requirements of the law," Petalas said. "Paying by check doesn't change anything."

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Arson linked to deaths in Greek town built like 'fire trap' **By COSTAS KANTOURIS and DEREK GATOPOULOS, Associated Press**

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greek authorities said Thursday there were serious indications that a deadly wildfire that gutted a vacation resort near Athens was started deliberately, while experts warned that the devastated coastal town had been built like a "fire trap," with poor safety standards and few escape routes.

The death toll from Monday's blaze east of the Greek capital rose to 82 as rescuers and divers continued to search for more bodies in burnt-out homes and at sea, where hundreds fled to try to escape the inferno.

Public Order Minister Nikos Toskas said satellite image analysis of the deadly fire and a second blaze that broke out Monday on the other side of the city indicated both had been set in multiple places within a short time frame.

"We have serious indications and significant findings of criminal activity concerning arson," Toskas said. "We are troubled by many factors, and there have been physical findings that are the subject of an investigation."

He declined to provide more details.

U.S. military officials told The Associated Press Wednesday that they had been helping Greece gather images of the fire-ravaged areas with combat drones and Navy surveillance aircraft.

Fires near populated areas in Greece are often blamed on arsonists believed to be targeting forest land for development, but arrests are rare.

Most casualties were found at Mati, some 30 kilometers (18 miles) east of Athens, a small seaside resort filled with summer homes and apartments owned by retirees. A group of experts from the University of Athens' Faculty of Geology and Geo-environment said the layout of the resort had acted like a "fire trap" with access to the sea hampered by cliffs, and homes built in wooded areas with little provision for fire safety.

The study also noted that the resort had narrow roads, numerous dead-ends, and was poorly sign-posted, meaning visitors could not easily reach a nearby main road.

Messages of support continued to come in on social media and in letters to the Greek government. They included a letter from Britain's Queen Elizabeth and an Instagram post from Brazilian soccer legend Ronaldinho, showing him pictured in prayer with a comment in Greek that read: "I'm hurting for Greece and Athens. Courage Greek bothers, my thoughts and prayers are with you."

Authorities, meanwhile, were still struggling with the identification of charred bodies. Germany's federal criminal police said a team of its forensics specialists was in Greece to help authorities identify the dead. The team members have worked on major disasters, including the 2004 Asian tsunami and a 2002 mid-air collision of a Russian charter flight and a DHL cargo plane over southern Germany that killed 71 people.

At a morgue in Athens where identification efforts were centered, relatives were informed about the steps needed to match the bodies held there to a missing person, including providing DNA samples and dental records.

"The procedure is difficult, harder than that of other mass disasters which we have dealt with in the past as a forensics department," coroner Nikolaos Kalogrias said. "Here, the main cause of death was burning, in most cases the complete burning (of the body), so identification is very difficult."

Thanassis Moraitis went to the morgue searching for his 90-year-old mother.

He had tried to drive away with his mother, wife and 19-year-old son, but the fire was moving too fast. They had to abandon the car and started running to the beach and into the water. Moraitis suffered burns to his leg from the extreme heat; his mother didn't make it.

"In the sea, there was a rain of fire, there was smoke, there was a Force 12 wind," the 53-year-old Moraitis said, adding that boats rescued him, his wife and son after about three hours.

"I didn't even get a chance to say goodbye to my mother."

Associated Press writers Elena Becatoros, Thanassis Stavrakis and Menelaos Hadjicostis in Athens contributed to this report.

Follow Kantouris at <http://www.twitter.com/CostasKantouris> and Gatopoulos at <http://www.twitter.com/dgatopoulos>

Arson linked to deaths in Greek town built like 'fire trap'

By **COSTAS KANTOURIS** and **DEREK GATOPOULOS**, Associated Press

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Report: China, Russia and Iran ramp up economic spying on US

By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Chinese cyberespionage group called APT10 relentlessly attacks U.S. engineering, telecom and aerospace industries. Russian hackers last year compromised dozens of U.S. energy companies. Iranian hackers known as "Rocket Kitten" repeatedly target American defense companies in hopes of stealing information to boost Tehran's missile and space programs.

While Moscow's efforts to meddle in the 2016 U.S. presidential election are widely known, spy services from China, Russia and Iran, along with their proxy hackers, also are hard at work trying to steal trade secrets and proprietary information from the United States, according to a government report released Thursday. A classified version of the report was sent to Congress.

"Foreign economic and industrial espionage against the United States continues to represent a significant threat to America's prosperity, security and competitive advantage," the National Counterintelligence and Security Center said. "China, Russia and Iran stand out as three of the most capable and active cyber actors tied to economic espionage and the potential theft of U.S. trade secrets and proprietary information."

Cyberespionage is a relatively low-cost, high-yield way to access and acquire information from U.S. research institutions, universities and corporations, the report said. More vulnerabilities will emerge with the increase in cloud computing, artificial intelligence and the proliferation of vehicles, home appliances, medical devices and other items connected to the internet.

Cyberoperations are the preferred method for conducting economic espionage, the report said, but U.S. adversaries also acquire sensitive information by hiring sophisticated hackers, recruiting spies or gleaning material from foreign students studying at American universities.

