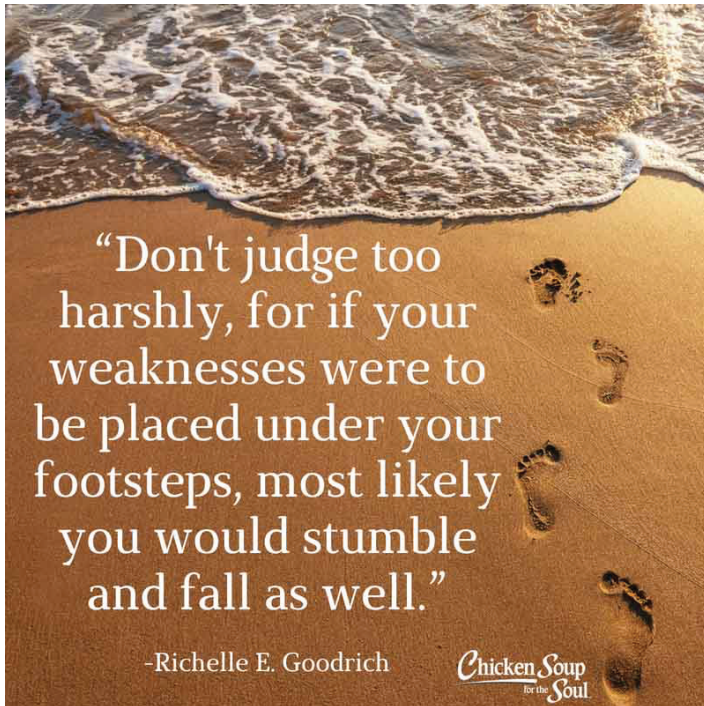


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The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **GONE**

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East

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Beresford Watchdogs

VS



Groton Area Tigers

Friday, Sept. 7, 2018
at Doney Field, Groton, 7:00 pm

Friday, September 7, 2018

6:00pm: Soccer: Girls Varsity Match vs. West Central @ West Central High School

7:00pm: Football: Boys Varsity Game vs. Beresford @ Groton Area High School Doney Field

Saturday, September 8, 2018

1:00pm: Soccer: Girls Varsity Match vs. S. F. Christian @ Groton Area High School

3:00pm: Soccer: Boys Varsity Match vs. S. F. Christian @ Groton Area High School

Sunday, September 9, 2018

Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course. Noon shotgun start. 18 holes - Scramble

Monday, September 10, 2018

2:00pm: Cross Country: Varsity Meet vs. Webster Area High School @ Webster Golf Course

5:00pm: Football: Boys JV Game vs. Redfield-Doland @ Doland High School

7:00pm- 9:00pm: School Board Meeting Groton Area High School

7:00pm: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

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Upgrading wastewater systems in SD a \$160 million task State residents will pay bulk of costs to clean up sewer systems

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

Fixing the aging, often overworked systems that treat municipal wastewater in South Dakota would cost nearly \$160 million, a cost borne mostly by state residents whose drinking water could be at stake.

Officials with the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources said in an email to News Watch that "the biggest issue facing wastewater treatment in South Dakota and the United States is repair and replacement of aging infrastructure, along with funding for new technologies."

System upgrades are critical to improving the water quality in state rivers because pollution from aging systems could taint the drinking water supplies of some state residents.

In all, 98 South Dakota municipalities get drinking water from surface water sources, almost exclusively rivers. Seven municipalities have dedicated surface water systems and 91 buy their water from rural systems that use surface water as the source, according to Brian Walsh, spokesman for the state DENR. The Missouri River is the source for many of those drinking water systems.

The 20 biggest cities in South Dakota dump nearly 50 million gallons of treated sewage into state rivers each day, according to a News Watch analysis. Though most cities have upgraded their systems over the years, many were built decades ago. Mobridge, which dumps into the Missouri River, built its system in 1958, while Belle Fourche opened its system that dumps into a small creek in 1959. The average age of the core elements of the systems in the largest 20 cities is 41.2 years.

Inspection and permit records reveal that older treatment systems often have trouble meeting pollution limits. The town of Sinai -- a hamlet of about 120 people in southwestern Brookings County -- had a mechanical treatment system built in 1979 that frequently violated wastewater standards. The city was cited for 176 violations of biological oxygen demand, acidity and total suspended solids released between 2008 and 2015, according to state inspection data. The system dumped 15,000 gallons of wastewater per day into Bolstad Slough.

In 2016, the state ordered the town to build a new system, and using local and state funds, a two-cell stabilization pond system was built for \$1.5 million. Since then, discharges into the slough have stopped and no new effluent violations have been reported, according to the DENR.

The DENR said the State Water Plan, which guides project proposals and funding, includes 36 identified but unfunded wastewater projects of various types with a combined cost of \$157 million.

Dan Fink, maintenance superintendent for the city of Harrisburg, among the state's fastest-growing cities, said that community is in the midst of a debate over building a new wastewater system or continuing to pipe waste to the Sioux Falls Water Reclamation Facility for treatment. The decision comes amid resident complaints over occasional odors from the existing lagoon system.

"This is a multi-million-dollar decision as to which would be better for the taxpayers," Fink said.

According to the city's website, Harrisburg in 2015 was offered a long-term option to continue pumping waste to Sioux Falls at a cost of up to \$30 million over 20 years. The price tag led the city to hire an engineering firm that created two options for a new system that would cost \$15 million to \$20 million. Meanwhile, Harrisburg officials are talking with neighboring cities of Tea and

Robert B. Johnson Estate Auction

Saturday, Sept. 15, 2018 10AM

Location: 204 Hickory St., Langford, SD

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Worthing to explore a shared system. The issue remains unsettled, Fink said.

"I do know that they (local residents) are going to pay substantially more for whatever we're going to do," Fink said.

Billions needed for nation, neighboring states

The upgrades needed in South Dakota pale compared to the potential cost to the nation and neighboring states.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that \$271 billion in deficiencies need repair at treatment plants across the country. Half of the nation's roughly 22,000 wastewater facilities need repair or replacement, the agency said. Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska all need more than \$2 billion in system upgrades.

The great need comes as federal funding for system upgrades and other state regulatory functions has been steady or falling in South Dakota and other states in recent years. In 2012, the state received about \$1.66 million in federal money; that fluctuated but fell to \$1.58 million in 2017.

DENR officials now say their 10-person permit and inspection team is fully staffed for the first time in six years. The staffing increase was enabled by passage of a measure by the 2018 South Dakota Legislature creating a new stormwater discharge fee placed on developers and municipalities and increasing the wastewater discharge permit fee for the first time in 25 years.

To encourage upgrades of wastewater facilities, the state holds \$57 million in its Clean Water State Revolving Fund that was formed in 1989. Over the years, more than \$667 million in loans have been made from that fund to improve wastewater systems in South Dakota.

About two-thirds of systems in need of upgrade across the country are in cities of 3,500 people or less, according to the EPA. Eight of 10 outdated systems are in cities under 10,000 population. In South Dakota, the need in small communities is even more pronounced: about 80 percent of municipalities with an identified need have populations of 3,500 or less.

But bigger cities also face major investments. Rapid City may spend up to \$62 million and Sioux Falls is considering \$260 million in wastewater upgrades over the next several years.

Just keeping municipal systems operational is a big expense for local taxpayers. Sioux Falls spends about \$22.5 million a year to run its treatment plant, Rapid City spends about \$12.6 million, and the cities of Huron, Mitchell and Spearfish pay about \$2 million a year. Vermillion and Madison spend about \$1.5 million annually, while Mobridge spends \$465,000 and Tea about \$350,000.

A \$5 million upgrade

Blame it on the weather or poor performance by microbes, but the city of Dell Rapids couldn't stop violating ammonia limits in its quarterly effluent discharges to the Big Sioux River. The state flagged the Minnehaha County city of about 3,700 for ammonia violations in September and December of 2010, in May of 2011 and again in May, 2013 and May, 2015.

Eventually, the state in 2016 ordered the city to upgrade or replace its system. The compliance schedule sent Dell Rapids officials into a nearly 2-year effort to build, and afford, a better system.

City Administrator Justin Weiland recalls hiring an engineering firm and traveling to Iowa and in-state sites to view modern treatment systems up close.

After considering a submerged attached growth reactor system – known for ease of operation and effective cold-weather ammonia removal – the city council instead voted to build a new sequencing batch reactor that uses oxygen and activated sludge to remove solids and bacteria and treat raw sewage, as the name applies, in batches of water eventually suitable for dumping onto land or in waterways. As part of the upgrade, the city also moved away from using chlorine to kill bacteria and instead now uses safer ultraviolet light.

The new plant began operating in May and things have so far gone well, if not a bit chaotic, Weiland said. "It's

**St. John's Soup, Sandwich,
and Pie Luncheon**

September 13, 2018, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

\$2.00 per item

**For take-out orders, call 397-2386 at
10:30 a.m. or after.**

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more manpower; it's a learning curve," he said, noting that testing requirements have increased with the new system.

The city received significant financial help from the state to build the roughly \$5 million plant that will dump about 6.5 million gallons of treated wastewater into the Big Sioux River annually.

Dell Rapids received about \$3 million in state grants from the Consolidated Fund and the Build America Bond grant programs. The city also received a \$2.4 million loan from the State Revolving Fund at a 3.25 percent interest rate.

Even with the grants, the 1,320 users of the system in Dell Rapids will pay more for sewer and water due to the upgrade.

Prior to the new system, the average monthly household sewer bill was \$43.64. With a usage hike and \$8.60 monthly surcharge in place for 30 years, the average Dell Rapids household pays \$54.40 a month for sewer services, a nearly 25 percent increase. Those same customers also pay \$3 more a month for water service.

Weiland hopes the new system will make Dell Rapids attractive to families and new business.

Even as an avid recreational user of state waterways, Weiland acknowledged that if not for state pressure, the city may not have upgraded its sewer system and lines.

"We care about our bodies of water, incredibly. The Big Sioux River flows directly through the city of Dell Rapids and it's part of our charm," Weiland said. "But if the state wouldn't have cracked down on us, we probably wouldn't have taken action."

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit news organization. Find more in-depth reporting at www.sdnewswatch.org.

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I-29/Sisseton Exit Interchange Ramp Construction

WATERTOWN, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Transportation says the southbound on and off ramps for the Interstate 29/Sisseton exit (Exit 232) will be closed to traffic on Friday, Sept. 7, for about 14 days.

Motorists will need to use an alternate route through Wednesday, Sept. 17, while the contractor reconstructs the southbound lanes through the exit.

Drivers are reminded to slow down through construction zones and be aware of workers and equipment adjacent to the driving lane.

Michels Corp. is the prime contractor on the \$14.6 million project.

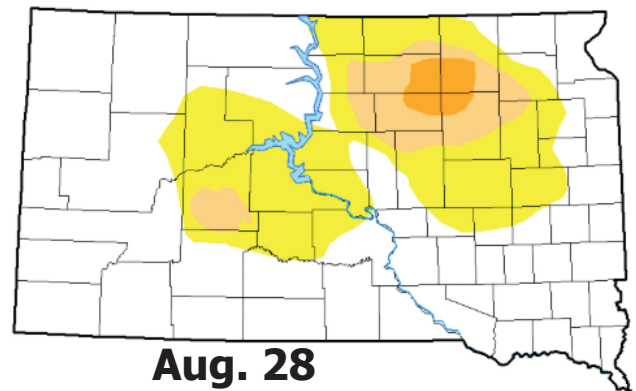
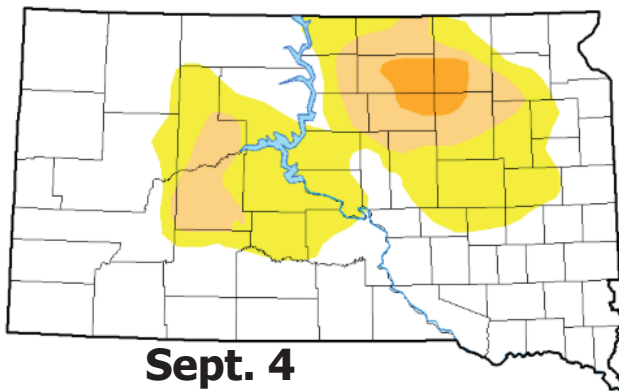
The project includes grading, concrete paving, epoxy bridge chip seals and roadway lighting and has a completion date of Oct. 26, 2018.

For complete road construction information, visit www.safetravelusa.com or dial 511.

Drought Monitor

Drought Classification

None D0 (Abnormally Dry) D1 (Moderate Drought) D2 (Severe Drought) D3 (Extreme Drought) D4 (Exceptional Drought)



Rainfall amounts were either lacking or light across most of the High Plains, except for very heavy rains (2-6 inches, locally higher) in eastern Kansas and southeastern Nebraska (associated with the copious rains in the Midwest), and light to moderate (0.5-2 inches) in parts of the Dakotas and southeastern Colorado. In Kansas and southeastern Nebraska, 2-8 inches of rain caused a 1-2 category drought improvement across southeastern Nebraska and northeastern and southeastern Kansas, while 1-3 inches of rain in far western Kansas was good for a 1-category reduction. Unfortunately, the core D3-D4 drought area in east-central Kansas received much lower totals (less than an inch), and little or no improvements were made there. Farther north, drier weather this week and out to the last 60-days has slowly increased short-term deficits, resulting in some minor deterioration in northeastern Montana, northern North Dakota, central and northeastern South Dakota. While continuing rains eased drought in southeastern Colorado into northeastern New Mexico, worsening conditions in west-central Colorado slightly expanded the D4 there. Monsoonal showers were widely scattered across eastern Arizona and most of New Mexico, but most areas were unchanged.

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting September 10, 2018 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.
POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3
- CONSENT AGENDA:
 1. Approval of minutes of August 13, 2018 school board meeting as drafted.
 2. Approval of North Central Special Education Co-Op (NCSEC) agenda items...as fiscal agent.
 3. Approval of August 2018 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
 4. Approval of August 2018 District bills for payment.
 5. Approve Open Enrollment Applications #19-18 (Grade K) and #19-19 (Grade K) from the Northwestern Area School District
 6. Approve Open Enrollment Application #19-20 (Grade 9) from Aberdeen School District.
 7. Acknowledge receipt of Notification for Public School Exemption #19-04: Grade 2
 8. Acknowledge receipt of Notification for Public School Exemption #19-05: Grades 2, 3, and 5
 9. Acknowledge receipt of Notification for Public School Exemption #19-06: Grades K, 2, and 3
 10. Acknowledge receipt of Notification for Public School Exemption #19-07: Grades K, K, and 3
 11. Acknowledge receipt of Notification for Public School Exemption #19-08: Grades 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12
 12. Acknowledge receipt of Notification for Public School Exemption #19-09: Grades 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8
 13. Acknowledge receipt of Notification for Public School Exemption #19-10: Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9
- OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:
 1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
 2. School Board Committee Reports:
 - a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder
 - b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Kara Pharis
 - c. Negotiations: Grant Rix, Steve Smith, Marty Weismantel
 3. Continued discussion of potential energy efficiency work.
 4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report
- NEW BUSINESS:
 1. Hear request from New Life Fellowship – Micah Westby.
 2. Discussion on One-Act Play/All-School Play.
 3. Approve amended work agreements and assignment changes:
 - a. Don Donley (bus route from \$12,240.00 to \$12,415.00), Lena Cox (bus route from \$16,993.80 to \$17,063.80), Chuck Padfield (bus route from \$11,325.00 to \$11,360.00)
 - b. Lisa Sippel (no salary change), Amanda Bisbee (no salary change), Jill Krueger (no salary change), Sarah Dennert (no salary change), Kim Weber (no salary change),
 - c. Kami Lipp (salary from \$17,354.37 to \$17,433.46), Joann Donley (salary from \$17,587.35 to \$16,860.60)
 - d. Lena Cox (6 hrs/week IEP and 10 hrs/week JK) and Randy Hjermsstad (8 hrs/week IEP and 10 hrs/week JK) at \$10.25/hour.
 4. Approve lane change for Kristen Gonsoir from MS+30 to MS+45 according to the terms of the negotiated agreement (+\$750.00).

ADJOURN

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Reminder to Remove Hay Bales from the Right of Way

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Department of Transportation reminds land owners hay remaining in highway ditches after Oct. 1 is deemed illegal.

After Oct. 1, the department will remove or authorize the removal of any illegal hay bales remaining in the public right of way.

Any person wishing to claim ownership of illegal bales must obtain a permit from the South Dakota Department of Transportation. Those permits are issued on a first-come first-served basis and allow permit holders to take ownership of any illegal hay bale.

Permits are available at Department of Transportation area offices in the following communities: Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Custer, Huron, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Watertown, Winner and Yankton. Phone numbers can be found on the website at <http://www.sddot.com/dot/region/Default.aspx>.

For more information, contact the Division of Operations at 605-773-3571.



Just Get `Er Done!

Autumn is here, and harvest is just around the corner. These Fall days are a great time to complete those cleaning tasks you have been putting off. As a veteran, it's also a great time to review your chore list.