Adversaries also are infiltrating computer networks of suppliers that serve large companies and then using that connection to worm their way up the chain into large corporate computer systems. Bill Evanina, the nation's top counterintelligence official and director of the center, told reporters at a briefing that business leaders need to investigate the security of computer systems used by companies that supply their air conditioning and heating, printers and copiers and the like.

"Our economic security is our national security," Evanina said "We cannot just get numb to our adversaries stealing our intellectual property."

The report listed two dozen technologies that have piqued the interest of foreign intelligence collectors. They include oil, gas and coal-bed methane gas energies; smart grids; solar and wind technologies; biopharmaceuticals and new vaccines and drugs; defensive marine systems and radar; hybrid and electric cars; pollution control; high-end computer numerically controlled machines, which are used to control factory tools and machines in manufacturing; space infrastructure and exploration technology; synthetic rubber; rare earth materials; quantum computing; and next generation broadband wireless communications networks.

Michael Moss, deputy director of the government's Cyber Threat Intelligence Integration Center, said incidents of economic espionage are growing rapidly. "The thing that continues to surprise me is how fast

it continues to accelerate. It's getting faster and faster," he said.

China uses joint ventures to try to acquire technical know-how, the report said. It said Beijing seeks partnerships with U.S. government labs to learn about specific technology and information about running such facilities and uses front companies to hide the hand of the Chinese government and acquire technology under U.S. export controls.

The Trump administration has railed against China, imposed new tariffs and called for Beijing to end the theft of intellectual property from U.S. companies. The administration also wants China to curb policies that require American and other foreign businesses to hand over technology in exchange for access to the Chinese market.

"If this threat is not addressed, it could erode America's long-term competitive economic advantage," the report said.

Economic espionage conducted by hackers linked to Russia is mostly aimed at finding ways to inflict damage on the United States, disrupt services or benefit its economic interests, according to the report.

"In support of that goal, Russian intelligence services have conducted sophisticated and large-scale hacking operations to collect sensitive U.S. business and technology information," the report said. It also said that Russian "military modernization efforts also likely will be a motivating factor for Russia to steal U.S. intellectual property."

Iranian's operations have typically targeted adversaries in the Middle East, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. But it also tries to infiltrate U.S. networks to acquire technologies to bolster economic growth, modernize its military and increase exports.

"The loss of sensitive information and technologies not only presents a significant threat to U.S. national security," the report said. "It also enables Tehran to develop advanced technologies to boost domestic economic growth, modernize its military forces and increase its foreign sales."

AP-NORC Poll: Latinos see health care communication barriers

By EMILY SWANSON and RUSSELL CONTRERAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 6 in 10 Hispanic adults have had a difficult time communicating with a health care provider because of a language or cultural barrier, and when they do they often turn to outside sources for help, according to a new study conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The survey finds that half of those who have faced those barriers turned to a family member or to another health care provider for assistance. In addition, more than 1 in 4 looked to a translator, public resources in their community or online sources for help when they faced those issues.

Antonio Torres, 53, of Orlando, Florida, who is bilingual and legally blind, told The AP he regularly struggles to understand the medical terms used by doctors and nurses.

"When I tell them I don't understand them, they'll bring someone over to speak to me in Spanish and I don't understand them, either," said Torres, who is Puerto Rican and was raised in New York. "We didn't grow up speaking that formal Spanish, so I have no idea what they are saying."

At times, Torres said he even gets medicine with his name misspelled on the bottle. "And I don't know if I'm taking my medicine or someone else's," he said.

The language and cultural barriers in health care for Latinos are something advocates have been pointing out for years.

In 2014, for example, the Obama administration faced criticism following the rollout of the Spanish version of the federal health care website, CuidadoDeSalud.gov. The translations were so clunky and full of grammatical mistakes that critics say they must have been computer-generated. The website also translated "premium" into "prima," the Spanish word more commonly used to mean a female cousin among Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants.

Along with communication challenges, many Hispanics are concerned about language or cultural accommodations for people in their community who seek long-term care services.

Fewer than half say it would be easy for older Latinos in their area to find a nursing home or assisted living facility with staff that speaks their language, or to find a home health aide who does. Even fewer — less than 3 in 10 — say the same about finding long-term care providers who can prepare the kind of food they are used to. Some have concerns about finding nursing homes and assisted-living facilities that will respect their religious or spiritual beliefs, though fewer have the same concern about home health aides.

Torres said he's not confident he'll find a culturally sensitive nursing home when he's gets older. "I'd rather just live alone and poison myself by accident rather than stay in one of those homes right now," he said.

Like other older Americans, many Hispanics age 40 and older expect to rely on government programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid to pay for long-term care services, even though Medicare does not cover most nursing care or home health aides. But only about 2 in 10 think any of these programs will still be providing at least the same level of benefits five years from now. Just 15 percent of older Hispanics are very confident they will be able to pay for their own future long-term care needs.

The survey also finds that a large majority of older Hispanics are open to using at least one type of telemedicine to receive care, including phone consultations, text messages or video services like Skype, although older Hispanics are somewhat less likely than others in their age group to say they'd be comfortable using some types of telemedicine.