- Locate your discharge papers. These papers are needed to verify military service for healthcare benefits, retirement, employment, education benefits and burial benefits.
- Record your discharge papers with the local county register of deeds. It costs nothing, and they are then on file for you or your family to retrieve when needed.
- Locate and visit your local county or tribal veterans service office (<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>) or our claims office (2501 W. 22nd Street) in Sioux Falls. Benefits and services are ever-changing. It is important for you to have that constant contact with these experts.
- Study agent orange and burn pit materials. Sign in on the registries. It is important that this exposure is identified and documented.
- Schedule your yearly physical. Don't forget to share information on flashbacks, anxiety and nightmares with your doctor.
- Prepare a will.
- Share your stories. Your stories are a legacy. They can awaken future generations to their potential and provide them with a better understanding of sacrifices made.
- Participate in sendoff and welcome home events. Share those five important words – "thank you for your service." Take advantage of every opportunity to make a positive impact on others. No soldier stands alone. Assist them with transition from military to civilian life.

Combat is a team sport where no one goes it alone. Regardless of rank, branch or specialty, a servicemember is always a servicemember. We are all on the same team and we all have the camaraderie of knowing what it is like to put our lives on hold and fight for our country.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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Groton Area beats Hamlin, 3-1

Groton Area fended off a late rally by Hamlin as the volleyball team came home with a 3-1 win over the Chargers. It was the second loss for Hamlin while Groton Area improves to 7-1 on the season.

Game scores were 25-16, 25-22, 14-25 and 26-24. Hamlin won the junior varsity match, 25-22 and 25-17.

The Tigers were 82 of 86 in serves with seven ace serves. Payton Maine had three ace serves. In sets, Groton Area was 136 of 137 with 30 assists. Miranda Hanson and Kaylin Kucker each had 13 assists. In spikes, Groton Area was 134 of 161 with 36 kills. Taylor Holm had eight kills, Jennie Doeden seven and Eliza Wanner six. Doeden had seven of Groton Area's nine blocks while Indigo Rogers had the other two blocks. Maine had 27 digs, Wanner 24 and Doeden 14 as the Tigers had 94 on the night.

Groton Area will travel to Mobridge on Tuesday to take on the Mobridge-Pollock Tigers.

Guthmiller places 10th at Groton Invite

Fifty-three golfers took part in the Groton Area golf meet held Thursday at the Olive Grove Golf Course. Cade Guthmiller placed 10th with a score of 85. Hunter Kassube was 29th with a 90, Tristan Traphagen was 32nd with a 91 and Lucas Simon was 45th with a 105.

Sisseton won the meet with 324 points followed by Madison with 333, Roncalli 334, Sioux Valley 344, Dell Rapids 345, Milbank 364, Redfield-Doland 365, Groton Area 371, Tiospa Zina 389 and McCook Central 408.

No. 3 Wolves Hit at a Season High Clip in NSIC Opener

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 3 Northern State University volleyball team opened the NSIC season with a swift 3-0 victory over the University of Mary. The Wolves improve to 9-0 overall and 1-0 in the league, after hitting a season high .556.

NSU tallied their eighth victory of the season by virtue of the sweep, with set scores of 25-12, 25-13, and 25-11. Northern doubled the kill total of their opponents with 44 on the evening. The Wolves added a game high 37 digs, 41 assists, and five blocks. Defensively they held the Marauders to just 22 kills and a .024 attack percentage.

Hailey Busch led the team offensively with 15 kills on 22 swings and no errors. The senior hit .682, and added seven digs. Jenna Reiff followed with eight kills, and led the team with a .727 hitting percentage. Laura Snyder notched seven kills, hitting .462, and Morgan Baufield tallies five kills, hitting a team second best .714.

Sally Gaul recorded five kills of her own, while Regan Dennis notched four in the final set of the match. Ashley Rozell paced the Wolves offense with 36 assists, averaging 12.00 per set. The junior led the team defensively as well with 12 digs.

Busch was second on the team defensively with seven digs, while Jaiden Langlie, Bry Goar, and Lexi Boesl each tallied four. Baufield led the team at the net with three blocks, while Rozell, Reiff, and Snyder each recorded two.

Northern returns to action on Saturday against Minot State. First serve is scheduled for 2 p.m. between the Wolves and Beavers.

Wolves Offensive Comes Alive in 26-Point Victory over Minot State

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Wolves came out of the gates quickly in the 2018 home opener, defeating Minot State 42-16 from Swisher Field. The InsuraCrop Ag Bowl wins brings Northern to 1-1 overall on the year and in the North Division.

NSU scored early and often with 21 points in just the first 15 minutes of action. Gerald Maxwell tallied the first score of the game for the Wolves on their opening drive. Hunter Trautman hit Maxwell for the pairs' first touchdown of the season, a 14-yarder with 12:03 on the play clock. Trautman continued to dish out daggers hitting Jacob Streit for a 13-yard score at the 4:30 mark, and Jelani Davis for a 35-yard touchdown with 2:29 on the clock.

Minot State answered with a field goal to open the second quarter, however the Wolves and Maxwell were not finished in the first half. The sophomore caught his second of the evening, this time a 43-yard pass from Trautman, putting Northern State up 28-3 with 6:51 left in the first half. That score remained through the final minutes of the period, and a majority of the third.

Chaka Kelly opened the second half scoring as the third quarter ticked down, with a 7-yard rush, right through the Minot State defense. The senior then added the team's sixth and final touchdown on their second drive of the fourth quarter. It was all Kelly, as he rushed for a total of 75 yards on six carries, including the 17-yard touchdown. Minot scored twice more in the fourth, cutting into the Wolves lead, but unable to make up the first half deficit.

As a team, NSU tallied 27 first downs to Minot's 15, and combined for 515 yards of total offense, with 227 yards rushing and 288 yards passing. Offensively, Northern converted on 4-of-9 third downs and scored on each of the fourth times they entered the red zone. They held the Beavers to a 3-of-14 conversion rate on third down, and tallied two sacks for a total loss of 17 yards.

Trautman tallied a single game career high 288 yards passing with four touchdowns and a 56-yard long. The sophomore completed 16-of-21 attempts, averaging 18.0 yards per completion. He also added 18 yards rushing on six carries. Likewise, Kelly tallied a single game career high 114 yards rushing with two touchdowns. The senior averaged 6.7 yards per carry in just the 100-yard rushing game of his career.

Maxwell added 61 yards rushing, while Jackson Ness tallied 36 yards on four carries with a 31-yard long. Maxwell was third among Wolves receivers with 57 total yards, averaging 28.5 per reception. The receiving front was led by Jacob Streit and Dakota Larson with 79 and 64 yards respectively. Streit averaged 15.8 yards per reception, while Larson tallied the 56-yard long off the arm of Trautman. Davis added 56 yards receiving, while Kelly and Spencer Johnson each recorded 13.

Noah MacPherson led the Wolves defense with eight total tackles, including a sack for a total loss of nine yards. Jacob Cross added the second sack of the evening for a loss of eight yards. Eight Wolves recorded a tackle for a loss, while another four notched a pass break-up. Alex Gray led the backfield with six solo stops, while Preston Droessler and Jacob Rader each recorded four tackles. Brayden McNeary grabbed the first interception of the season for the Wolves, and the first of his Northern State career.

Jacob Wiedrich had a heavy foot for NSU averaging 48.5 yards per punt. He totaled 194 yards punting with a 66 yard long and two boots over 50 yards. He also added 325 yards on seven kickoffs. Mitch Tschakert sent all six PATs through the uprights, and Chance Olson led the returners with 46 total yards on three punts.

Northern returns to action next Saturday on the road versus MSU Moorhead. Kickoff is scheduled for 3 p.m. between the Wolves and the Dragons.

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Today in Weather History

September 7, 1961: A tornado struck a farm near the McPherson-Brown county line, or about 10 miles east and 2 miles north of Leola, at around 825 pm CDT. All farm buildings were destroyed including two chicken coops, granary, machine shop, and two trailer homes. The house was pushed about a foot off its foundation and had windows broken, plaster cracked, and part of the roof ripped. A farm truck and tractor were both blown about 500 feet and demolished. Rain up to 2.5 inches and hail accompanied the storm and caused minor damage.

1881 - The temperature soared to 101 degrees at New York City, 102 degrees at Boston MA, and 104 degrees at Washington D.C. (David Ludlum)

1888 - Much of the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast Region experienced freezing temperatures. Killer frosts resulted in a million dollars damage to crops in Maine. (David Ludlum)

1909 - Topeka, KS, was drenched with 8.08 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a record for that location. (6th- 7th) (The Weather Channel)

1970 - A lightning bolt struck a group of football players at Gibbs High School in Saint Petersburg FL, killing two persons and injuring 22 others. All the thirty-eight players and four coaches were knocked off their feet. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced 4 to 8 inch rains in three to six hours in Virginia, with totals across the state for the Labor Day weekend ranging up to fourteen inches. The Staunton River crested at 34.44 feet at Altavista on the 8th, its highest level since 1940. Damage due to flooding was estimated at seven million dollars around Bedford, Henry, and Franklin. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Fifty cities across the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 56 degrees at Mobile AL was their coolest reading of record for so early in the season. The mercury dipped to 31 degrees at Athens OH, and to 30 degrees at Thomas WV. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms in the central U.S. produced four inches of rain at Texamah overnight, and up to six inches of rain in southwestern Iowa. Evening thunderstorms in eastern Colorado produced golf ball size hail at Clear Creek and at Nederland. Late evening thunderstorms in Iowa drenched Harlan with more than four inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1998: Two Derechos occurred on this day with one affecting most of Pennsylvania and New York City, the other impacting central New York.

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Today



Sunny

High: 79 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 52 °F

Saturday



Sunny then
Sunny and
Breezy

High: 77 °F

Saturday
Night



Partly Cloudy
and Breezy
then Partly
Cloudy

Low: 57 °F

Sunday



Partly Sunny

High: 78 °F



Mild – Dry – Windy Today & Saturday

Highs Today:
Mid 80s West
Mid 70s East
South Breeze

Highs Sat:
Low 80s West
Mid 70s East
**Gusty South
Winds**



Increasing Fire Danger Today & Saturday

Published on: 09/07/2018 at 4:26AM

Mild and dry conditions are expected today and Saturday, with a south breeze today, and gustier winds for Saturday. This will result in creasing fire danger. The next chance for moisture comes Sunday with a front that will pass through the area, though the potential for anyone getting much for moisture with this system is rather low, with dry and mild conditions continuing into next week.

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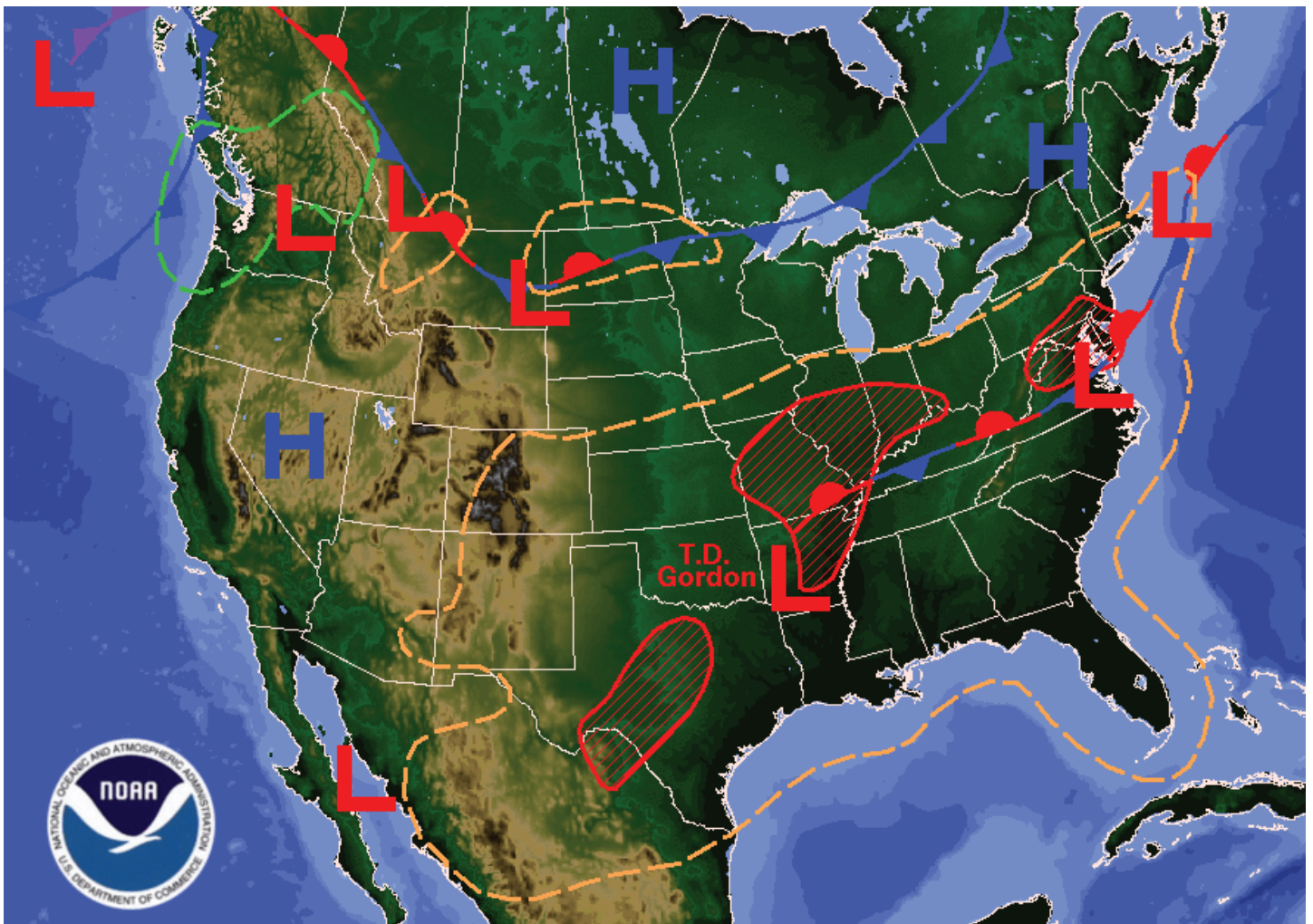
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 77.4 F at 4:51 PM
Low Outside Temp: 50.0 F at 4:06 AM
High Gust: 19.0 Mph at 12:34 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 101° in 1897
Record Low: 29° in 1895
Average High: 76°F
Average Low: 50°F
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.45
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.10
Average Precip to date: 16.74
Precip Year to Date: 11.36
Sunset Tonight: 8:00 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:04 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Sep 07, 2018, issued 4:51 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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WHAT TO DO WITH TROUBLE

A young businessman, deeply troubled, went to his pastor. After a deep sigh, he said, I have some huge problems. I don't know what to do, and I need your help. Will you pray with me?

What a great way to look at problems: through the eyes of prayer. That was what David did. I pour out my complaints before Him; before Him, I tell my trouble.

Whatever may have been troubling David was not as important as going to God in prayer. He did not go to his friends and complain. He did not go to the leaders of his army and gripe. Nor was he paralyzed in confusion or fear. He did what every godly person does: he went to God and prayed. And it was not an insincere prayer or a prayer that was meaningless. David poured out his complaints and troubles. He left his troubles, so to speak, on the floor. He kept nothing inside of himself. He put it where God could see what was troubling him.

Far too often we go to others and complain about our troubles knowing that they can do no more than listen or offer us sympathy. Sometimes we sit and sulk and feel sorry for ourselves. Other times we climb into bed and try to hide from them by falling asleep - only to awaken and see them before us on the ceiling.

David did the most sensible thing that any of us can do: Go to God and pour out our troubles and look to God for His wisdom, guidance, and solutions. God knows the answer before we even identify the problem. So, it makes good sense to go to Him first!

Prayer: It is so strange, Lord, that we often look to others for help rather than You. May we look to You first. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 142:2 I pour out my complaints before Him; before Him, I tell my trouble.

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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)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 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

Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Redfield/Doland, 14-25, 20-25, 25-16, 25-15, 15-13
Avon def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-11, 23-25, 25-17, 25-11
Bennett County def. White River, 26-24, 25-19, 25-23
Bridgewater-Emery def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-12, 25-12, 20-25, 25-22
Burke def. St. Mary's, Neb., 25-11, 25-11, 25-13
Canistota def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-21, 26-24, 23-25, 25-9
Chamberlain def. Crow Creek, 27-25, 23-25, 25-14, 25-17
Colman-Egan def. Lake Preston, 11-25, 25-11, 25-15, 25-9
Corsica/Stickney def. James Valley Christian, 25-17, 25-21, 25-17
Dell Rapids def. Tea Area, 25-20, 25-14, 24-26, 25-12
Dupree def. Bison, 28-26, 28-30, 19-25, 25-20, 15-13
Edmunds Central def. McIntosh, 25-17, 25-20, 25-11
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Canton, 25-15, 25-16, 25-13
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Howard, 25-12, 25-16, 25-19
Ethan def. Menno, 25-23, 22-25, 25-21, 25-13
Faith def. Rapid City Christian, 25-14, 25-16, 25-18
Faulkton def. Potter County, 19-25, 25-23, 25-16, 23-25, 15-5
Freeman def. Gayville-Volin, 23-25, 25-16, 25-11, 25-20
Great Plains Lutheran def. Wilmot, 25-18, 16-25, 25-13, 25-22
Groton Area def. Hamlin, 25-16, 25-22, 14-25, 26-24
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-22, 27-25, 25-23
Herreid/Selby Area def. Timber Lake, 25-16, 25-11, 25-17
Highmore-Harrold def. Iroquois, 25-6, 25-19, 25-11
Hill City def. Spearfish, 22-25, 16-25, 25-22, 25-22, 15-7
Hot Springs def. Custer, 25-20, 26-28, 19-25, 25-17, 15-11
Ipswich def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-12, 25-17, 25-15
Kadoka Area def. Wall, 17-25, 25-19, 25-13, 21-25, 15-7
Kimball/White Lake def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-18, 25-15, 25-17
Langford def. Florence/Henry, 25-17, 25-11, 25-18
Lead-Deadwood def. Belle Fourche, 25-15, 25-13, 24-26, 28-30, 15-8
Madison def. Lennox, 22-25, 25-14, 18-25, 25-17, 15-12
Milbank Area def. Sisseton, 25-18, 25-18, 25-13
Mitchell def. Yankton, 25-8, 25-13, 25-27, 25-17
Mobridge-Pollock def. Leola/Frederick, 16-25, 27-25, 16-25, 25-17, 15-4
New Underwood def. Lyman, 27-25, 25-14, 25-13
Northwestern def. Warner, 20-25, 25-20, 25-14, 23-25, 15-9
Philip def. Stanley County, 25-18, 25-15, 25-20
Pierre def. Sturgis, 25-9, 25-18, 25-9
Platte-Geddes def. Bon Homme, 25-20, 25-17, 23-25, 25-22
Rapid City Stevens def. Rapid City Central, 25-14, 25-15, 25-19
Red Cloud def. Little Wound, 22-25, 25-17, 25-19, 25-18
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Mitchell Christian, 29-27, 25-16, 25-7
Sioux Falls Christian def. West Central, 25-10, 25-14, 25-13

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Sioux Falls O’Gorman def. Brookings, 25-22, 25-16, 25-19
Sioux Falls Washington def. Watertown, 25-18, 24-26, 25-18, 24-26, 15-12
St. Francis Indian def. Marty Indian, 17-25, 20-25, 25-18, 25-10, 15-12
St. Thomas More def. Douglas, 25-12, 25-16, 25-23
Wagner def. Gregory, 25-11, 25-12, 25-15
Waverly-South Shore def. Waubay/Summit, 25-11, 25-13, 25-21
Webster def. Deuel, 25-21, 21-25, 21-25, 25-16, 15-10
Wolsey-Wessington def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-19, 17-25, 25-18, 22-25, 15-12
Big East Conference Tournament
First Round
Chester def. Garretson, 25-8, 25-19, 25-12
McCook Central/Montrose def. Flandreau, 25-21, 21-25, 25-15, 25-15
Parker def. Baltic, 25-22, 25-13, 25-17
Consolation Semifinal
Baltic def. Flandreau, 23-25, 25-16, 25-20, 19-25, 15-12
Semifinals
Chester def. Beresford, 25-15, 25-22, 25-7
McCook Central/Montrose def. Parker, 26-4, 25-18, 25-18
Tiospaye Topa Triangular
Newell def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-18, 25-14, 25-21

At rally, Trump lauds Kavanaugh progress, decries ‘meanness’

By KEN THOMAS and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — President Donald Trump on Thursday praised Judge Brett Kavanaugh’s progress toward winning confirmation to the Supreme Court but decried the “anger and the meanness on the other side,” blasting Democrats’ behavior toward his nominee as “sick.”

During a campaign rally in Montana, Trump sought to elevate Kavanaugh’s confirmation as a political litmus test for voters as he embraced a Republican challenger to Democratic Sen. Jon Tester, a top GOP target in the fall elections.

Trump also raised the specter of impeachment if Democrats win control of Congress.

As he stood alongside Tester’s opponent, state Auditor Matt Rosendale, Trump said Tester “will never drain the swamp because he happens to live in the swamp.” Seeking to portray the Montana farmer as a tool of liberal Democrats, Trump said, “Jon Tester talks like he’s from Montana, but he votes like he’s Nancy Pelosi” — a reference to the House minority leader, a frequent Trump target.

Trump said many of the Senate Democrats whom Tester had helped elect “are attacking Judge Kavanaugh and looking like fools.” He said Kavanaugh — who is strongly opposed by Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee — deserved “overwhelming bipartisan support.”

“It’s embarrassing to watch those people make fools of themselves as they scream and shout at this great gentleman,” Trump said after three days of committee hearings on the nomination.

The president’s strategy on the Supreme Court nomination aims to turn the screws on Tester and Sen. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, where Trump planned to appear Friday. Both red-state Democrats find themselves caught between their Senate leaders and their states’ more conservative voters, who are more broadly supportive of Trump’s pick.

Neither senator has laid down clear markers on how they will vote on Kavanaugh’s nomination, which Senate Republican leaders hope to bring to a floor vote later this month — just weeks before the Nov. 6 general election.

White House officials contend the Supreme Court was a powerful motivator for Republican base voters in 2016, when Trump won the White House, and they’re seeking to capitalize on Kavanaugh’s nomination to help overcome an enthusiasm gap with Democrats. Likewise, a vote for Kavanaugh by either Tester

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or Heitkamp could frustrate a Democratic base eager for a more confrontational approach to the Trump administration.

Democrats question whether the Kavanaugh vote will resonate in the race to unseat Tester. He has emphasized his independence and willingness to cross the aisle to work with Trump, who carried Montana by 20 percentage points two years ago.

"It's not like you're standing in the grocery store line and people are talking about the Kavanaugh confirmation. It's pretty inside baseball for folks," said Barrett Kaiser, a Montana-based Democratic strategist. Kaiser said Tester had demonstrated a "proven bipartisan record of working with this administration when it helps Montana and oppose them when it doesn't."

Tester opposed Trump's first Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch, and the Republican tax bill, but took flak from the left for supporting a bill easing the rules on banks. He has a television ad promoting his collaboration with Trump as he seeks to inoculate himself against conservative critics.

Likewise, Heitkamp is locked in a tough re-election fight in heavily Republican North Dakota, where she narrowly won six years ago and now faces a more formidable opponent in Rep. Kevin Cramer. Cramer has been a fervent supporter of Trump, who remains popular in North Dakota.

During the rally, Trump claimed Democrats would "hurt" Social Security and "kill" Medicare. Trump promised during his 2016 campaign that he would save those programs.

Trump also warned that a Democratic-controlled Congress would pursue impeachment despite the strong economy and set a precedent that would hurt future presidents. A few Democratic lawmakers have called for Trump to be removed from office.

"Let's say a Democrat gets elected and let's say we have a Republican House. We will impeach that Democrat, right?" Trump said. "You're going to have a country that's going to turn into a third-world country because if the opposite party becomes president, every time before it even starts, before you even found out whether or not he or she is going to do a great job, they'll say, 'We want to impeach him!'"

"If it does happen, it's your fault because you didn't go out to vote," Trump said.

Trump also lit into Tester for his role in torpedoing Trump's nomination of Ronny Jackson to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Earlier this year, Tester released unsubstantiated, anonymous allegations against Jackson that accused him of on-the-job drunkenness, overprescribing medication and fostering a hostile work environment. Jackson, a Navy rear admiral who was Trump's personal physician, denied the claims and eventually withdrew his nomination.

"What Tester did to Admiral Jackson should never, ever be allowed," Trump said, calling the allegations "lies."

Superville reported from Washington. Associated Press writers James MacPherson in Bismarck, North Dakota; Matthew Brown in Billings, Montana; and Catherine Lucey and Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

NTSB: Errors led to BNSF train killing 2 in South Dakota

EDGEMONT, S.D. (AP) — A series of human errors led to a BNSF Railway train striking and killing two railroad workers in South Dakota last year, federal investigators said Thursday.

The National Transportation Safety Board released its report Thursday on the Jan. 17, 2017, accident near Edgemont, in southwestern South Dakota. A BNSF train traveling at 35 mph struck and killed two of three workers who had been clearing snow and ice from a track switch.

One of the workers killed was the designated lookout. According to the NTSB, the sight distance at the switch was inadequate for safely using a train approach warning method with only one lookout.

Investigators also found the lookout did not devote his full attention to detecting approaching trains, and was not given the necessary equipment as required by federal regulations.

In addition, the work group had incorrect information about the minimum-required sight distance and

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lacked the required time to move to a predetermined place of safety, the report found.

BNSF says it will review the report and recommendations.

BNSF spokeswoman Amy McBeth said the railroad follows Federal Railroad Administration standards for proper lookout equipment.

"After the incident, we further developed our already robust safety protocols," McBeth said in a statement.

In its report, the NTSB said the FRA's inconsistent enforcement of federal regulations for lookout equipment requirements contributed to the accident.

Robert Hall, the NTSB's director of the Office of Rail, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials, said it was the 52nd fatal accident in the past 21 years involving railroad roadway worker safety. In all, 55 workers have been killed in these accidents.

"These accidents are completely preventable when the people involved, from the workers to the regulators, follow well-established rules and perform their duties with a focus on safety," Hall said in a news release.

The FRA said Thursday the agency is reviewing the report and will respond within 90 days.

The two railroad workers who were killed were 35-year-old gang foreman Richard Lessert and 58-year-old motor vehicle operator Douglas Schmitz. Lessert had 10 years of service with BNSF, and Schmitz was employed by the railroad for 39 years.

BNSF says the two were headquartered at Edgemont, a city about 60 miles (97 kilometers) southwest of Rapid City.

Trump boosting Kristi Noem's governor bid at SD fundraiser

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — President Donald Trump is giving Republican Kristi Noem's governor campaign a boost with a private fundraiser in Sioux Falls.

Trump will give remarks Friday at the \$500-per-person event for Noem, but no public rally has been announced in South Dakota.

Noem's campaign says a \$5,000-per-couple option to get a photo with Trump sold out quickly. Noem, South Dakota's U.S. representative, has emphasized her role negotiating the Republican federal tax cuts with Trump and has commended his administration's regulatory rollbacks.

Noem says she's glad Trump is coming and believes visiting a state makes a relationship with it more personal. Noem faces Democratic state Sen. Billie Sutton and Libertarian Kurt Evans in November.

Sutton's campaign says Noem called in "help from Washington" when she realized her political career is at risk.

Judge rejects Phelps' push to ban some testimony, arguments

ARMOUR, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley says a judge has denied a request from a man accused of aiding in an embezzlement scheme to exclude some arguments and witness testimony at trial.

Jackley said the judge on Thursday rejected former GEAR UP consultant Stacy Phelps' motion to block a legislative auditor's testimony and confine prosecutor's arguments. Phelps and former Mid-Central Educational Cooperative Director Dan Guericke are accused of falsifying evidence and conspiring to offer forged or fraudulent evidence.

Their October trial comes after cooperative employee Scott Westerhuis in 2015 killed his family and himself following theft that authorities believe topped \$1 million.

Jackley says the judge is weighing other defense motions including one to exclude evidence of allegedly improper purchases made on the debit card of a nonprofit Phelps headed. Another push to exclude the auditor's testimony is pending.

Company spent \$20K meant as bond for South Dakota wells

BUFFALO, S.D. (AP) — An oil and gas exploration company is alleging its officials cashed out a \$20,000 certificate of deposit intended to serve as a bond for 40 idled natural gas wells in South Dakota because they forgot the money's purpose.

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Texas-based Spyglass Cedar Creek LP filed a petition last week opposing South Dakota's revocation of the company's permits for the wells near Buffalo, the Rapid City Journal reported . A state hearing on the permits is scheduled for Oct. 18.

The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources started proceedings to revoke the permits last month over the project's non-compliance with state regulations. The project began in 2006 but ran into multiple issues, including a drop in natural gas prices, a lender's bankruptcy and at least four lawsuits.

The department discovered last month that former Spyglass partner Kevin Sellers cashed out the \$20,000 in 2015. The deposit was meant to help the state pay for plugging the wells if Spyglass couldn't complete the work.

Sellers' transaction occurred after a bank notified the company that Texas officials were trying to claim the deposit as abandoned property, said March Kimmel, general partner of Spyglass.

"At the time the bank insisted that the account be closed; neither Mr. Kimmel nor Mr. Seller(s) has any personal recollection of the documentation to the effect that the certificate served as collateral for any obligations to the state," Kimmel wrote in his petition. "The bank's correspondence did not indicate that it was being held for such purpose, nor did it indicate there was any requirement that DENR agree to termination of the account."

The deposit loss leaves state regulators with less than \$10,000 from a separate bond to use to manage the idled wells. Officials estimated that plugging the wells could cost more than \$850,000.

Kimmel said he hopes to resurrect the project and that Spyglass is working with at least two investors interested in providing funding. But the department's attempt to revoke the permits will stop such goals, he said.

"Essentially Spyglass cannot give any potential equity partners the assurance they need without assistance and assurance of cooperation or a stay of action against the project from the state," he wrote.

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

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

American News, Aberdeen, Sept. 6

Newsprint tariff ruling a win, and a warning

Last week, some good news came to an industry that really needed it.

The U.S. International Trade Commission Aug. 29 blocked tariffs on imported newsprint — the very paper your American News and Farm Forum are printed on.

The commission found that American newsprint producers (more on that in a minute) were not harmed by imports from Canadian paper mills.

This is certainly a win for newspapers of all sizes, but especially local papers. The smaller ones were threatened with closure because of the rising costs of newsprint in anticipation of the tariffs. In Aberdeen, seven jobs were lost at the American News and Farm Forum in layoffs associated with the tariffs and other costs.

South Dakota's congressional delegation deserves our thanks, and the thanks of our communities.

U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem, R-S.D., this summer introduced the PRINT Act, which would have halted the implementation of newsprint tariffs for further study.

"All but one U.S.-based paper mill opposed the tariffs, and small-town South Dakota newspapers told me the costs were too much to bear, so I pushed back," Noem wrote in her weekly column.

"I also joined Sens. Thune and Rounds in a letter to David Johanson, chairman of the International Trade Commission (ITC), urging him to reject the tariffs. In late August, the ITC agreed to our request and nullified the tariffs, delivering an important victory for hometown newspapers, for the small-town businesses

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who advertise in those papers, and for consumers in South Dakota.”

The rejection of the tariffs by the commission protects U.S. businesses that rely on Canada to produce the paper needed for newspapers, books, fliers, phone books and so much more.

The tariff issue was raised by one U.S. newsprint paper mill, NORPAC. Though based in Washington state, NORPAC is owned by a New York-based hedge fund.

It should frighten all Americans that a lone business — granted, one that has the ear of the right people — can get so close to destroying an entire industry. These tariffs would have been devastating to newspapers, sure, but also to businesses up and down the supply chain.

And NORPAC still wouldn't be able to compete: The tariffs would not have leveled the playing field. The newsprint tariff would have canceled the game and paved over the field. Who would NORPAC sell newsprint to if printing was no longer economically feasible on that reduced scale? That paper mill would see its own costs skyrocket, which would then be passed on to its few customers.

This attempt by NORPAC's owners should be a warning about the unintended (and intended) results from tariffs.

Newsprint is one of the two biggest costs associated with publishing a newspaper (employees being the other one). Canada has long been home to the types of mills that accommodate newsprint production in North America.

American companies do not need more hurdles to be able to do business in a cost-effective, efficient manner.

And U.S. trade policy should not be set by one business that is unable to compete in the global market.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, Sept. 4

A noble objective and a cigarette tax

Labor Day is over, which means the campaign season, which has been simmering on the back burners all summer, is about to heat up.

Besides the various state and federal races, South Dakotans will once again be dealing with ballot issues.

One is already hitting the accelerator.

The Associated Press reported that foes of Initiated Measure 25 (IM 25), which would raise South Dakota's tax on a 20-pack of cigarettes by \$1, are ramping up a big wall of resistance against the proposal.

The tax increase was proposed in order to boost funding for the state's technical schools, which reportedly have some of the highest tuition rates in the country. The money generated by the tax would be utilized to lower those rates.

In terms of intent, this is a noble goal. The importance of technical education not only in training people for careers but also in building the state's economy has become quite clear in recent years, due in part to the growing manpower shortage being felt in many sectors across the state. The fact that tuition for these schools is so expensive is a serious issue, and South Dakota's lawmakers are correct in wanting a way to create a fund that could bring these costs down.

“We can't attract and grow the workforce that we need if kids can go to Nebraska for half the price,” House speaker Mark Mickelson told the AP. “You look around, there's a lot of ‘help wanted’ signs.”

Certainly, then, this is a serious question that demands a solution.

However, attaching the idea to the state's cigarette tax may be a much stickier issue.

Several organizations oppose raising the state's cigarette tax from \$1.53 per pack to \$2.53 per pack on the grounds that it will hurt small businesses that rely on cigarette sales as part of their income.

“It's a \$35 million tax increase on small businesses in our state, said Jason Glodt of South Dakotans Against Higher Taxes.

Opponents also claim that a significant chunk of the money raised would go into the state's general fund, and there would be little oversight on how the money is used.

For the record, the South Dakota Legislative Research Council has estimated the tax would generate about \$25 million in new revenue. The council also determined that about \$5 million of that total would

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go to the general fund, with the rest going to the technical school fund.

One also is forced to wonder if it's wise to address this education issue by taxing a vice that is seeing a declining market. Cigarette consumption has dropped dramatically across the country the past few decades, which means fewer packs of cigarettes sold and, thus, less revenue generated by any taxes on them. Hiking the South Dakota tax could produce a further drop in such sales, either by people deciding to forego smoking because it's too expensive (which, we must admit, we would see as a good thing) or to instead purchase cigarettes from out of state.