Gabriel Vargas, 41, of Lancaster, South Carolina, who is from Veracruz, Mexico, said he felt these resources in his area already were helping Latino residents. The growth of online options, he said, is breaking down the stigma held by Hispanics around regular checkups and preventative care.

"There's a nonprofit group here that goes out of its way to help," said Vargas, whose first language is Spanish. "Maybe 10 years ago, it was tough. But today I think it's become easier."

The survey was conducted March 13 to April 5 by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, with funding from the SCAN Foundation.

It involved interviews in English and Spanish with 1,522 adults nationwide who are members of NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population, including 458 Hispanic adults. Results from the full survey have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.3 percentage points, and plus or minus 9.5 percentage points for the Hispanic sample.

Contreras contributed to this report from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

IS attack devastates community in southern Syria

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Mourners in southern Syria attended mass funerals Thursday for least 216 people killed in coordinated attacks by Islamic State fighters on a usually peaceful city and surrounding countryside. In the worst violence to hit the area since the country's conflict began, the militants also reportedly abducted at least 18 people, activists said.

The simultaneous attacks on the city of Sweida and surrounding villages a day earlier evoked the dark days of Islamic State violence that beleaguered Syria and neighboring Iraq during the group's heyday in 2014 and 2015. The abduction of civilians — activists say at least 14 were women — also were reminiscent of the group's tactic of taking hostages and using women as sex slaves.

A mass funeral was held in the city of Sweida on Thursday where men gathered in a hall to pay their respects to the dead. The devastated city was covered in black and shops were closed during the day to mourn the mass deaths.

Until Wednesday, Sweida, home to a predominantly Druze community, had largely been spared the violence that has hit Syria since 2011.

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As Syria's civil war took increasingly sectarian undertones, pitting the largely Sunni opposition against the predominantly Alawite ruling class, the Druze minority stayed largely on the sidelines. Community leaders in Sweida took a firm position against participating in the war, resisting enrolling their sons in the army to avoid revenge attacks. The Druze, followers of an esoteric offshoot of Islam, have kept their own local militias.

The attacks Wednesday rocked the community, sparking criticism of the government for failing to protect the minority group that has for years been spared the violence.

Diana Semaan, a Syria researcher at the rights group Amnesty International, said there were signs that no government troops or security were present to provide protection for the community when it came under attack. Despite the community's push-back against getting involved in the war, the government has an "obligation" to protect them, Semaan said.

"We call on all sides to prioritize the protection of civilians. This didn't happen (in Sweida)," she said. "No government troops were in site."

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

The militants launched their offensive with a spate of suicide bombing attacks in the city of Sweida in the early hours of Wednesday, including one at a busy vegetable market that left a scene of devastation. The militants also swarmed several villages in the province's northeast, and in some cases, shot residents as they slept, according to activist-operated Facebook page Sweida News Network.

Hassan Omar, a government health official in Sweida province, said Thursday that at least 150 people were wounded in the attacks and that some were in critical condition.

SNN also shared the names of at least 18 people abducted from one village, Shabki, most of them women. Their fate remained unknown and it was not immediately clear if they were missing or abducted.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported the abduction, saying dozens were taken from their homes but details of the operation remained unclear. The Observatory put the death toll at 246, including 111 members of local militias who took up arms to fight the advancing militants. At least 135 civilians were among the killed, the Observatory said.

SNN said many of the dead were shot in the head as they slept.

The Observatory also reported bodies found killed inside homes.

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.

On Thursday afternoon, Syrian troops entered the town of Quneitra in the Golan Heights and reached the frontier with the Israeli-occupied part of the region, where the Syrian Central Military Media said they raised the Syrian flag.

The SCMM posted photographs from inside the town, where homes have been left badly damaged since wars with Israel decades ago.

Syrian state TV also reported that troops captured the nearby town of Sahem al-Golan later in the day.

IS has been largely defeated in Syria and Iraq, but still has pockets of territory it controls in eastern and southern Syria.

The extremist group boasted that its "soldiers" killed more than 100 people in Sweida.

In a statement posted on the group's social media channels, it said its militants carried out surprise attacks on government and security centers, sparking clashes with Syrian troops and allied militias. It mentioned nothing about attacking civilians in villages.

The Islamic State group posted no death toll for its own men in Wednesday's fighting. The Observatory said at least 56 militants were killed.

European Central Bank says rates will remain low for months

By DAVID McHUGH, Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — The European Central Bank is stressing that interest rates will stay low well into next year even as the U.S. Federal Reserve is expected to keep raising rates in coming months. The central bank for the 19 countries that use the euro left its key rates and monetary stimulus settings unchanged at a meeting Thursday at its headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany.

ECB President head Mario Draghi was asked at a news conference about accusations by U.S. President Donald Trump that Europe is purposefully pushing its currency down with low interest rates to gain a trade advantage.

But Draghi said the ECB monetary stimulus efforts were simply a reflection that Europe and the United States economies had emerged from the financial crisis at different periods. The eurozone economy has not had as much time to strengthen and therefore needs lower rates.

"We said several times that the exchange rate is not a policy target," he said.

Stimulus policies such as zero interest rates can weaken a currency. But Draghi noted that euro has actually appreciated when measured against all of Europe's trading partners.