This is the rhetorical debate that figures to be waged during the next two months. Opponents of IM 25 are already launching ads and mobilizing volunteers to spread their message. As for the advocates, Mickelson said, "We've got our work cut out for us" — citing the money that tobacco companies and others may inject into the campaign — "but this is a good public policy measure because it's good for South Dakotans."

Whether one part of the measure is popular enough to support the worthwhile whole will be determined by voters.

Madison Daily Leader, Madison, Sept. 5

Should all states look into clergy abuse?

We continue to be startled as to the prevalence of Catholic clergy sex abuse in the United States.

Recently, a grand jury report in Pennsylvania documented more than 300 "predator priests" abusing more than 1,000 child victims over seven decades.

While accusations, convictions and cover-ups have been occurring for most of the last century, much of the awareness in the United States was triggered by a critical story in the Boston Globe in 2002, later dramatized in the movie Spotlight.

In addition to the United States, abuse by priests has received broad attention in Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Belgium France, Germany and Australia.

We know now that what we once thought was an isolated problem goes across state lines and country borders. Other U.S. states are now initiating grand jury investigations like Pennsylvania. Minnesota, Missouri, Illinois and New York are all in some stage of this process.

We're not aware of any call for grand jury investigation in South Dakota. But we'd be naive to think that it occurs in all other states but not ours.

No one seems to dispute that the Catholic church itself cannot resolve this problem on its own. In fact, the long history of covering up incidents and protecting priests proves it.

We're saddened by the ever-expanding prevalence of the problem, and aren't even sure what the best path is to fix it. But we know the issue is widespread and the solutions need to be widespread.

Whether that means all states must begin investigations, or if our federal government can play an effective role, we don't know. But we must take bold action to stop this now.

1 arrested after reports of hospital shooting

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say no gun has been found in what police earlier said was a shooting at Sanford Aberdeen Medical Center.

Aberdeen police say officers responded to a report of an active shooter in the hospital shortly after 9 a.m. Thursday. Capt. Eric Duven says medical staff reported hearing three shots fired in a patient's room. The man was arrested.

Police now say no gun was found in the patient room and that the staff likely heard the suspect banging on something repeatedly, not gunfire. Staff say the man was being belligerent with them prior to the incident.

One officer was injured while taking the 54-year-old Webster man into custody.

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

Have you herd? Moose, bighorn sheep pass on migration tips

By MALCOLM RITTER, AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Looking for the best place to eat? Ask a local. Now scientists say that same insider knowledge shapes the springtime migrations of moose and bighorn sheep.

Animals learn from experienced members of the herd about where to find the best food, building sort of a cultural know-how that's passed through generations and improves over the course of decades, new research indicates.

While scientists have speculated before that this happens in hoofed animals, this is the first conclusive test of the idea, said Matthew Kauffman, a U.S. Geological Survey researcher who was part of the study released Thursday by the journal *Science*.

Researchers tracked the movements of 267 bighorn sheep and 189 moose in Wyoming, Idaho and South Dakota that wore GPS devices on collars. They used satellite data to track where and when vegetation along the migration routes reached the stage of growth that the animals prefer for eating.

Some of the collared animals came from herds that had been established in an area for at least 200 years, while others came from herds that had been introduced in recent decades. Scientists reasoned that if animals learned and then developed over time the knowledge of how to find the best food, those from long-established herds would perform better at locating the prime forage than those from herds with a shorter history.

And that's what they found when they compared the GPS data on the animals to the locations of the best forage. The longer a herd had been established, the better the tracked animals were at finding the best forage, and the more likely they were to migrate at all.

The researchers didn't study how the knowledge is passed along within the herds, but it's probably from young animals watching their mothers or other herd members, said the study's lead author, Brett Jesmer of the University of Wyoming.

The long, slow improvement in forage-finding over decades indicates that herds build on the cultural knowledge across generations. A slow curve also showed up in the likelihood that animals would migrate in the spring.

Results indicate that within herds that had first entered their home range even 30 to 50 years before, only about a quarter of the tracked animals on average migrated. But almost all the animals migrated if they came from herds that had occupied their home for 200 years or so.

Such social learning of migration routes also appears to happen with cranes and geese, but not other birds, said Cornell University ornithologist Kevin McGowan, who didn't participate in the study.

The researchers said the study has implications for conservation. When a migration corridor is blocked, such as by construction of a highway, it can take decades for herds of big game animals to establish a new route. So it's important to identify such corridors and protect them.

Marco Festa-Bianchet of the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada, who didn't participate in the study, wrote in a *Science* commentary that when migratory hoofed animals are relocated as a conservation measure, they might need several generations to find their seasonal ranges

Follow Malcolm Ritter at @MalcolmRitter . His recent work can be found here .

The Associated Press Health & Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Mitchell man sentenced for abusing woman, infant daughter

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A Mitchell man accused of beating a woman and throwing his infant child to the ground has been sentenced to serve four years and seven months in prison.

Authorities said 26-year-old Levi Sapp in March hit the woman in the head with an ashtray and a hair

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grooming tool, threw her phone in the toilet, pushed her into a bathtub, hit her head against a wall and threatened to kill her. He also was accused of throwing his 7-week-old daughter on the ground.

The Daily Republic reports that Sapp pleaded guilty to felony aggravated domestic assault, and other felony charges were dropped. In addition to his prison sentence, Sapp was ordered to pay more than \$11,000 in restitution.

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

South Dakotans among those arrested at confirmation hearing

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two South Dakota women are among the protesters arrested during the Senate confirmation hearing for Brett Kavanaugh.

Tiffany Campbell and Grace Bucklin, working on behalf of NARAL Pro-Choice South Dakota, were arrested for civil disobedience after they were removed from the hearing Wednesday.

The Argus Leader reports Campbell and Bucklin and a third person traveled to the Capitol as part of a coordinated effort by a coalition of groups to oppose Kavanaugh's confirmation. Dozens of others have been arrested during the hearing Tuesday and Wednesday.

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

Authorities identify 2 Viborg teens killed in crash

VIBORG, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified two teenage boys from Viborg who died in a crash in Turner County.

The Highway Patrol says 19-year-old Brady Patterson was driving a car that collided with a pickup in which 17-year-old Kelley Fox was a passenger. It happened about 11:30 p.m. Friday at a rural intersection just west of the town. Boy boys died at the scene.

The 17-year-old boy driving the pickup was flown to a Sioux Falls hospital with injuries that are considered life-threatening. The patrol says charges are pending against him.

Winter wheat seeding getting underway in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Winter wheat seeding is getting underway in South Dakota, as the fall small grains harvest wraps up.

The federal Agriculture Department in its weekly crop report says 1 percent of the winter wheat crop is seeded. Winter wheat is planted in the fall, goes dormant over the winter and is harvested the following summer.

The report says development of the corn and soybean crops in the state remains ahead of the average pace.

Slightly more than half of topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are rated adequate.

Pasture and range conditions are rated 40 percent in good to excellent condition.

AP Exclusive: Modest premium hikes as 'Obamacare' stabilizes

By MEGHAN HOYER and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Millions of people covered under the Affordable Care Act will see only modest premium increases next year, and some will get price cuts. That's the conclusion from an exclusive analysis of the besieged but resilient program, which still sparks deep divisions heading into this year's midterm elections.

The Associated Press and the consulting firm Avalere Health crunched available state data and found that "Obamacare's" health insurance marketplaces seem to be stabilizing after two years of sharp pre-

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mium hikes. And the exodus of insurers from the program has halted, even reversed somewhat, with more consumer choices for 2019.

The analysis found a 3.6 percent average increase in proposed or approved premiums across 47 states and Washington, D.C., for next year. This year the average increase nationally was about 30 percent. The average total premium for an individual covered under the health law is now close to \$600 a month before subsidies.

For next year, premiums are expected either to drop or increase by less than 10 percent in 41 states with about 9 million customers. Eleven of those states are expected to see a drop in average premiums. In six other states, plus Washington, D.C., premiums are projected to rise between 10 percent and 18 percent.

Insurers also are starting to come back. Nineteen states will either see new insurers enter or current ones expand into more areas. There are no bare counties lacking a willing insurer.

Even so, Chris Sloan, an Avalere director, says, "This is still a market that's unaffordable for many people who aren't eligible for subsidies."

Nearly 9 in 10 ACA customers get government subsidies based on income, shielding most from premium increases. But people with higher incomes, who don't qualify for financial aid, have dropped out in droves.

It's too early to say if the ACA's turnabout will be fleeting or a more permanent shift. Either way, next year's numbers are at odds with the political rhetoric around the ACA, still heated even after President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans failed to repeal the law last year.

Trump regularly calls "Obamacare" a "disaster" and time again has declared it "dead." The GOP tax-cut bill repealed the ACA requirement that Americans have health insurance or risk fines, effective next year. But other key elements remain, including subsidies and protection for people with pre-existing conditions. Democrats, meanwhile, accuse Trump of "sabotage," driving up premiums and threatening coverage.

The moderating market trend "takes the issue away from Republican candidates" in the midterm elections, said Mark Hall, a health law and policy expert at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. "Part of the mess is now their fault, and the facts really don't support the narrative that things are getting worse."

Market stability also appears to undercut Democrats' charge that Trump is undermining the program. But Democrats disagree, saying the ACA is in danger while Republicans control Washington, and that premiums would have been even lower but for the administration's hostility.

"Voters won't think that the Trump threat to the ACA has passed at all, unless Democrats get at least the House in 2018," said Bill Carrick, a strategist for Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., whose re-election ads emphasize her support for the health law.

As if seconding Democrats' argument, the Trump administration has said it won't defend the ACA's protections for pre-existing conditions in a federal case in Texas that could go to the Supreme Court. A new Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that Americans regardless of partisan identification said those protections should remain the law of the land.

In solidly Republican Arkansas, Democratic state legislator and cancer survivor Clarke Tucker is using the ACA in his campaign to try to flip a U.S. House seat from red to blue. Tucker, 37, says part of what made him want to run is the House vote to repeal the ACA last year and images of Trump and GOP lawmakers celebrating at the White House.

Business analysts say the relatively good news for 2019 is partly the result of previous premium increases, which allowed insurers to return to profitability after losing hundreds of millions of dollars.

"They can price better, and they can manage this population better, which is why they can actually make some money," said Deep Banerjee of Standard & Poor's.

Repeal of the ACA's requirement to carry insurance doesn't seem to have had a major impact yet, but Banerjee said there's "a cloud of uncertainty" around the Trump administration's potential policy shifts. Yet some administration actions have also helped settle the markets, such as continuing a premium stabilization program.

April Box of Spokane Valley, Washington, lives in a state where premiums could rise substantially since insurers have proposed an 18 percent increase. In states expecting double-digit increases, the reasons reflect local market conditions. Proposed increases may ultimately get revised downward.

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Box is self-employed as a personal advocate helping patients navigate the health care system. She has an ACA plan, but even with a subsidy her premiums are expensive and a high deductible means she's essentially covered only for catastrophic illness.

"I'm choosing not to go to the doctor, and I'm saying to myself I'm not sick enough to go to the doctors," Box said. "We need to figure out how to make it better and lower the price."

Now in her 50s, Box was born with dislocated hips. She worries she could be uninsurable if insurers are allowed to go back to denying coverage for pre-existing conditions. She might need another hip surgery.

"It needs to be a level playing field for everybody," said Box. "We need to have universal coverage — that is really the only answer."

Tennessee is a prime example of the ACA's flipped fortunes.

Last year, the state struggled to secure at least one insurer in every county. But approved rates for 2019 reflect an 11 percent average decrease. Two new insurers — Bright Health and Celtic— have entered its marketplace, and two others —Cigna and Oscar— will expand into new counties.

Tennessee Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander called that a "welcome step," but argued rates could have been even lower if congressional Democrats had supported a market stabilization bill. Democrats blame Republicans for the failure.

To calculate premium changes, Avalere and The Associated Press used proposed overall individual marketplace rate filings for 34 states and D.C., and final rates for 13 states that have already approved them. Data was not available for Massachusetts, Maryland and Alabama. The average rate change calculations include both on-exchange and off-exchange plans that comply with ACA requirements. The government isn't expected to release final national figures until later this fall.

Iran summit holds key to looming battle in Syria's Idlib

By JON GAMBRELL and NASSER KARIMI, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey will meet Friday in Tehran to discuss the war in Syria, with all eyes on a possible military offensive to retake the last rebel-held bastion of Idlib.

The summit between Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan may determine whether diplomacy halts any military action. Even before it began, an airstrike early Friday struck Idlib's southern edge, killing at least one person.

Each of the three nations has its own interests in the yearslong war in Syria.

Iran wants to keep its foothold in the Mediterranean nation neighboring Israel and Lebanon. Turkey, which backed opposition forces against Syrian President Bashar Assad, fears a flood of refugees fleeing a military offensive and destabilizing areas it now holds in Syria. And Russia wants to maintain its regional presence to fill the vacuum left by America's long uncertainty about what it wants in the conflict.

"The Tehran summit can produce peace and reconciliation in Syria or it can deepen the mess created by endless bouts of violence mainly instigated by the Assad regime," Inur Cevik, a senior adviser to Erdogan, wrote in the Daily Sabah newspaper.

Northwestern Idlib province and surrounding areas are home to about 3 million people — nearly half of them civilians displaced from other parts of Syria. That also includes an estimated 10,000 hard-core fighters, including al-Qaida-linked militants.

For Russia and Iran, both allies of the Syrian government, retaking Idlib is crucial to complete what they see as a military victory in Syria's civil war after Syrian troops recaptured nearly all other major towns and cities, largely defeating the rebellion against Assad.

A bloody offensive that creates a massive wave of death and displacement, however, runs counter to their narrative that the situation in Syria is normalizing, and could hurt Russia's longer-term efforts to encourage the return of refugees and get Western countries to invest in Syria's postwar reconstruction.

The streets of Tehran were quiet on Friday, the second day of the Iranian weekend. The country's state-run IRNA news agency described the summit as potentially offering an "agreement on peace and security" in Syria.

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A former Iranian diplomat, Ali Akbar Farazi, told IRNA the summit shows that solving regional issues "in a fair way that agrees with the interests of all sides" remains important for the three nations.

For Turkey, the stakes couldn't be higher. Turkey already hosts 3.5 million Syrian refugees and has sealed its borders to newcomers. It has also created zones of control in northern Syria and has several hundred troops deployed at 12 observation posts in Idlib. A government assault creates a nightmare scenario of potentially hundreds of thousands of people, including militants, fleeing toward its border and destabilizing towns and cities in northern Syria under its control.

Naji al-Mustafa, a spokesman for the Turkey-backed National Front for Liberation, said Friday his fighters were prepared for a battle that they expect will spark a major humanitarian crisis.

"The least the summit can do is to prevent this military war," he said.

Early on Friday, a series of airstrikes struck villages in southwest Idlib, targeting insurgent posts and killing a fighter, said Rami Abdurrahman, the head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Abdurrahman said suspected Russian warplanes carried out the attack.

Turkey also doesn't want to see another Kurdish-controlled area rise along its border, as it already faces in northern Iraq.

Cevik, a senior adviser to Erdogan, also didn't pull any punches in his piece in the Daily Sabah, saying: "Assad bolstered by Iran's land assets and Russian air power and his use of chemical weapons has punched his way into opposition strongholds and hence massive gains for the Damascus regime.

"You still need moderate opposition groups who represent the Sunni suffering masses in Syria to achieve a viable political solution and durable peace in this country," he wrote. "Iran and Russia are the fighting forces in Syria and have brought blood and tears."

All three nations face sanctions from the U.S. under the administration of President Donald Trump. Although America has some 2,000 troops and outposts in Syria, Trump has said he wants to pull those forces out after the war against the Islamic State group dislodged the extremists from vast territories it once held there and in Iraq.

America's ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, has warned any military offensive in Idlib "would be a reckless escalation." The U.S. will chair a U.N. Security Council meeting Friday about the possible offensive.

"There is no military solution to the Syrian conflict," Haley said in a statement Wednesday. "Assad's brutal regime — backed by Russia and Iran — cannot continue to attack and terrorize Syria's citizens."

Associated Press writers Zeina Karam and Sarah El Deeb in Beirut contributed to this report.

Giuliani to AP: Trump will not answer obstruction questions

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump will not answer federal investigators' questions, in writing or in person, about whether he tried to block the probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election, one of the president's attorneys told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani said questions about obstruction of justice were a "no-go."

Giuliani's statement was the most definitive rejection yet of special counsel Robert Mueller's efforts to interview the president about any efforts to obstruct the investigation into possible coordination between his campaign and Russians. It signals the Trump's lawyers are committed to protecting the president from answering questions about actions the president took in office.

It's unclear if Giuliani's public position has been endorsed by Trump, who has said he wants to answer questions under oath. Negotiations about the scope and format of an interview are still ongoing. If the legal team holds its stance, it could force Mueller to try to subpoena the president, likely triggering a standoff that would lead to the Supreme Court.

Mueller's office has previously sought to interview the president about the obstruction issue, including his firing last year of former FBI Director James Comey and his public attacks on Attorney General Jeff

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Sessions. Trump's legal team has argued that the president has the power to hire and fire appointees and the special counsel does not have the authority to ask him to explain those decisions. Giuliani said Thursday the team was steadfast in that position.

"That's a no-go. That is not going to happen," Giuliani said. "There will be no questions at all on obstruction."

In a letter last week, Mueller's team said it would accept written responses from Trump on questions related to Russian election interference. Giuliani suggested Thursday that Trump's lawyers had agreed to those terms but wanted to prohibit investigators from asking follow-up questions.

"It would be in written form and if you want to follow up on our answers, justify it. Show us why you didn't get there the first time," Giuliani said. He said he was not categorically ruling out answering a second round of questions but the entire matter of whether there would be follow-up inquiries should be settled before the president answers anything at all.

"We aren't going to let them spring it on us," said Giuliani, who has served as lawyer-spokesman for the president's personal legal team, using television interviews and public comments as a tactic in the negotiations.

He has repeatedly moved the goalposts on what would be required for a presidential interview and, at times, has been forced to clarify previous statements. In earlier interviews, Giuliani had suggested some obstruction questions could be allowed if prosecutors show necessity and preview the questions with the defense lawyers.

Trump, in a Fox News interview taped ahead of a Thursday night rally in Montana, was noncommittal when asked about a possible Mueller interview.

In the latest letter to the legal team, Mueller's office didn't address obstruction questions, indicating investigators would later assess what additional information it needs from the president after receiving a response about the written submissions, according to a person familiar with the document.

The person familiar with the letter spoke on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to publicly discuss the negotiations.

Giuliani's declaration drew a swift rebuke from Rep. Adam Schiff, the highest-ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, who tweeted: "Trump's legal team never had any intention of allowing him to be interviewed, knowing he is incapable of telling the truth. It's past time to subpoena the President. No one is above the law."

Though the president has publicly said he was eager to face questions from Mueller, his lawyers have been far more reluctant to make him available for an interview and have questioned whether Mueller has the right to ask him about actions that he is authorized, under the Constitution, to take as president. Giuliani's comments came just hours after Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, espoused a belief in an expansive view of executive powers and declined to say whether a president can be subpoenaed and forced to testify.

Mueller's team raised the prospect in March that it could subpoena the president, though this would unquestionably prompt a court fight.

The Supreme Court has never definitively ruled on the question of whether a president can be forced to testify, though the justices did rule in 1974 that Richard Nixon had to produce recordings and documents that had been subpoenaed.

In addition to questions about Comey and Sessions, Mueller has expressed interest in Trump's role in drafting a statement to The New York Times about a June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower attended by his son, Donald Trump Jr., and a Russian lawyer.

Trump Jr. took the meeting, emails show, after it was described as part of a Russian government effort to help his father's campaign by providing derogatory information about Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Trump has said he knew nothing about the meeting before it happened.

Trump and Giuliani have led an onslaught of attacks on Mueller's credibility, claiming that the special counsel was biased and that the entire probe was a "witch hunt." Giuliani has also demanded that the

probe suspend its activities with the midterm elections approaching, but the former mayor said Thursday he was not certain of Mueller's intentions.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker and Chad Day contributed reporting from Washington.

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Kavanaugh avoids major missteps, closing 2 days of testimony

By MARK SHERMAN and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats worked into the night in a last, ferocious attempt to paint Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh as a foe of abortion rights and a likely defender of President Donald Trump. But after two marathon days in the witness chair in a Senate hearing room, Kavanaugh appeared to be on a path to confirmation as a Supreme Court justice.

The 53-year-old appellate judge stuck to a well-rehearsed script throughout his testimony, providing only glimpses of his judicial stances while avoiding any serious mistakes that might jeopardize his confirmation. In what almost seemed like a celebration Thursday, Kavanaugh's two daughters returned to the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing room for the final hours of testimony, accompanied by teammates on Catholic school basketball teams their father has coached.

Senators will return for a final hearing day on Friday along with more than two dozen witnesses on both sides of the nomination fight. Democratic witnesses include John Dean, Richard Nixon's White House counsel who cooperated with prosecutors during the Watergate investigation, and Rochelle Garza, the legal guardian for the pregnant immigrant teenager whose quest for an abortion Kavanaugh would have delayed last year.

On the Republican side, former solicitors general Theodore Olson and Paul Clement will testify in support of the nominee, along with former students, law clerks and the mother of a basketball player Kavanaugh coached.

Campaigning in Montana Thursday night, Trump sought to elevate Kavanaugh's confirmation as a political litmus test for voters, saying the judge deserves bipartisan support and criticizing the "anger and the meanness on the other side — it's sick."

Abortion was a focus throughout Kavanaugh's two days of testimony. The Democrats' best shot at stopping Kavanaugh — who could swing the court further to the right for decades — would be branding him as a justice who might vote to overturn the court's landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling. Their hope is that two Republican senators who support abortion rights could break from their party and vote against him.

A newly disclosed email suggested Kavanaugh once indicated the abortion case was not settled law, though Kavanaugh denied in the hearing that he had been expressing his personal views.

The tone in the email from 2003 contrasted with his responses to questions on Wednesday when he stressed how difficult it is to overturn precedents like *Roe*. In the email, Kavanaugh was reviewing a potential op-ed article in support of two judicial nominees while he was working at the George W. Bush White House. The document had been held by the committee as confidential, but was made public Thursday.

"I am not sure that all legal scholars refer to *Roe* as the settled law of the land at the Supreme Court level since Court can always overrule its precedent, and three current Justices on the Court would do so," Kavanaugh wrote, referring to justices at the time, in an email to a Republican Senate aide. The document was partially redacted.

Asked about it by the committee's top Democrat, Dianne Feinstein of California, Kavanaugh reiterated his previous testimony that "*Roe v. Wade* is an important precedent of the Supreme Court."

Democrats also questioned Kavanaugh's ability to separate himself from Trump and special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russia's meddling in the 2016 election. Throughout his testimony, Kavanaugh repeatedly stated the importance of judicial independence.

Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois put the focus on Trump, who Durbin said, "has shown contempt

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for the federal judiciary and has shown disrespect for the rule of law over and over again.”

“It’s in the context of the Trump presidency that we ask you these questions,” Durbin said.

Kavanaugh refused to answer questions about Trump or commit to stepping aside from any case about the Russia investigation that might come to the Supreme Court. When Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut invited him to denounce Trump’s criticism of federal judges, including Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the nominee demurred.

“The way we stand up is by deciding cases and controversies independently without fear or favor,” Kavanaugh said.

Earlier, he said his 12-year record as an appellate judge shows that he has not been afraid to invalidate executive branch actions. Kavanaugh said that he has made clear that a court order “that requires a president to do something or prohibits a president from doing something ... is the final word in our system.”

On a separate track, Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont and Durbin led the charge in suggesting that Kavanaugh misled them in earlier testimony. He denied that allegation with the robust support of Senate Republicans.

Much of the debate among senators focused more on the disclosure of documents than on Kavanaugh’s record. Democratic Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey — who along with Harris is a potential presidential candidate in 2020 — said he was willing to risk fallout over releasing confidential documents about Kavanaugh’s views on race. Republican John Cornyn of Texas warned him that senators could be expelled for violating confidentiality rules. Democrats and Booker responded, “Bring it on.”

In fact, some of the documents the Democrats wanted disclosed had been released hours earlier, in a pre-dawn disclosure approved by Bill Burck, the GOP attorney who serves as presidential records lawyer for Bush.

The document battle stemmed from Kavanaugh’s unusually long paper trail following his years in the Bush White House. The panel’s process resulted in hundreds of thousands of pages of Kavanaugh’s documents being withheld as confidential or kept from release under presidential privilege by the Trump White House.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, who released more documents Thursday, stood by his handling of the issue.

“My process was fair,” Grassley declared.

Republicans hope to confirm Kavanaugh in time for the first day of the new Supreme Court term, Oct. 1.

Associated Press writers Jessica Gresko and Ken Thomas contributed to this report. Thomas reported from Billings, Montana.

Read more on AP’s coverage of Kavanaugh at <https://apnews.com/tag/KavanaughNomination>

Trump campaigns in Montana, lauds Kavanaugh’s progress

By KEN THOMAS and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — President Donald Trump praised Judge Brett Kavanaugh’s progress toward winning confirmation to the Supreme Court but decried the “anger and the meanness on the other side,” blasting Democrats’ behavior toward his nominee as “sick.”

During a campaign rally in Montana Thursday, Trump sought to elevate Kavanaugh’s confirmation as a political litmus test for voters as he embraced a Republican challenger to Democratic Sen. Jon Tester, a top GOP target in the fall elections.

Trump also raised the specter of impeachment if Democrats win control of Congress.

As he stood alongside Tester’s opponent, state Auditor Matt Rosendale, Trump said Tester “will never drain the swamp because he happens to live in the swamp.” Seeking to portray the Montana farmer as a tool of liberal Democrats, Trump said, “Jon Tester talks like he’s from Montana, but he votes like he’s Nancy Pelosi” — a reference to the House minority leader, a frequent Trump target.

Trump said many of the Senate Democrats whom Tester had helped elect “are attacking Judge Kavanaugh.”

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ugh and looking like fools." He said Kavanaugh — who is strongly opposed by Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee — deserved "overwhelming bipartisan support."

"It's embarrassing to watch those people make fools of themselves as they scream and shout at this great gentleman," Trump said after three days of committee hearings on the nomination.

The president's strategy on the Supreme Court nomination aims to turn the screws on Tester and Sen. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, where Trump planned to appear Friday. Both red-state Democrats find themselves caught between their Senate leaders and their states' more conservative voters, who are more broadly supportive of Trump's pick.

Neither senator has laid down clear markers on how they will vote on Kavanaugh's nomination, which Senate Republican leaders hope to bring to a floor vote later this month — just weeks before the Nov. 6 general election.

White House officials contend the Supreme Court was a powerful motivator for Republican base voters in 2016, when Trump won the White House, and they're seeking to capitalize on Kavanaugh's nomination to help overcome an enthusiasm gap with Democrats. Likewise, a vote for Kavanaugh by either Tester or Heitkamp could frustrate a Democratic base eager for a more confrontational approach to the Trump administration.

Democrats question whether the Kavanaugh vote will resonate in the race to unseat Tester. He has emphasized his independence and willingness to cross the aisle to work with Trump, who carried Montana by 20 percentage points two years ago.

"It's not like you're standing in the grocery store line and people are talking about the Kavanaugh confirmation. It's pretty inside baseball for folks," said Barrett Kaiser, a Montana-based Democratic strategist. Kaiser said Tester had demonstrated a "proven bipartisan record of working with this administration when it helps Montana and oppose them when it doesn't."

Tester opposed Trump's first Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch, and the Republican tax bill, but took flak from the left for supporting a bill easing the rules on banks. He has a television ad promoting his collaboration with Trump as he seeks to inoculate himself against conservative critics.

Likewise, Heitkamp is locked in a tough re-election fight in heavily Republican North Dakota, where she narrowly won six years ago and now faces a more formidable opponent in Rep. Kevin Cramer. Cramer has been a fervent supporter of Trump, who remains popular in North Dakota.

During the rally, Trump claimed Democrats would "hurt" Social Security and "kill" Medicare. Trump promised during his 2016 campaign that he would save those programs.

Trump also warned that a Democratic-controlled Congress would pursue impeachment despite the strong economy and set a precedent that would hurt future presidents. A few Democratic lawmakers have called for Trump to be removed from office.

"Let's say a Democrat gets elected and let's say we have a Republican House. We will impeach that Democrat, right?" Trump said. "You're going to have a country that's going to turn into a third-world country because if the opposite party becomes president, every time before it even starts, before you even found out whether or not he or she is going to do a great job, they'll say, 'We want to impeach him!'"

"If it does happen, it's your fault because you didn't go out to vote," Trump said.

Trump also lit into Tester for his role in torpedoing Trump's nomination of Ronny Jackson to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Earlier this year, Tester released unsubstantiated, anonymous allegations against Jackson that accused him of on-the-job drunkenness, overprescribing medication and fostering a hostile work environment. Jackson, a Navy rear admiral who was Trump's personal physician, denied the claims and eventually withdrew his nomination.

"What Tester did to Admiral Jackson should never, ever be allowed," Trump said, calling the allegations "lies."

Superville reported from Washington. Associated Press writers James MacPherson in Bismarck, North Dakota; Matthew Brown in Billings, Montana; and Catherine Lucey and Zeke Miller in Washington contrib-

uted to this report.

Trump denounces anonymous column as officials cry 'Not me!'

By ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One after another, President Donald Trump's top lieutenants stepped forward to declare, "Not me."

They lined up to deny writing an incendiary New York Times opinion piece that was purportedly submitted by a member of an administration "resistance" movement straining to thwart Trump's most dangerous impulses.

By email, by tweet and on camera, the denials paraded in Thursday from Cabinet-level officials — and even Vice President Mike Pence — apparently crafted for an audience of one, seated in the Oval Office. Senior officials in key national security and economic policy roles charged the article's writer with cowardice, disloyalty and acting against America's interests in harsh terms that mimicked the president's own words.

Trump was incensed about the column, calling around to confidants to vent about the author, solicit guesses as to his or her identity and fume that a "deep state" within the administration was conspiring against him. He ordered aides to unmask the writer, and issued an extraordinary demand that the newspaper reveal the author to the government.

In an interview Thursday with Fox News, Trump said it was unfair for the person to pen the editorial anonymously because there's no way to discredit it.

He suggested it "may not be a Republican, it may not be a conservative, it may be a deep state person who has been there for a long time."

As striking as the essay was the long list of officials who plausibly could have been its author. Many have privately shared some of the article's same concerns about Trump with colleagues, friends and reporters.

With such a wide circle of potential suspicion, Trump's men and women felt they had no choice but to speak out. The denials and condemnations came in from far and wide: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis denied authorship on a visit to India; Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke chimed in from American Samoa. In Washington, the claims of "not me" echoed from Vice President Pence's office, from Energy Secretary Rick Perry, from Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman from Dan Coats, director of national intelligence, and other Cabinet members.

The author professed to be a member of that same inner circle. So could the denials be trusted? There was no surefire way to know, and that only deepened the president's frustrations.

On Twitter, Trump charged "The Deep State and the Left, and their vehicle, the Fake News Media, are going Crazy - & they don't know what to do."

White House officials did not respond to requests to elaborate on Trump's call for the writer to be turned over to the government or on the unsupported national security grounds of his demand. Some who agreed with the writer's points suggested the president's reaction actually confirmed the author's concerns.

Rudy Giuliani, the president's attorney, suggested that it "would be appropriate" for Trump to ask for a formal investigation into the identity of the op-ed author.

"Let's assume it's a person with a security clearance. If they feel writing this is appropriate, maybe they feel it would be appropriate to disclose national security secrets, too. That person should be found out and stopped," Giuliani said.

As the initial scramble to unmask the writer proved fruitless, attention turned to the questions the article raised, which have been whispered in Washington for more than a year: Is Trump truly in charge, and could a divided executive branch pose a danger to the country?

Former CIA Director John Brennan, a fierce Trump critic, called the op-ed "active insubordination ... born out of loyalty to the country."

"This is not sustainable to have an executive branch where individuals are not following the orders of the chief executive," Brennan told NBC's "Today" show. "I don't know how Donald Trump is going to react to this. A wounded lion is a very dangerous animal, and I think Donald Trump is wounded."

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The anonymous author, claiming to be part of the resistance "working diligently from within" the administration, said, "Many Trump appointees have vowed to do what we can to preserve our democratic institutions while thwarting Mr. Trump's more misguided impulses until he is out of office."

"It may be cold comfort in this chaotic era, but Americans should know that there are adults in the room," the author continued. "We fully recognize what is happening. And we are trying to do what's right even when Donald Trump won't."

First lady Melania Trump issued a statement backing her husband. She praised the free press as "important to our democracy" but assailed the writer, saying, "You are not protecting this country, you are sabotaging it with your cowardly actions."

The Beltway guessing game seeped into the White House, as current and former staffers traded calls and texts trying to figure out who could have written the piece, some turning to reporters and asking them for clues.

In a rare step, Pence's communications director Jarrod Agen tweeted early Thursday that "The Vice President puts his name on his Op-Eds. The @nytimes should be ashamed and so should the person who wrote the false, illogical, and gutless op-ed. Our office is above such amateur acts."

With many prominent administration members delivering on-the-record denials, the focus could now fall on other senior aides to do the same, with questions raised about those who stay silent.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders tried to head off reporters' inquiries of Trump officials, tweeting that the questions should be aimed at the Times, which she said was "complicit in this deceitful act."

The anonymous author wrote that where Trump has had successes, they have come "despite — not because of — the president's leadership style, which is impetuous, adversarial, petty and ineffective."

Down Pennsylvania Avenue, House Speaker Paul Ryan said he did not know of any role Congress would have to investigate, though Republican Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, a Trump ally, said the legislative body could take part.

"Nothing in this town stays secret forever, and so ultimately I do think we will find out who is the author," he said.

The writer said Trump aides are aware of the president's faults and "many of the senior officials in his own administration are working diligently from within to frustrate parts of his agenda and his worst inclinations. I would know. I am one of them."

Lemire reported from New York. AP writers Catherine Lucey, Mary Clare Jalonick, Darlene Superville and Ken Thomas contributed reporting.

Follow Miller on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@zekejmilller> and Lemire at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

SKorea's Moon wants 'irrevocable progress' in nuke diplomacy

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean President Moon Jae-in said Friday that he is pushing for "irrevocable progress" in efforts to rid North Korea of its nuclear weapons by the end of this year as he prepares for his third summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Earlier this week, Moon sent special envoys to Pyongyang to help resolve the nuclear stalemate. After returning home, the envoys said Thursday that Kim still has faith in U.S. President Donald Trump and reaffirmed his commitment to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, although he expressed frustration over skepticism about his sincerity.