He said that while the eurozone economy is enjoying solid growth, "significant monetary policy stimulus is still needed."

The bank had said at the previous meeting, on June 14, that it would phase out its 2.4 trillion-euro (\$2.8 trillion) bond-buying stimulus program by year-end, and would keep interest rates on hold "through the summer" of 2019. Speculation on what "through the summer" means has ranged from July to September or even later. Draghi declined to be more precise during the news conference.

The ECB is withdrawing stimulus as the economy grows, but doing it so slowly that its path is diverging sharply from that of the Fed, which is already raising rates.

The rich world's major central banks — also including the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan— are slowly withdrawing stimulus measures they deployed to support the economy during and after the global financial crisis and Great Recession.

The end of the stimulus will have wide-ranging effects, such as increasing borrowing costs for governments and home buyers. By raising returns on safe assets such as bonds and savings accounts, it could also make those holdings more attractive relative to stocks and change investor attitudes toward the risks of the longstanding bull market. The ECB is proceeding gingerly to avoid market disruptions.

ECB officials have expressed confidence that inflation is sustainably trending toward their goal of just under 2 percent. It came in at 2 percent in June, although when excluding volatile items like oil and food, prices remain weaker. The central bankers are still keeping a wary eye on recent signs of weaker growth, and on the chance that a trade conflict between the United States and other countries could hurt global business and the export-dependent European economy.

Draghi welcomed a tentative agreement between the EU and U.S. on Wednesday that put a halt to any new tariffs and sought to reduce existing ones.

"It shows that there is a willingness to discuss trade issues in a multilateral trade framework again," he said.

The ECB's short-term benchmark rate was kept unchanged at a record low of zero. By comparison, the Fed's key rate is in a range between 1.75 percent and 2 percent and more increases are expected this year. The bond-buying program, meanwhile, pumps newly created money into the banking system in an attempt to raise inflation and growth by making credit easier to get.

Girl Scouts stress 'girl power' in new recruitment efforts

By DAVID CRARY, AP National Writer

As American women seek a larger role in politics, fairer wages and an end to sexual harassment, the Girl Scouts see an opportune time to show some swagger in promoting their core mission: girl empowerment.

They recruited Queen Latifah to narrate a video featuring famous former Girl Scouts — Venus Williams,

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Katie Couric and many more. And they indulged in a little bragging when Girl Scout alumna Meghan Markle married into Britain's royal family.

"Life is always better with a Girl Scout by your side, and Prince Harry truly hit the jackpot," enthused a post on Girl Scout Blog.

But the marketing campaign is about more than boasting. It's also an effort to confront several high-stakes challenges, including reversing a long slide in membership, making the case for all-girl scouting after the rival Boy Scouts included girls and updating the organization's curriculum for a new generation that expects more than cookies and camping.

"What's happening in society as a whole makes it all the more important for girls to have every possible opportunity to learn that their voice and opinion matter, and to have the courage and confidence to become who they want to be," said Megan Ferland, CEO of the Seattle-based Girl Scouts of Western Washington.

One major challenge, she said, is to puncture some of the myths and stereotypes that affect public perceptions.

"People hear 'Girl Scouts' and think, 'Oh, those cute little girls that sell the cookies and make macaroni necklaces' and that's it," Ferland said. "It is so much more than that."

She cited activities such as robotics and rock climbing, a strong emphasis on community service and the iconic cookie sales, which she depicted in a recent newspaper essay as "the largest girl-run business in the world."

The Boy Scouts decided last year to admit girls into all programs. But the Girl Scouts' parent organization, Girl Scouts of the USA, will not follow suit by admitting boys.

"I believe with full conviction that Girl Scouts is the best leadership organization in the world for girls, and that is because we are girl-led and girl-centric," said Violet Apple, CEO of Girl Scouts of Central Maryland.

The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, as well as other youth organizations and sports leagues, have experienced membership declines in recent years, for reasons ranging from busy family schedules to the lure of online games and social media. The Girl Scouts say they now have about 1.76 million girls and 780,000 adult members — down from about 2.9 million girls and 900,000 adult volunteers in 2003.

Some recruitment efforts reflect the Girl Scouts' pride in the diversity of their membership. For example, the organization over the past two years has created more than 240 new troops in low-income Los Angeles neighborhoods to serve several thousand girls from Hispanic, African-American, Korean and other communities.

Denise Nowack, who oversees the recruitment programs, said the Girl Scouts council in LA decided to cover basic first-year costs for the new troops, including membership fees and uniforms, to ease the financial burden.

Many other councils struggle to find enough adults to serve as volunteer troop leaders, leaving hundreds of girls on waiting lists.

"It's really sad," said Asha Menon, a troop leader for seven years in the Atlanta suburb of McDonough. "All these parents show up with kids who want to be in it — but they want another adult to take the lead."

In Chicago, TV producer Craig Harris has tried — with minimal success — to persuade other men to join him as Girl Scout leaders. Harris started as a volunteer 14 years ago when his eldest daughter — now a confident college student — joined the Girl Scouts as a shy 5-year-old.

Harris' 11-year-old daughter is active in the Girl Scouts, pursuing her interest in science.

"I lead a full career, but I've found ample time to be a volunteer," Harris said. "My oldest daughter went all the way through, and I was there at every stage. It was invaluable time building those memories with her."

Among the many mothers juggling work and Girl Scout duties is Audra Fordin, owner of an auto-repair business in New York City's Flushing neighborhood. She is founder of an education initiative called Women Auto Know and leader of her teenage daughter's troop.

Fordin is confident the Girl Scouts can maintain their stature as an all-girl institution even as the Boy Scouts make its programs available to boys and girls.

"Some girls may not feel as capable of doing the same things boys can do," she said. "But when we

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come together in a group, we can accomplish whatever we want to do.”

Reeny Boutros, 18, of Wichita, Kansas, started Girl Scouts at age 5. She said the experience helped her develop the skills and confidence that recently earned her admission to Stanford University, with plans to major in computer science.

Boutros has received Girl Scouting’s highest honors — first earning the elite Gold Award, then being selected as one of 10 National Young Women of Distinction. She’s a technology whiz now, but recalled struggling with studies back in middle school.

“The badge work (with Girl Scouts) was one of the few academic recognitions I got,” she said. “I got exposed to archaeology, photography. It was a great way to boost my self-esteem.”

Boutros’ experience reflects the Girl Scouts’ push to engage girls in science, technology, engineering and math. There are a host of new STEM-related badges, and there’s a newly opened year-round camp in Dallas — the STEM Center of Excellence — that will offer K-12 STEM programs on a 92-acre campus.

But the best part of being a Girl Scout? “It’s always been camping,” she said. “You put your phones away and bond with nature — and just giggle uncontrollably with your friends.”

World premieres at Venice for Gosling, Cooper movies

ROME (AP) — The Venice Film Festival will feature plenty of Hollywood star power, including premieres for a biopic of astronaut Neil Armstrong starring Ryan Gosling, a period western by the Coen brothers with Liam Neeson, and Bradley Cooper’s directorial debut starring Lady Gaga.

The 75th edition of the world’s oldest film festival opens on Aug. 29 with the world premiere of “First Man” by Damien Chazelle. Like his previous film “La La Land,” which also opened the festival and earned six Oscars, it stars Gosling, who plays Armstrong.

“The Ballad of Buster Scruggs” is the new offering from the Coen brothers. It started out as a television series before being turned into a movie featuring Tom Waits.

Emma Stone, Olivia Colman and Rachel Weisz star in an irreverent royal comedy set in the early 18th century called “The Favourite,” by Yorgos Lanthimos, which also makes its debut on the Lido.

Tilda Swinton and Dakota Johnson are paired in the horror movie “Suspiria” by Luca Guadagnino, who earned acclaim for last year’s “Call Me By Your Name.”

Among other films being shown for the first time are “Roma,” Alfonso Cuarón’s first film since “Gravity;” Mike Leigh’s “Peterloo,” about an 1819 massacre in northern England; and “Sunset” by Hungarian director Laszlo Nemes, who captured the 2016 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film with “Son of Saul.”

Debuting out of competition for the Golden Lion are Bradley Cooper’s “A Star is Born,” in which he stars alongside Gaga, and the police abuse drama “Dragged Across Concrete” with Mel Gibson and Vince Vaughn.

Golden Lions for career achievements will be presented to British actress Vanessa Redgrave and Canadian filmmaker David Cronenberg at the festival, which runs through Sept. 8.

Man explodes small bomb outside US Embassy in Beijing

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A man exploded a small homemade bomb outside the U.S. Embassy in Beijing on Thursday, injuring only himself, according to police and an embassy spokesperson.

Photos on social media showed a large amount of smoke and police vehicles surrounding the embassy shortly after the incident. Apart from a heightened security presence, the scene outside appeared to be normal by early afternoon.

The Beijing Police Department posted a statement on its website identifying the suspect only by his surname, Jiang, and said he was 26 years old and a native of Tongliao city in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia. He was injured on the hand by the explosive device, which was made from fireworks and was detonated at about 1 p.m., police said.

There was no word on a motive and the statement said the investigation was continuing.

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No damage was done to embassy property and no other injuries were recorded, a U.S. embassy spokesperson said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

Only one person was involved and police responded to the situation, the spokesperson said.

Neither the police nor the embassy had any comment on a report by the ruling Communist Party newspaper Global Times that said officers had earlier removed a woman from outside the embassy who had sprayed gasoline on herself in a "suspected attempt at self-immolation" at around 11 a.m.

China and the U.S. are in the middle of a trade dispute, but America remains a hugely popular destination for travel, education and immigration for Chinese citizens.

On weekdays, large lines of visa applicants form outside the embassy, which sits in a busy corner of the city with numerous diplomatic facilities as well as hotels and stores.

Backing off auto tariffs, US and EU agree to more talks

By KEN THOMAS and PAUL WISEMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and European leaders pulled back from the brink of a trade war over autos Wednesday and agreed to open talks to tear down trade barriers between the United States and the European Union.

But while politicians and businesses welcomed the deal Thursday, the agreement was vague, the negotiations are sure to be contentious, and the United States remains embroiled in major trade disputes with China and other countries.