Trump later responded by tweeting, "Kim Jong Un of North Korea proclaims 'unwavering faith in President Trump.' Thank you to Chairman Kim. We will get it done together!" Moon said the outcome of his envoys' Pyongyang trip was "much more than what was expected."

The next step in nuclear diplomacy is uncertain. Negotiators seem deadlocked over whether North

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Korea truly intends to denuclearize as it has pledged numerous times in recent months. North Korea has dismantled its nuclear and rocket engine testing sites, but U.S. officials want more serious, concrete action taken before North Korea obtains outside concessions.

Kim told the South Korean envoys that he is willing to take stronger steps if his "goodwill" measures are met in kind, according to chief envoy Chung Eui-yong. Kim has repeatedly said he wants a step-by-step disarmament process in which each of his actions is reciprocated with corresponding outside concessions.

North Korea, which says its nuclear program is aimed at countering U.S. military threats, has demanded the United States jointly declare an end to the 1950-53 Korean War, which was halted by an armistice, not a peace treaty. During his meeting with the South Korean envoys, Kim said an end-of-war declaration wouldn't weaken the U.S.-South Korean alliance or lead to the withdrawal of the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea to prevent an North Korean attack, according to Chung.

Moon's liberal government, which is eager to continue engagement with North Korea, also wants the declaration. In a written interview released Friday with Indonesian newspaper Kompas, Moon said he wants to see such a declaration made this year as part of trust-building measures.

"What matters is implementing with sincerity the agreements among the leaders, and our objective is producing irrevocable progress by the end of this year," Moon said, referring to denuclearization and a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

During the Seoul envoys' trip, the two sides agreed that Kim and Moon would meet in Pyongyang on Sept. 18-20, in their third summit since April. South Korean officials say the meeting will focus on how to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Two senior members of South Korea's delegation to Pyongyang are to fly to China and Japan to brief them on their meeting with Kim. Chung is to meet senior Chinese official Yang Jiechi on Saturday and National Intelligence Service director Suh Hoon, who went to Pyongyang with Chung, is to meet Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Monday, according to South Korea's presidential office.

Chung, whose official title is presidential national security director, spoke with his U.S. counterpart, John Bolton, on the phone on Thursday about his trip to North Korea.

How black women are organizing to energize voters this fall

By ERRIN HAINES WHACK, AP National Writer

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Meeting on the campus of Jackson State University on a recent Friday afternoon, dozens of black women came together to strategize about the upcoming midterm elections, opening the gathering with a freedom song.

"The revolution done signed my name," they moaned, invoking the names of the ancestors whose strength has willed them to persevere: Harriet Tubman. Shirley Chisholm. Aretha Franklin. Two were like them, daughters of Mississippi: Ella Jo Baker. Fannie Lou Hamer.

"All of us who are in the room right now are midwives for transformation," said Rukia Lumumba, daughter of the late Jackson Mayor Chokwe Lumumba, and co-founder of the Electoral Justice Project.

The impact of such targeted work is evident. Black women went to the polls in record numbers last December to elect Doug Jones as the first Democratic senator from Alabama in 25 years. As of this week, 39 black women are nominees for the U.S. House in the November midterms, including 22 women who aren't incumbents.

The meeting soon shifted to strategy as the women plotted how to harness the energy of black female voters this fall. Scenes like these are playing out across the country as black women convene at schools, churches and homes to plan how to make sure that black voters — particularly women — are aware of the upcoming elections, registered and planning to vote and that their family members will do the same.

It's all part of an effort to reshape the politics of the Trump era when many black voters feel threatened by the country's increasingly racially polarized climate, with concerns ranging from access to the ballot box to the president's hostility to protesting NFL players and the violent demonstrations last summer in Charlottesville, Virginia.

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In California, volunteers spent last weekend working at phone banks and texting for Ayanna Pressley, whose upset victory Tuesday put her on track to become Massachusetts' first black female congresswoman. Others have started political action committees to provide financial resources to candidates such as Stacey Abrams, the Democratic nominee for governor in Georgia. If she wins in November, Abrams would become the first black female governor elected to lead a U.S. state.

The Mississippi gathering was part of a stop on a tour across the Deep South organized by LaTosha Brown, co-founder of the Black Voters Matter Fund, which aims to increase political power in black communities.

Brown said the time is now for black women to lead again. She pointed to incidents like the attempt to close a majority of polling places in Randolph County, Georgia, last month, as proof of the need for the kind of continued vigilance black women have long provided.

"This is what we do," she said. "We want to take it to another level. We see what's happening in this country. . We know how to fight, we know how to win, we know how to transform, we know how to build power. We have everything we need."

Headed into November, black female organizers are hoping to elect more African-Americans to power and not simply be a reliable voting block for white Democrats.

In Alabama, "black women were looked to, to bail out Democrats and the state from a very problematic candidate," said Glynda Carr, co-founder of Higher Heights for America, which focuses on electing black women and galvanizing them as voters. "Alabama was this tipping point around black women's leadership, when we woke up to our Twitter feed going crazy. The broader community recognized black women are the building blocks to a winning coalition."

Rhonda Briggins has long worked in politics but never considered herself "a money person" until this year. Briggins co-founded R.O.S.E.-PAC, short for Raising Our Sisters' Electability, and started the Sisters Supporting Sisters campaign this summer, with the goal of getting 100 women at a time to donate \$100 each.

Her pitch is simple: When black women go to the hair salon, she asks them to talk to other women about the midterms and about the importance of voting.

Along the Black Voters Matter Fund tour, Briggins told a crowd of black women organizers in Stockbridge, Georgia, "This is not a time for us to play."

"So many times we have good sisters on the ballot and they don't have the resources," she said. "We've come together . we need people to educate everyone. We're just trying to find grassroots ways to organize African-American women. We have been always behind the scenes."

Fallon McClure, who was sitting in the audience, agreed.

"For the longest time, there's been a lot of white-led organizations, and there'd be a sprinkling of women of color, but now it's starting to be women of color-led organizations," said McClure, state director for Spread the Vote, started by a black woman, which is working in states with voter ID laws to get free identification cards.

"Even in organizations that are still white-led, we're seeing their whole organizing crew is starting to be black women and other women of color," she continued. "They've been doing the work for a long time but weren't necessarily getting the credit, or they had a regular, full-time job, and they were just kind of doing the work on the side because they cared about their community and wanted to make a difference, but now they're getting the recognition for it."

Black women are also collaborating across states and across the country to maximize their efforts. Many have worked together on previous campaigns or on other grassroots projects in black communities, bringing a familiarity to the work they now share.

As the Black Voters Matter Fund tour rolled through Mississippi, Kenya Collins and Cassandra Overton Welchlin chatted easily in their seats, each tooting the other's horn and finishing the other's sentences. Because there are so few black women on the ground, Collins explained, they have no choice but to stick together.

"In Mississippi, black women have always been about community," said Overton Welchlin, co-convener

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of the Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable. "If we can shift the power to get black women to show up for every election, we can do some amazing things. The Bible says that in the multitude of counselors, plans succeed."

For nearly two hours after the bus rolled into Jackson for the final meeting of the day, Brown listened to her sisters in the struggle discussing their work around issues from education to nutrition to reproductive rights. When it was her turn to speak, she ended her remarks by echoing Baker's most famous line with a renewed urgency:

"We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes."

Whack is The Associated Press' national writer on race and ethnicity. Follow her on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/emaravelous>.

Main California highway closed by fire until declared safe

By NOAH BERGER and PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FOREST, Calif. (AP) — Interstate 5 usually swarms with trucks and traffic as it winds its way through California.

But the main highway between Mexico and Canada was a ghost road Friday morning along a 45-mile (72-kilometer) northern stretch that remained closed since a fire two days earlier swept down and turned hills on either side into walls of flame.

Drivers fled in terror and several big-rigs burned Wednesday as the Delta Fire erupted on both sides of the artery. Crews managed to remove the burned hulks and abandoned rigs on Thursday but flames continued to burn along an edge of the road in some areas, fire spokesman Brandon Vacarro said.

A decision was expected Friday on whether to reopen the highway but first authorities had to check the safety of the pavement and cut down burned trees next to the road — some of them 70 feet tall — that might be in danger of falling down.

The Delta Fire had burned more than 34 square miles (89 square kilometers) of timber and brush and prompted evacuation orders for scattered homes and buildings in three counties in and around the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. At times, flames shot up 300 feet (91 meters) high.

Although the fire wasn't burning near any large towns, Vacarro said about 280 homes were considered threatened. There were some reports that homes had burned but Vacarro could only confirm that an outbuilding and two mixed-use commercial and residential buildings had been damaged.

"It could be like a bed-and-breakfast, it could be a store with a house above it," he explained.

Meanwhile, truckers who rely heavily on the I-5 to transport timber and other goods along the West Coast had the unenviable choice of waiting or taking a jammed detour that added 115 miles (185 kilometers) or so to their journeys.

"The road is essentially all two lanes on that journey and there's some steep hills on there as well so obviously slow-moving trucks going up and down the hill is making it hard to travel," Vacarro said.

Patience was running thin at the Pilot Travel Center in the town of Weed, near the northern end of the closure. The truck stop's facilities were stretched to their limits, cashier Jacob Chapman said Thursday afternoon. Parked big rigs lined the roads surrounding the facility.

"It's been ridiculously congested. It's been frantic," Chapman said. "A lot of the truckers are upset. They're just stuck, they can't get through and they're sick of waiting around."

"The general mood is just tired and upset. The truckers are exhausted and just want to get going. And the locals just want a break from the wildfires," Chapman said.

"We want our towns to stop being on fire," he added.

California has been hit with one massive blaze after another, including a blaze not far from the Delta Fire that last month burned about 1,100 homes and killed eight people.

The unrelenting flames have drained California's firefighting budget and prompted nearly \$1 billion in property claims even before the start of the dangerous fall fire season, officials said Thursday.

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The deadly Carr Fire and another in the Mendocino area — the two largest blazes in the state this year — destroyed or damaged 8,800 homes and 329 businesses, Insurance Commissioner David Jones said. Victims have filed more than 10,000 insurance claims so far, totaling \$845 million.

"The worst may be yet to come," Jones warned at a San Francisco news conference, noting that California wildfires are typically more destructive after Sept. 1.

Last year, for example, wildfires that killed more than 40 people and destroyed thousands of buildings in counties north of San Francisco didn't spark until October.

Also on Thursday, the director of the state's firefighting agency said in a letter to lawmakers that the agency only had about \$11 million remaining in its annual budget and anticipates needing another \$234 million to add firefighters and helicopters, and to cover other costs of fires expected later this year.

The department had spent \$432 million through the end of August, said Ken Pimlott of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The Legislature budgets for firefighting costs based on historical averages. Cal Fire has requested extra money in seven of the past 10 years but never this early, according to the Department of Finance.

Elias reported from San Francisco. AP writers Jonathan J. Cooper in Sacramento, Alina Hartounian in Phoenix, and Janie Har in San Francisco and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Word detectives: Close look at word choice could ID writer

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Language detectives say the key clues to who wrote the anonymous New York Times opinion piece slamming President Donald Trump may not be the odd and glimmering "lodestar," but the itty-bitty words that people usually read right over: "I," "of" and "but."

And lodestar? That could be a red herring meant to throw sleuths off track, some experts say.

Experts use a combination of language use, statistics and computer science to help figure out who wrote documents that are anonymous or possibly plagiarized. They've even solved crimes and historical mysteries that way. Some call the field forensic linguistics, others call it stylometry or simply doing "author attribution."

The field is suddenly at center stage after an unidentified "senior administration official" wrote in the Times that he or she was part of a "resistance" movement working from within the administration to curb Trump's most dangerous impulses.

"My phone has been ringing off the hook with requests to do that analysis and I just don't have the time," says Duquesne University computer and language scientist Patrick Juola.

Robert Leonard, a Hofstra University linguistics professor who has helped solve murders by examining language, says if experts could get the right number of writing samples from officials whose identities are known, "an analysis could certainly be done."

One political scientist figures there are about 50 people in the Trump administration who fit the Times' description as a senior administration official and could be the author. The key would be to look at how they write, the words they use, what words they put next to each other, spelling, punctuation and even tenses, experts say.

"Language is a set of choices. What to say, how to say and when to say it," Juola says. "And there's a lot of different options."

One of the favorite techniques of Juola and other experts is to look at what's called "function words." These are words people use all the time but that are hard to define because they more provide function than meaning. Some examples are "of," "with," "the," "a," "over" and "and."

"We all use them but we don't use them in the same way," Juola says. "We don't use them in the same frequency." Same goes with apostrophes and other punctuation.

For example, do you say "different from" or "different than?" asks computer science and data expert Shlomo Argamon of the Illinois Institute of Technology.

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Women tend to use first- and second-person pronouns more — “I,” “me” and “you” — and more present tense, Argamon says.

Men use “the,” “of,” “this” and “that” more often, he says.

“You look for clues and you try to assess the usefulness of those clues,” Argamon says. But he is less optimistic that the Trump opinion piece case will be cracked for various reasons, including the New York Times’ editing for style and possible efforts to fool language detectives with words that someone else likes to use such as “lodestar.” Mostly, he’s pessimistic because to do a proper comparison, samples from all suspects have to be gathered and have to be similar, such as all opinion columns as opposed to novels, speeches or magazine stories.

Rachel Greenstadt at Drexel University studies when people try to throw off investigators with words they don’t normally use or purposeful bad spellings. She says her first instinct is that the word “lodestar” — one Vice President Mike Pence has used several times — is “a red herring.” It seems too deliberate.

“Most people are still looking for sound bite-sized features like lodestar instead of trying to get a handle on the whole picture,” says Hofstra’s Leonard.

Greenstadt says language analysis “could kind of contribute to the picture” of who wrote the Times’ opinion pieces, but she adds “by itself, I’d be concerned to use it.”

Still, with the right conditions words matter.

Juola testified in about 15 trials and handled even more cases that never made it to court. His biggest case was in 2013, when a British newspaper got a tip that the book “The Cuckoo’s Calling” by Robert Galbraith was really written by Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling. In about an hour, Juola fed two Rowling books, “The Cuckoo’s Calling” and six other novels into his computer, analyzed the language patterns with four different systems and concluded that Rowling did it.

A couple of days later, Rowling confessed.

It was far from the first time that language use fingered the real culprit. The Unabomber’s brother identified him because of his distinctive writing style. Field pioneers helped find a kidnapper who used the unique term “devil strip” for the grassy area between the sidewalk and road. The phrase is only used in parts of Ohio.

Even in politics, words are poker tells. In 1996, the novel “Primary Colors” about a Clintonesque presidential candidate set Washington abuzz trying to figure out who was the anonymous author. An analysis by a Vassar professor and other work pointed to Newsweek’s Joe Klein and he finally admitted it.

But the literary sleuthing goes back to the founding of the republic. Historians had a hard time figuring out which specific Federalist Papers were written by Alexander Hamilton and which were by James Madison. A 1963 statistical analysis figured it out: One of the many clues came down to usage of the words “while” and “whilst.” Madison used “whilst”; Hamilton preferred “while.”

Juola says experts in the field can generally tell introverts from extroverts, men from women, education level, age, location, almost everything but astrological sign.

“The science is very good,” Juola said. “It’s not quite DNA. It’s actually considered by some scientists to be considered the second-most accurate form of forensic identification we have because it is so good.”

AP writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter: @borenbears . His work can be found here .

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Burt Reynolds, star of film, TV and tabloids, dead at 82

By JOHN ROGERS, Associated Press

Burt Reynolds, the handsome film and television star known for his acclaimed performances in "Deliverance" and "Boogie Nights," commercial hits such as "Smokey and the Bandit" and for an active off-screen love life which included relationships with Loni Anderson and Sally Field, has died at age 82.

His death was confirmed Thursday by his agent Todd Eisner. In a statement, his niece, Nancy Lee Hess, called his death "totally unexpected," although she acknowledged he had health issues.

"He was tough. Anyone who breaks their tail bone on a river and finishes the movie is tough. And that's who he was. My uncle was looking forward to working with Quentin Tarantino, and the amazing cast that was assembled," she said, referring to the upcoming film "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" with Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt.

Hess noted her uncle's kindness and generosity, and thanked "all of his amazing fans who have always supported and cheered him on, through all of the hills and valleys of his life and career."

The mustachioed, smirking Reynolds inspired a wide range of responses over his long, erratic career: critical acclaim and critical scorn, popular success and box office bombs. Reynolds made scores of movies, ranging from lightweight fare such as the hits "The Cannonball Run" and "Smokey and the Bandit" to more serious films like "The Longest Yard" and "The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing."

He received some of the film world's highest and lowest honors. He was nominated for an Oscar for "Boogie Nights," the Paul Thomas Anderson film about the pornography industry; won an Emmy for the TV series "Evening Shade," and was praised for his starring role in "Deliverance."

But he also was a frequent nominee for the Razzie, the tongue-in-cheek award for Hollywood's worst performance, and his personal life provided ongoing drama, particularly after an acrimonious divorce from Anderson in 1995. He had a troubled marriage to Judy Carne, a romance with Dinah Shore and a relationship with Field damaged by his acknowledged jealousy of her success.

Through it all he presented a genial persona, often the first to make fun of his own conflicted image.

"My career is not like a regular chart, mine looks like a heart attack," he told The Associated Press in 2001. "I've done over 100 films, and I'm the only actor who has been canned by all three networks. I epitomize longevity."