In a hastily called Rose Garden appearance with Trump, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said the U.S. and the EU had agreed to hold off on new tariffs, suggesting that the United States will suspend plans to start taxing European auto imports — a move that would have marked a major escalation in trade tensions between the allies.

Trump also said the EU had agreed to buy "a lot of soybeans" and increase its imports of liquefied natural gas from the U.S. And the two agreed to resolve a dispute over U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Thursday addressing steel and aluminum tariffs and counter tariffs would be covered in the first phase of talks between the U.S. and the EU. He reiterated that no new tariffs would be imposed during the negotiations and if the US concluded an agreement, "there would be no car tariffs on the EU."

Trump was traveling to Iowa and Illinois Thursday in which his trade agenda was expected to be a leading issue. The administration recently announced a \$12 billion temporary aid package for farmers — including soybean producers — dealing with the impact of retaliatory tariffs.

"It's encouraging that they're talking about freer trade rather than trade barriers and an escalating tariff war," said Rufus Yerxa, president of the National Foreign Trade Council and a former U.S. trade official. But he said reaching a detailed trade agreement with the EU would likely prove difficult.

The tone was friendlier than it has been. During a recent European trip, Trump referred to the EU as a "foe, what they do to us in trade." The EU's Juncker said in March, after Trump imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, that "this is basically a stupid process, the fact that we have to do this. But we have to do it. We can also do stupid."

On Wednesday, Trump and Juncker said they have agreed to work toward "zero tariffs" and "zero subsidies" on non-automotive goods.

Trump told reporters it was a "very big day for free and fair trade" and later tweeted a photo of himself and Juncker in an embrace, with Juncker kissing his cheek.

"Obviously the European Union, as represented by @JunckerEU and the United States, as represented by yours truly, love each other!" he wrote.

The agreement was welcomed by political and business leaders in Germany, the EU's biggest economy, though their relief was tempered with caution that details have to be firmed up.

"Very demanding and intensive negotiations lie ahead of us," German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said, vowing that "we will represent and defend our European interests just as emphatically as the U.S."

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does with its interests." He said the Trump-Juncker accord was "a good start — it takes away many people's worries that the global economy could suffer serious damage in the coming months from a trade war."

Trump campaigned on a vow to get tough on trading partners he accuses of taking advantage of bad trade deals to run up huge trade surpluses with the U.S.

He has slapped taxes on imported steel and aluminum, saying they pose a threat to U.S. national security. The U.S. and EU are now working to resolve their differences over steel and aluminum — but the tariffs are still in place. And they would continue to hit U.S. trading partners like Canada, Mexico and Japan even if the U.S. and the EU cut a deal.

Whatever progress was achieved Wednesday could provide some relief for U.S. automakers. The escalating trade war and tariffs on steel and aluminum had put pressure on auto companies' earnings. General Motors slashed its outlook, and shares of Ford Motor Co. and auto parts companies have fallen.

"Our biggest exposure, our biggest unmitigated exposure, is really steel and aluminum when you look at all of the commodities," GM CEO Mary Barra said Wednesday.

Trump has also imposed tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese imports — a figure he has threatened to raise to \$500 billion — in a dispute over Beijing's aggressive drive to supplant U.S. technological dominance.

China has counterpunched with tariffs on American products, including soybeans and pork — a shot at Trump supporters in the U.S. heartland.

The EU is stepping in to ease some of U.S. farmers' pain. Juncker said the EU "can import more soybeans from the U.S., and it will be done."

Mary Lovely, a Syracuse University economist who studies trade, said, "The Chinese are not going to be buying our soybeans, so almost by musical chairs our soybeans are going to Europe." The trouble is, China last year imported \$12.3 billion in U.S. soybeans, the EU just \$1.6 billion.

Trump's announcement stunned lawmakers who arrived at the White House ready to unload concerns over the administration's trade policies only to be quickly ushered into Rose Garden for what the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee called "quite a startling" development.

"I think everybody sort of changed what they were going to say," said Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan.

Lisa Mascaro, Kevin Freking, Christopher Rugaber, Darlene Superville, Matthew Daly and Josh Boak in Washington and Geir Moulson in Berlin contributed to this story.

Trump touts trade win in Illinois steel town as others lose

By SARA BURNETT, Associated Press

Steelworkers in Granite City, Illinois, threw a street party — complete with hot dogs, cold beer and a singer in red, white and blue — when U.S. Steel announced earlier this year it was bringing hundreds of laid-off employees back to work at the local mill.

On Thursday they'll celebrate again, this time with President Donald Trump.

U.S. Steel credited Trump's plan to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum when the company announced in March it was firing up a furnace at Granite City Works that had been idled for more than two years. Since then, Trump has pointed to the community east of St. Louis as an example of how his "America First" approach to trade will help U.S. workers — a case he'll make again Thursday before a crowd of employees and local residents who say this steel town has come alive again.

"Our community is excited to have the president come, and we're especially excited to see jobs coming back to Granite City," said James Amos, the city's economic development director. "To have the president of the United States visit your city feels like, maybe, icing on the cake."

But not everyone is in a partying mood. Others in Illinois and the Midwest, from farmers to manufacturers and technology companies, warn a global trade war and retaliatory tariffs from countries such as China, Mexico and Canada are causing job losses. The new tariffs threaten more than \$3.8 billion in Illinois exports, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce says, and major Illinois-based companies including Caterpillar and Boeing already have been negatively affected.