Reynolds was candid about his flops, his regrets and about his many famous friends. He would call posing nude for Cosmopolitan one of his biggest mistakes because it undermined the respect he had gained for "Deliverance." He revered Spencer Tracy as an early mentor and came to know Johnny Carson, Clint Eastwood, Frank Sinatra and many others.

"Burt Reynolds was one of my heroes," tweeted Arnold Schwarzenegger. "He was a trailblazer. He showed the way to transition from being an athlete to being the highest paid actor, and he always inspired me. He also had a great sense of humor - check out his Tonight Show clips. My thoughts are with his family."

Born in Lansing, Michigan and raised in Florida, he was an all-Southern Conference running back at Florida State University in the 1950s. Reynolds appeared headed to the NFL until a knee injury and an automobile accident ended his chances. He dropped out of college and drifted to New York, where he worked as a dockhand, dance-hall bouncer, bodyguard and dish washer before returning to Florida in 1957 and enrolling in acting classes at Palm Beach Junior College.

He won the Florida Drama Award in 1958 for his performance in the role John Garfield made famous in "Outward Bound." He was subsequently discovered by a talent agent at New York's Hyde Park Playhouse.

Early theater roles included performances in "Mister Roberts" and "Look: We've Come Through."

After moving to Hollywood, he found work as a stuntman, including one job that consisted of flying through a glass window. As a star, he often performed his own stunts, and he played a stuntman in the 1978 film "Hooper," one of his better reviewed films.

Because of his dark features, he was cast frequently as an Indian early in his career, including the title role in the 1967 spaghetti western "Navajo Joe." He also played Iroquois Indian detective John Hawk in the short-lived 1966 TV series "Hawk."

In the 1960s he made dozens of guest-star appearances on such TV shows as "Bonanza," "The Twilight

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Zone" and "Perry Mason." His first film role came in 1961's "Angel Baby," and he followed it with numerous other mediocre movies, the kind, he liked to joke, that were shown in airplanes and prisons.

He did become famous enough to make frequent appearances on "The Tonight Show," leading to his most cherished film role and to his greatest folly.

In the early 1970s, director John Boorman was impressed by how confidently Reynolds handled himself when subbing for Carson as host of "The Tonight Show." Boorman thought he might be right for a film adaptation of James Dickey's novel "Deliverance."

Reynolds starred as Lewis Medlock, the intrepid leader of an ill-fated whitewater canoe trip. When he and three other Atlanta businessmen are ambushed by violent backwoodsmen, Reynolds must guide the group to safety.

"Deliverance" was an Oscar nominee for best picture and no film made him prouder. In his 2015 memoir "But Enough About Me," he wrote that "Deliverance" would be his choice could he put one of his movies in a time capsule.

"It proved I could act," he wrote.

But soon after filming was completed, he made a decision he never stopped regretting. While appearing on "The Tonight Show" with Cosmopolitan editor Helen Gurley Brown, he agreed to her invitation, offered during a commercial break, to be the first male centerfold for her magazine.

"I was flattered and intrigued," Reynolds wrote in his memoir. The April 1972 issue of Cosmopolitan quickly sold more than 1 million copies, but turned his life into a "carnival." The centerfold would appear on T-shirts, panties and other merchandise and Reynolds began receiving obscene fan mail. Reynolds' performance in "Deliverance" was snubbed by the movie academy.

"It was a total fiasco," he wrote. "I thought people would be able to separate the fun-loving side of me from the serious actor, but I was wrong."

He did remain an A-list movie star, starring in such films as "Shamus," "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" and three popular "Smokey and the Bandit" comedies, with co-stars including Field and Jackie Gleason.

Reynolds also directed a few of the films he starred in, including "Gator," "Sharky's Machine" and "Stick," and made cameo appearances in the Hollywood spoof "The Player" and Woody Allen's "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)."

One of his first encounters with the tabloids came in 1973 with the mysterious death of Sarah Miles' manager during filming of "The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing." Reynolds testified during a highly publicized inquest; the death was eventually ruled a suicide.

His romance with Shore, 20 years his senior, brought intense media scrutiny. The two met when Reynolds made a surprise appearance on her talk show, bursting out of a closet on the set.

In the 1980s, his career was nearly destroyed when false rumors surfaced that he was infected with the AIDS virus, in the height of hysteria over the disease. He had injured his jaw making the 1984 comedy "City Heat" with Clint Eastwood. Barely able to eat, he lost 50 pounds and suddenly looked ill and emaciated.

"For two years I couldn't get a job," he told the AP in 1990. "I had to take five physicals to get a job. I had to take the pictures that were offered to me. I did action pictures because I was trying to prove that I was well."

Reynolds later said that at the same time he became addicted to the prescription sleep-aid Halcion for several years.

He eventually regained his health, and in 1988 he married Anderson. The actress, one of the stars of the sitcom "WKRP in Cincinnati," had met him on a talk show.

The marriage was often ugly, the breakup even uglier. The couple divorced in 1995, and their breakup was an embarrassing public spectacle, with the pair exchanging insults in print interviews and on television shows. Reynolds finally paid her a \$2 million settlement and a vacation home to settle the divorce.

"There was pain. There was some abuse," Anderson told the AP in 1995. There was drug addiction, on his part. There was always me trying to save it and feeling very empowered that I thought I could. And there was great love on my part."

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Reynolds rebounded once again, this time with the role of porn movie impresario Jack Horner in Paul Thomas Anderson's "Boogie Nights," which brought him some of his best reviews even though he felt ambivalent about his character and felt limited rapport with the director.

He won a Golden Globe for best supporting actor and received an Oscar nomination. Convinced he would win, he was devastated when the Oscar went to Robin Williams for "Good Will Hunting."

"I once said that I'd rather have a Heisman Trophy than an Oscar," he wrote in his memoir. "I lied."

Reynolds had previously won a Golden Globe in 1992 for "Evening Shade," in which he played Wood Newton, a former professional football player who returns to his Arkansas hometown to coach the high school team. He also received an Emmy for the role in 1991.

He was back in the tabloids again in 2005 after he appeared in a remake of "The Longest Yard," which starred Adam Sandler in Reynolds' old role as an imprisoned former football star. Reynolds costarred as the coach, the role Michael Conrad had in the original film.

At a premiere in New York, a studio publicist admitted he hadn't seen either movie, and Reynolds responded by slapping him across the face. He joked later that it was just a "love tap."

Burton Leon Reynolds was born on Feb. 11, 1936, the son of a police chief who looked down on his son's ambitions to become an actor. After several years in California, he returned in 1969 to Florida, where he had gone to college. He bought eight acres of waterfront property in the wealthy community of Jupiter and spent most of the rest of his life there, devoting much of his later years to his only son, Quinton, whom he had adopted with Anderson.

He opened the Burt Reynolds Jupiter Theatre and a Burt Reynolds and Friends Museum, where he displayed his memorabilia and sometimes lectured to drama students.

Associated Press writers Hillel Italie and the late Bob Thomas contributed to this report.

California takes financial wallop from unrelenting wildfires

By NOAH BERGER and PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FOREST, Calif. (AP) — California is taking a financial wallop from unrelenting wildfires that have drained its firefighting budget and prompted nearly \$1 billion in property claims even before the start of the dangerous fall fire season, officials said Thursday.

The disclosures came as a roaring blaze in a rural area near the Oregon state line closed 45 miles (72 kilometers) of heavily traveled Interstate 5, the main highway from Mexico to Canada.

Fierce orange flames forced panicked truckers to abandon big-rigs and brought screams from motorists as they watched the advancing fire in Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

A decision was expected Friday on when to reopen the highway.

The wildfire flared just weeks after a blaze in the Redding area killed eight people and burned about 1,100 homes.

California's insurance commissioner said Thursday that victims of that fire and one in the Mendocino area — the two largest blazes in the state so far this year — have filed more than 10,000 claims so far totaling \$845 million.

The two wildfires destroyed or damaged a combined 8,800 homes and 329 businesses.

"The worst may be yet to come," Commissioner David Jones warned at a San Francisco news conference, noting that California wildfires are typically more destructive after Sept. 1.

Last year, for example, wildfires that killed more than 40 people and destroyed thousands of buildings in counties north of San Francisco didn't spark until October.

Also on Thursday, the director of the state's firefighting agency said in a letter to lawmakers that the agency only had about \$11 million remaining in its annual budget and anticipates needing another \$234 million to add firefighters and helicopters, and to cover other costs of fires expected later this year.

The department had spent \$432 million through the end of August, said Ken Pimlott of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

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The Legislature budgets for firefighting costs based on historical averages. Cal Fire has requested extra money in seven of the past 10 years but never this early, according to the Department of Finance.

In far Northern California, officials said they had no plans to re-open Interstate 5 on Thursday and would reevaluate early Friday — a decision that slowed or stalled truckers who rely heavily on the highway to transport goods along the West Coast.

They were advised to take an alternate route adding 100 miles (160 kilometers) that could take at least six hours.

"If you don't need to make the trip, I wouldn't do it," Caltrans spokeswoman Denise Yergenson said.

Truck driver Amit Sekhri said he saw flames and slowing vehicles along the freeway on Wednesday but his big-rig was too large to turn around and he decided against parking and fleeing on foot.

He kept driving, with fire lapping at both sides of the highway and burning ash falling all around him. He felt the heat in his cab, despite the air conditioning.

"It was picking up so fast. It was behind me, in front of me, left, right. It was all fire. I was surrounded by fire," he said, still shaken by the experience.

When he finally saw daylight, he knew he had made it to safety.

"It's one of the scariest things I've ever seen and been through," he said.

The fire began Wednesday and nearly tripled in size overnight, officials said. By Thursday night it had grown to 34 square miles (89 square kilometers) and had damaged three buildings, although there was no confirmation of any homes being destroyed. It prompted mandatory evacuations and was moving rapidly but remained far from any large towns.

David Steinberg and his partner Kim Mears were returning from a day hike when they came upon the wildfire and watched in awe.

Steinberg says they were mesmerized by the fire, but eventually realized the danger it presented.

"There's a moment when you're saying, 'This is really exciting.' Then you realize, 'Oh this could be really dangerous,'" he said.

Elsewhere in the state, a fire burning in the Sierra Nevada had grown to more than 7 square miles (18 square kilometers) after shutting down stretches of U.S. 395, State Route 108 and the Pacific Crest Trail along the eastern spine of California.

The Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, campgrounds and other areas were evacuated Wednesday. Ranchers were told to prepare to move livestock out of the area in Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

— Elias reported from San Francisco. AP writers Jonathan J. Cooper in Sacramento, Alina Hartounian in Phoenix, and Janie Har in San Francisco contributed to this report.

North Korean charged in crippling Sony hack, WannaCry virus

By BRIAN MELLEY and MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A computer programmer working for the North Korean government was charged with devastating cyberattacks that hacked Sony Pictures Entertainment and unleashed the WannaCry ransomware virus that infected computers in 150 countries and crippled parts of the British health care system, federal prosecutors said Thursday.

Park Jin Hyok, who is believed to be in North Korea, conspired to conduct a series of attacks that also stole \$81 million from a bank in Bangladesh, according to charges unsealed in Los Angeles federal court following years of investigation. The U.S. believes he was working for a North Korean-sponsored hacking organization.

The U.S. government previously said North Korea was responsible for the 2014 Sony hack that led to the release of a trove of sensitive personal information about employees, including Social Security numbers, financial records, salary information, as well as embarrassing emails among top executives. The hack included four yet-to-be released Sony films, among them "Annie," and one that was in theaters, the Brad

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Pitt film "Fury," and cost the company tens of millions of dollars.

The FBI had long suspected North Korea was also behind last year's WannaCry cyberattack, which used malware to scramble data on hundreds of thousands of computers at hospitals, factories, government agencies, banks and other businesses across the globe.

"The criminal conduct outlined in this case is intolerable," said Tracy Wilkison, the first assistant U.S. attorney in Los Angeles. "The North Korean-backed conspiracy attempted to crush freedom of speech in the U.S. and the U.K. It robbed banks around the world. And it created indiscriminate malware that paralyzed computers and disrupted the delivery of medical care."

The charges were filed under seal June 8, four days before President Donald Trump's historic meeting with North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, to discuss ending decades of hostility between the two countries. Prosecutors said the complaint was sealed for a variety of reasons and wasn't done to prevent derailing the Singapore talks.

"This has nothing to do with the summit and nothing to do with denuclearization," Wilkison said.

U.S. officials believe the Sony hack was retribution for "The Interview," a comedy starring Seth Rogen and James Franco in a plot to assassinate Kim. Sony canceled the theatrical release of the film amid threats to moviegoers. The company released it online through YouTube and other sites.

A Sony spokeswoman declined comment Thursday. Attempts by The Associated Press to reach the alleged hacker were not immediately successful. Two Gmail addresses identified in the FBI in the complaint were listed as disabled.

Among the emails released in the hack was an exchange in which Amy Pascal, then co-chairman of the studio, and "The Social Network" producer Scott Rudin joked about what might be then-President Barack Obama's favorite movies, listing "12 Years a Slave" and films by black comedian Kevin Hart.

The pair apologized. Pascal left her job months later.

In addition to targeting Sony, hackers sent spear-phishing emails to employees at AMC Theaters, which had planned to screen the movie, and to a British company producing a fictional television series about a scientist taken prisoner in North Korea, authorities said.

The hackers used the same aliases and accounts from the Sony attack when they sent spear-phishing emails to several U.S. defense contractors, including Lockheed Martin, and others in South Korea, officials said.

The criminal complaint says the hackers committed several attacks from 2014 into 2018, attempting to steal more than \$1 billion from banks around the world. The investigation is continuing.

The hackers also targeted technology and virtual currency industries, as well as academia and electric utilities, authorities said.

"This case warrants attention whether you are an individual, a small business or a major corporation," FBI Special Agent Jennifer Boone said. "Terms you'll see in the complaint, such as watering holes and back doors, don't sound menacing, but in reality they describe malicious cyber techniques that wreak havoc on our computer systems and our lives."

Cybersecurity experts have said portions of the WannaCry program used the same code as malware previously distributed by the hacker collective known as the Lazarus Group, which is believed to be responsible for the Sony hack.

The complaint said Park was on a team of programmers employed an organization called Chosun Expo that operated out of Dalian, China, and that the FBI described as "a government front company."

A North Korea-registered website bearing that company's name described it as the country's "first internet company," established in 2002.

A 2015 version of the Chosun Expo website said it focused on gaming, gambling, e-payments and image recognition software. It looked in many ways like a typical tech company, boasting of its "pioneering" IT talent and customer satisfaction. By July 2016, internet archival records show, the company dropped the reference to North Korea from its home page. The site later vanished from the web.

Emails sent to Chosun Expo's generic email address and to the website's original registrant, whose name was given as Won Sun Chol, went unreturned.

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It is the first time the Justice Department has brought criminal charges against a hacker said to be from North Korea. In recent years, the department has charged hackers from China, Iran and Russia in hopes of publicly shaming other countries for sponsoring cyberattacks on U.S. corporations.

In 2014, for instance, the Obama administration charged five Chinese military hackers with a series of digital break-ins at American companies. Last year, the Justice Department charged Russian hackers with an intrusion at Yahoo Inc.

The Treasury Department also added Park Jin Hyok's name to their sanction list, which prohibits banks that do business in the U.S. from providing accounts to him or Chosun Expo.

Park, whose age is not known, is charged with two counts alleging conspiracies to commit computer and wire fraud — crimes that could carry a prison term up to 25 years.

It's unlikely he will be extradited because the U.S. has no formal relations with North Korea.

The North Korean government was not notified about the charges, which are likely to be a source of irritation.

Diplomatic efforts have sputtered since the June summit, though Kim said through South Korean security officials Thursday that he still has faith Trump is committed to ending hostile relations.

Trump thanked Kim on Twitter and said, "We will get it done together!"

Balsamo reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Eric Tucker in Washington and Raphael Satter in London contributed to this report.

Incumbent Carper fends off rival in Delaware Senate primary

By RANDALL CHASE, Associated Press

DOVER, Del. (AP) — Incumbent Tom Carper won Thursday's Democratic U.S. Senate primary in Delaware, easily fending off a challenge from a political newcomer who had hoped to become the latest liberal candidate to score an upset against a powerful legislator.

Carper's victory set up a November race against Rob Arlett, President Donald Trump's former campaign chair in this heavily Democratic state. Arlett defeated former PayPal executive Gene Truono in the Republican primary.

"This is not the finish line," Carper told a crowd of about 60 supporters, including Democratic Gov. John Carney, in declaring victory. "This was a good solid win."

Carper, 71, won by nearly 30 percent over Kerry Evelyn Harris, who was part of a wave of young activists emboldened by the 2016 presidential campaign of U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Eying a fourth term in the Senate, Carper touted his experience and his ability to work with lawmakers from both sides of the aisle in Congress, despite being a vocal Trump critic. He served five terms in the U.S. House and two terms as governor before being elected to the Senate in 2000.

"I'm happy with how things are going here in the state," said Jim Williams, 39, who works in the financial services industry and voted for Carper. "I think he represents us well, and I didn't see a need for change."

Carper had a huge advantage over Harris in fundraising, having raised more than \$1.3 million this year, compared to a little more than \$120,000 reported by Harris as of mid-August. He outspent her by a similar margin.