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"While we're happy Granite City has those jobs coming back, it's a lot harder to see the jobs that are lost or not created in the rest of the state because of the tariffs," said Illinois Chamber of Commerce President Todd Maisch. He described the administration's policies as "really negative" for most of Illinois, the nation's fifth-largest economy.

Richard Guebert, a farmer and president of the Illinois Farm Bureau, said he told Vice President Mike Pence during a meeting last week that there's "a lot of angst" among farmers after several tough years and with another strong crop likely to lower prices this year. He worries particularly about whether young farmers will be able to keep going in a state where one of every four rows of soybeans is exported to China.

"Older, more seasoned farmers have a better asset base. They can weather storms like this," Guebert said. "The young farmers are having a definite challenge."

A \$12 billion aid package the administration announced Tuesday to help farmers hurt by the trade disputes is "a start," Guebert said, but "won't make farmers whole in the face of continued trade tensions."

Factories around the region also have been hurt. Mid Continent Nail Corp. in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, has shuttered a multimillion-dollar plant and is "on the brink of extinction."

The company, which says it's the nation's largest nail manufacturer, employed 510 workers before Trump raised tariffs on June 1 but has since slashed its workforce to 370, spokesman James Glassman said. The tariffs led to a big jump in the price of steel wire, the raw material Mid Continent imports from Mexico to make nails. When Mid Continent raised its prices 25 percent, customers turned to cheaper foreign-made nails.

"This is a county that went 79 percent for Trump so people are certainly willing to give him the benefit of the doubt," Glassman said. "But their jobs are at stake because of this misguided tariff."

Trump will travel to Granite City with Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Bost, whose southern Illinois district includes the steel mill as well as many farmers. The seat is one of Democrats' top targets as they look to regain control of the House this fall.

Bost, who's being challenged by St. Clair County State's Attorney Brendan Kelly, could get a boost from the Trump visit. While Illinois went heavily for Hillary Clinton in 2016 thanks to large support from the Chicago area, most of Southern Illinois backed Trump.

The more than 2,000 workers laid off from Granite City Works got the notice just before Thanksgiving 2015. U.S. Steel cited low oil prices — because the mill produces steel for oil refineries and the auto industry — as well as the availability of cheap, imported steel.

Granite City Works is now near its 2015 employment level of 2,100, with a second blast furnace to be operating by this fall. Jobs there mean dozens more at steel-processing plants throughout the city that bend or cut or coat or reshape the raw product, Amos said.

"There's no question we're thankful for what's happened and we're not afraid to say that the president and Congressman Bost did something we're thankful for," he said.

Associated Press reporters John O'Connor in Springfield, Illinois, and Jim Salter in St. Louis contributed. Burnett reported from Chicago.

Asian shares mostly higher, defying Facebook-led tech slump

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares were mostly higher early Friday as investors shrugged off Facebook's nearly \$120 billion overnight plunge in market value, the biggest-ever one-day loss in dollar value for a U.S. company.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index added 0.3 percent to 22,648.67 and the Kospi in South Korea edged 0.1 percent higher to 2,290.98. The Shanghai Composite index slipped 0.1 percent to 2,880.51 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index was little changed at 28,769.49. Australia's S&P ASX 200 jumped 0.7 percent to 6,289.30. Shares gained in Taiwan and Indonesia but were lower in Singapore.

WALL STREET: Facebook's tumble, brought on by its warning to investors that it sees slower revenue

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growth ahead, led a decline in technology shares and snapped a three-day winning streak for the S&P 500 index, which lost 0.3 percent to 2,837.44. The Nasdaq composite index, which is heavily weighted with technology companies, lost 80.05 points, or 1 percent, to 7,852.18. But broader gains in industrial, energy and consumer goods companies helped offset those losses. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, whose 30 members don't include Facebook, had a much better day, rising 0.4 percent to 25,527.07. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks gained 0.6 percent to 1,695.36. More stocks rose than fell on the New York Stock Exchange.

TRADE: The agreement between President Donald Trump and a European delegation to work on a pact to dismantle trade barrier inspired fresh optimism among investors that trade tensions between the U.S. and European Union may be on the mend. But it's worrying for Asian trading partners, especially China, which could lose leverage with Washington in its own disputes, especially over its imports of soybeans.

JAPAN: The Bank of Japan is due to hold a policy meeting early next week that some analysts believe could bring at least minor changes to the longstanding ultra-lax monetary policy for the world's third-largest economy. Sustained relatively strong growth has raised expectations that the central bank may need to consider further tempering its massive purchases of government bonds and other assets.

ANALYST'S VIEWPOINT: "The Bank of Japan has a mandate to focus on financial stability as well as inflation. Some argue that sustained ultra-loose policy could generate unwelcome financial risks and so it should be reversed even if inflation remains well below target," Marcel Thieli of Capital Economics said in a commentary. But he added, "it would take far more than a further few months of stronger wage or inflation data to convince us that a change in stance was a possibility in the next couple of years."

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude rose 4 cents to \$69.65 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It picked up 31 cents to settle at \$69.61 per barrel on Thursday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 6 cents to \$75.18. It added 61 cents in London to close at \$74.54.

CURRENCIES: The dollar slipped to 110.98 yen from 111.23 yen on Thursday. The euro rose to \$1.1652 from \$1.1645.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, July 27, the 208th day of 2018. There are 157 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 27, 1974, the House Judiciary Committee voted 27-11 to adopt the first of three articles of impeachment against President Richard Nixon, charging he had personally engaged in a course of conduct designed to obstruct justice in the Watergate case.

On this date:

In 1789, President George Washington signed a measure establishing the Department of Foreign Affairs, forerunner of the Department of State.

In 1866, Cyrus W. Field finished laying out the first successful underwater telegraph cable between North America and Europe (a previous cable in 1858 burned out after only a few weeks' use).

In 1909, during the first official test of the U.S. Army's first airplane, Orville Wright flew himself and a passenger, Lt. Frank Lahm, above Fort Myer, Va., for one hour and 12 minutes.

In 1921, Canadian researcher Frederick Banting and his assistant, Charles Best, succeeded in isolating the hormone insulin at the University of Toronto.

In 1942, during World War II, the First Battle of El Alamein in Egypt ended in a draw as Allied forces stalled the progress of Axis invaders. (The Allies went on to win a clear victory over the Axis in the Second Battle of El Alamein later that year.)

In 1953, the Korean War armistice was signed at Panmunjom, ending three years of fighting.

In 1960, Vice President Richard M. Nixon was nominated for president on the first ballot at the Republican national convention in Chicago.

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In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed the Kerner Commission to assess the causes of urban rioting, the same day black militant H. Rap Brown told a press conference in Washington that violence was "as American as cherry pie."

In 1980, on day 267 of the Iranian hostage crisis, the deposed Shah of Iran died at a military hospital outside Cairo, Egypt, at age 60.

In 1981, 6-year-old Adam Walsh was abducted from a department store in Hollywood, Fla., and was later murdered. (His father, John Walsh, became a well-known crime victims' advocate.)

In 1996, terror struck the Atlanta Olympics as a pipe bomb exploded at Centennial Olympic Park, directly killing one person and injuring 111. (Anti-government extremist Eric Rudolph later pleaded guilty to the bombing, exonerating security guard Richard Jewell, who had been wrongly suspected.)

In 2003, comedian Bob Hope died in Toluca Lake, California, at age 100.

Ten years ago: A gunman went on a rampage at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, killing two people and wounding six others. (Jim D. Adkisson later pleaded guilty to murder and attempted murder and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.) Two bombs targeting civilians at a packed square in Istanbul, Turkey, killed 17 people. Iran hanged 29 people convicted of murder, drug trafficking and other crimes. Carlos Sastre (SAHS'-treh) of Spain won the Tour de France in one of the closest finishes in the 105-year-old race.

Five years ago: Security forces and armed men clashed with supporters of Egypt's ousted president, Mohammed Morsi, killing at least 80 people. More than a thousand inmates escaped a prison in Libya as protesters stormed political party offices across the country. Former Louisiana congresswoman Lindy Boggs, 97, died in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

One year ago: New White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci, in an interview published by The New Yorker, attacked chief of staff Reince Priebus and other White House officials in sometimes profane terms. (A day later, President Donald Trump announced that Priebus was being replaced by John Kelly. Scaramucci himself was ousted on July 31.) The Boy Scouts' chief executive apologized to those offended by the aggressive political rhetoric in President Donald Trump's recent speech to the Scouts' national jamboree. As stock in Amazon hit an all-time high, CEO Jeff Bezos briefly became the world's richest man; Microsoft founder Bill Gates reclaimed the lead by afternoon as Amazon stock fell nearly 1 percent for the day.

Today's Birthdays: TV producer Norman Lear is 96. Sportscaster Irv Cross is 79. Actor John Pleshette is 76. Actress-director Betty Thomas is 71. Olympic gold medal figure skater Peggy Fleming is 70. Singer Maureen McGovern is 69. Actress Janet Eilber is 67. Rock musician Tris Imboden (Chicago) is 67. Actress Roxanne Hart is 64. Country musician Duncan Cameron is 62. Comedian-actress-writer Carol Leifer is 62. Comedian Bill Engvall is 61. Jazz singer Karrin Allyson is 56. Country singer Stacy Dean Campbell is 51. Rock singer Juliana Hatfield is 51. Actor Julian McMahon is 50. Actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (NIH'-koh-lye KAH'-stur WAHL'-dah) is 48. Comedian Maya Rudolph is 46. Rock musician Abe Cunningham is 45. Singer-songwriter Pete Yorn is 44. Former MLB All-Star Alex Rodriguez is 43. Actor Seamus Dever is 42. Actor Jonathan Rhys (rees) Meyers is 41. Actress/comedian Heidi Gardner is 35. Actor Blair Redford is 35. Actress Taylor Schilling is 34. Singer Cheyenne Kimball is 28. Golfer Jordan Spieth is 25. Actress Alyvia Alyn Lind is 11.

Thought for Today: "We usually know what we can do, but temptation shows us who we are." — Thomas a Kempis, German theologian (1380-1471).