Harris, a black, gay Air Force veteran, ran on a platform including government-paid health care for all, a \$15 an hour minimum wage and abolition of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. She tried to paint Carper as an out-of-touch, career politician beholden to corporations and their political action committees.

She had hoped to follow the success of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who beat a 10-term incumbent in a New York congressional primary in June, Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum, who won Florida's Democratic gubernatorial primary, and Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley, who beat an incumbent in a Massachusetts primary this week.

"We're going to just keep pushing against the machine," Harris said. "Our voices are louder than ever,

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and we are not going to sit silent whenever we see any injustices.”

Carper congratulated Harris for running a good race and inspiring young people to get energized and involved.

“We need to reunite as a party,” he said. “We need to keep in mind that we are not one another’s enemies.”

Carper beat his 2012 general election opponent by 37 points, suggesting a difficult race for Arlett, the 51-year-old owner of a real estate business in southern Delaware. Arlett has served on the Sussex County council since 2015.

During the Senate campaign, Arlett touted his support of Trump’s “America First” agenda and his socially conservative positions, including opposition to abortion and gay marriage. He reminded GOP voters that Truono is openly gay and in a same-sex marriage.

“I’m married to a woman and he is not,” Arlett replied when asked by a newspaper reporter just days before the election to describe the biggest contrast between him and Truono.

Arlett also tried to paint Truono, who changed his political registration from unaffiliated to Republican a year ago before announcing his Senate bid, as a “party crasher.”

Arlett has said he would work in Washington to remove burdensome regulations on businesses, improve border security and fight for free and fair trade.

He also has called for repeal of the Affordable Care Act and the defunding of so-called “sanctuary cities.”

Republican voters also chose businessman Scott Walker as their nominee for Delaware’s lone U.S. House seat. He will challenge first-term Democrat Lisa Blunt Rochester.

Democrats make final attempt to block Kavanaugh confirmation

By MARK SHERMAN and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats mounted a last, ferocious attempt Thursday to paint Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh as a foe of abortion rights and a likely defender of President Donald Trump if he makes it to the high court. But their chances of blocking Trump’s nominee seemed to fade away by the end of a second marathon day of testimony in his confirmation hearing.

Questioning of the 53-year-old appellate judge wound down without him revealing much about his judicial stances or making any serious mistakes that might jeopardize his confirmation. In what almost seemed like a celebration, Kavanaugh’s two daughters returned to the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing room for the final hours of testimony, accompanied by teammates on Catholic school basketball teams their father has coached.

The hearing pivoted during the day to *Roe v. Wade*, the high court’s landmark abortion case. The Democrats’ best hope of stopping Kavanaugh — who could swing the court further the right for decades — would be branding him as a justice who might vote to overturn the ruling, attracting the votes of two Republican senators who support abortion rights.

A newly disclosed email suggested he once indicated the abortion case was not settled law, though Kavanaugh denied in the hearing that he had been expressing his personal views on the issue.

The tone in the email from 2003 contrasted with his responses to questions on Wednesday when he stressed how difficult it is to overturn precedents like *Roe*. In the email, Kavanaugh was reviewing a potential op-ed article in support of two judicial nominees while he was working at the George W. Bush White House. The document had been held by the committee as confidential, but was made public Thursday.

“I am not sure that all legal scholars refer to *Roe* as the settled law of the land at the Supreme Court level since Court can always overrule its precedent, and three current Justices on the Court would do so,” Kavanaugh wrote, referring to justices at the time, in an email to a Republican Senate aide. The document was partially redacted.

Asked about it by the committee’s top Democrat, Dianne Feinstein of California, Kavanaugh reiterated his previous testimony that “*Roe v. Wade* is an important precedent of the Supreme Court.”

Democrats also hammered at Kavanaugh’s ability to separate himself from Trump and special counsel

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Robert Mueller's investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 election. Throughout his testimony, Kavanaugh has repeatedly insisted he fully embraces the importance of judicial independence.

Campaigning in Montana Thursday night, Trump said Kavanaugh deserves bipartisan support and criticized the "anger and the meanness on the other side— it's sick."

In the hearing room, Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois put the focus on Trump, who Durbin said, "has shown contempt for the federal judiciary and has shown disrespect for the rule of law over and over again."

"It's in the context of the Trump presidency that we ask you these questions," Durbin said.

Kavanaugh refused to answer questions about Trump or commit to stepping aside from any case about the Russia investigation that might come to the Supreme Court. When Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut invited him to denounce Trump's criticism of federal judges, the nominee demurred.

"The way we stand up is by deciding cases and controversies independently without fear or favor," Kavanaugh said.

Earlier, he said his 12-year record as an appellate judge shows that he has not been afraid to invalidate executive branch actions. Kavanaugh said that he has made clear that a court order "that requires a president to do something or prohibits a president from doing something ... is the final word in our system."

Late Wednesday evening, Kavanaugh seemed to stumble at first when questioned by Democrat Kamala Harris of California about whom he might have spoken with at a law firm concerning the investigation into Russian election meddling. The firm in question was founded by Marc Kasowitz, who has represented Trump.

Kavanaugh eventually said he couldn't think of any such conversations but would need to see a list of the firm's lawyers. In questioning Thursday, he said more directly that he had no such conversations.

On a separate track, Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont and Durbin have led the charge in suggesting that Kavanaugh misled them in earlier testimony, an allegation the nominee firmly denied with the enthusiastic backing of Senate Republicans.

Much of the debate among senators has focused more on the disclosure of documents than on Kavanaugh's record.

Democratic Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey, along with Harris — both potential presidential candidates in 2020 — said he was willing to risk fallout over releasing confidential documents about Kavanaugh's views on race. Republican John Cornyn of Texas warned him that senators could be expelled for violating confidentiality rules. Democrats and Booker responded, "Bring it on."

In fact, some of the documents the Democrats wanted disclosed had been released hours earlier, in a pre-dawn disclosure approved by Bill Burck, the GOP attorney who serves as presidential records lawyer for Bush.

"We were surprised to learn about Senator Booker's histrionics this morning because we had already told him he could use the documents publicly," Burck said by email. Booker had sought release late Wednesday, after questioning Kavanaugh on race and drawing rebuke from his colleagues for disclosing the confidential documents. They were made available after 3 a.m. Thursday.

Booker's spokeswoman said that only by raising the issue publicly was the senator able to "shame the committee into agreeing" to release the pages to the public.

The document battle stemmed from Kavanaugh's unusually long paper trail following his years in the Bush White House. The panel's process resulted in hundreds of thousands of pages of Kavanaugh's documents being withheld as confidential or kept from release under presidential privilege by the Trump White House.

Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, who released more documents Thursday, stood by his handling of the issue.

"My process was fair," Grassley declared.

Protesters have repeatedly tried to interrupt the hearing, which has carried strong political overtones ahead of the November congressional elections.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell dismissed the protesters' "unhinged antics" as powerless to stop Trump's choice. "There's no hecklers' veto," he said.

Republicans hope to confirm Kavanaugh in time for the first day of the new Supreme Court term, Oct. 1.

Associated Press writer Jessica Gresko contributed to this report.

Read more on AP's coverage of Kavanaugh at <https://apnews.com/tag/KavanaughNomination>

Word detectives: Science may help finger opinion columnist

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Language detectives say the key clues to who wrote the anonymous New York Times opinion piece slamming President Donald Trump may not be the odd and glimmering “lodestar,” but the itty-bitty words that people usually read right over: “I,” “of” and “but.”

And lodestar? That could be a red herring meant to throw sleuths off track, some experts say.

Experts use a combination of language use, statistics and computer science to help figure out who wrote documents that are anonymous or possibly plagiarized. They’ve even solved crimes and historical mysteries that way. Some call the field forensic linguistics, others call it stylometry or simply doing “author attribution.”

The field is suddenly at center stage after an unidentified “senior administration official” wrote in the Times that he or she was part of a “resistance” movement working from within the administration to curb Trump’s most dangerous impulses.

“My phone has been ringing off the hook with requests to do that analysis and I just don’t have the time,” says Duquesne University computer and language scientist Patrick Juola.

Robert Leonard, a Hofstra University linguistics professor who has helped solve murders by examining language, says if experts could get the right number of writing samples from officials whose identities are known, “an analysis could certainly be done.”

One political scientist figures there are about 50 people in the Trump administration who fit the Times’ description as a senior administration official and could be the author. The key would be to look at how they write, the words they use, what words they put next to each other, spelling, punctuation and even tenses, experts say.

“Language is a set of choices. What to say, how to say and when to say it,” Juola says. “And there’s a lot of different options.”

One of the favorite techniques of Juola and other experts is to look at what’s called “function words.” These are words people use all the time but that are hard to define because they more provide function than meaning. Some examples are “of,” “with,” “the,” “a,” “over” and “and.”

“We all use them but we don’t use them in the same way,” Juola says. “We don’t use them in the same frequency.” Same goes with apostrophes and other punctuation.

For example, do you say “different from” or “different than?” asks computer science and data expert Shlomo Argamon of the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Women tend to use first- and second-person pronouns more — “I,” “me” and “you” — and more present tense, Argamon says.

Men use “the,” “of,” “this” and “that” more often, he says.

“You look for clues and you try to assess the usefulness of those clues,” Argamon says. But he is less optimistic that the Trump opinion piece case will be cracked for various reasons, including the New York Times’ editing for style and possible efforts to fool language detectives with words that someone else likes to use such as “lodestar.” Mostly, he’s pessimistic because to do a proper comparison, samples from all suspects have to be gathered and have to be similar, such as all opinion columns as opposed to novels, speeches or magazine stories.

Rachel Greenstadt at Drexel University studies when people try to throw off investigators with words they don’t normally use or purposeful bad spellings. She says her first instinct is that the word “lodestar” — one Vice President Mike Pence has used several times — is “a red herring.” It seems too deliberate.

“Most people are still looking for sound bite-sized features like lodestar instead of trying to get a handle

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on the whole picture," says Hofstra's Leonard.

Greenstadt says language analysis "could kind of contribute to the picture" of who wrote the Times' opinion pieces, but she adds "by itself, I'd be concerned to use it."

Still, with the right conditions words matter.

Juola testified in about 15 trials and handled even more cases that never made it to court. His biggest case was in 2013, when a British newspaper got a tip that the book "The Cuckoo's Calling" by Robert Galbraith was really written by Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling. In about an hour, Juola fed two Rowling books, "The Cuckoo's Calling" and six other novels into his computer, analyzed the language patterns with four different systems and concluded that Rowling did it.

A couple of days later, Rowling confessed.

It was far from the first time that language use fingered the real culprit. The Unabomber's brother identified him because of his distinctive writing style. Field pioneers helped find a kidnapper who used the unique term "devil strip" for the grassy area between the sidewalk and road. The phrase is only used in parts of Ohio.

Even in politics, words are poker tells. In 1996, the novel "Primary Colors" about a Clintonesque presidential candidate set Washington abuzz trying to figure out who was the anonymous author. An analysis by a Vassar professor and other work pointed to Newsweek's Joe Klein and he finally admitted it.

But the literary sleuthing goes back to the founding of the republic. Historians had a hard time figuring out which specific Federalist Papers were written by Alexander Hamilton and which were by James Madison. A 1963 statistical analysis figured it out: One of the many clues came down to usage of the words "while" and "whilst." Madison used "whilst"; Hamilton preferred "while."

Juola says experts in the field can generally tell introverts from extroverts, men from women, education level, age, location, almost everything but astrological sign.

"The science is very good," Juola said. "It's not quite DNA. It's actually considered by some scientists to be considered the second-most accurate form of forensic identification we have because it is so good."

AP writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter: @borenbears . His work can be found here .

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NY Times' decision to publish anonymous column carries risks

By **DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — The coup of publishing a column by an anonymous Trump administration official bashing the boss could backfire on The New York Times if the author is unmasked and turns out to be a little-known person, or if the newspaper's own reporters solve the puzzle.

Within hours of the essay appearing on the paper's website, the mystery of the writer's identity began to rival the Watergate-era hunt for "Deep Throat" in Washington, and a parade of Trump team members issued statements Thursday saying, in effect, "it's not me."

The Times' only clue was calling the author a "senior administration official." James Dao, the newspaper's op-ed editor, said in the Times' daily podcast that while an intermediary brought him together with the author, he conducted a background check and spoke to the person to the point that he was "totally confident" in the identity.

How large the pool of "senior administration officials" is in Washington is a matter of interpretation.

It's a term used loosely around the White House. Press offices often release statements or offer background briefings and ask that the information be attributed to a senior administration official.

The Partnership for Public Services tracks approximately 700 senior positions in government, ones that

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require Senate confirmation. Paul Light, a New York University professor and expert on the federal bureaucracy, said about 50 people could have legitimately written the column — probably someone in a political position appointed by President Donald Trump.

He suspects the author is in either a Cabinet-level or deputy secretary position who frequently visits the White House or someone who works in the maze of offices in the West Wing. Most of the Cabinet has denied authorship.

Martha Joynt Kumar, director of the White House Transition Project, meanwhile, puts the number of true senior administration officials at around 100, defining them as high up in the government and having regular interaction with the White House or the president himself.

Jennifer Palmieri, former communications director for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, tweeted that, based on her experience with the Times and sourcing, "this person could easily be someone most of us have never heard of and more junior than you'd expect."

That would be a problem for the Times, partly through no fault of its own, said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, communications professor and director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. The column attracted so much attention — as much for its existence as for what it actually said — that it raised the expectation that the author is someone powerful, she said.

If the person is not among the 20 top people in the administration, "the Times just gets creamed," said Tom Bettag, a veteran news producer and now a University of Maryland journalism instructor. "And I think it gets held against them in the biggest possible way. I have enough respect for the Times to believe that they wouldn't hold themselves up to that."

It would look like the Times was trying to stir the pot if it were not a high-level person, said Chuck Todd, host of NBC's "Meet the Press."

Ruth Marcus, deputy editorial page editor of The Washington Post, told Todd on MSNBC that if the author had come to the Post it would provoke a serious discussion, because the newspaper has not in the past run anonymous op-ed columns. She said no one approached the Post to hawk the column.

"When you give someone anonymity on this, you are putting your credibility on the line," Marcus said.

News organizations have different standards for using information from unnamed sources. Frequently, they try to give some indication of why the person would be in a position to know something — the senior administration official, for example — and why anonymity was granted. In this case, the newspaper considered that the person's job would clearly be at risk and that the person could even be physically threatened, Dao said.

He did not see much difference in the use of anonymity in news and opinion pages.

The Times has long been a target of Trump's vitriol. He criticized the newspaper for printing the column and said the Times should reveal its source for reasons of national security. In an interview Thursday with Fox News, Trump said, "What they've done is virtually, you know, it's treason, you could call it a lot of things."

Dao said, "There's nothing in the piece that strikes me as being relevant to or undermining the national security."

The newspaper maintains a strict policy of separation between its news and opinion side, and the decision to publish the column without identifying the author was made by Dao and his boss, Editorial Page Editor James Bennet, in consultation with Publisher A.G. Sulzberger. The paper's executive editor, Dean Baquet, is responsible for the news side and was not part of the decision.

Few people at the paper know the writer's identity, Dao said, and he could not see any circumstances under which it would be divulged.

The Times' own news story about the column said the author's identity is "known to the Times' editorial page department but not to the reporters who cover the White House."

Trump, in a tweet Thursday evening, posed the question: "Are the investigative 'journalists' of the New York Times going to investigate themselves - who is the anonymous letter writer?"

Indeed, like hundreds of other reporters in Washington, the Times' news staff is trying to find out the writer's name. If the Times learns the identity, it could raise serious questions about the newspaper's

ability to protect a confidential source among people who don't know — or don't believe — that one part of the newspaper will keep important information away from another.

"You could write a novel about this," said Jamieson, author of the upcoming "Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President." "If they engage in successful journalism, at some level they discredit themselves."

Associated Press writer Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

Brazilian candidate in serious condition after stabbing

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and PETER PRENGAMAN, Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Jair Bolsonaro, a leading presidential candidate whose heated rhetoric has electrified some voters and angered others in a deeply polarized Brazil, was stabbed at a campaign event Thursday and suffered serious abdominal injuries.

Police said the suspected attacker was in custody.

Dr. Luiz Henrique Borsato, who performed emergency surgery, said Thursday night that the right-wing candidate was in serious but stable condition and would remain in intensive care for at least seven days. The first round of Brazil's presidential election is Oct. 7.

The doctor said the two-hour procedure stopped serious internal bleeding and repaired most of the damage from the knifing. The candidate will need further surgery within months for a part of his intestines that was temporarily fixed with a colostomy, the surgeon said.

"We can't say when he will be able to leave hospital," Borsato said. "But in the first hours after the surgery his recovery has been very satisfactory."

Numerous videos on social media showed Bolsonaro, who has promised to crack down on crime in Latin America's largest nation, being stabbed with a knife to the lower part of his stomach while campaigning in Juiz de Fora, a city about 125 miles (200 kilometers) north of Rio de Janeiro.

At the moment of the attack, Bolsonaro was on the shoulders of a supporter, looking out at the crowd and giving a thumbs up with his left hand.

After the attack, he is seen flinching and then goes out of view. Other videos show supporters carrying him to a car and hitting a man who was apparently the suspect.

Police spokesman Flavio Santiago confirmed to The Associated Press that 40-year-old Adelio Bispo de Oliveira had been arrested in connection with the incident.

De Oliveira was beaten badly by Bolsonaro supporters after the attack. The man was arrested in 2013 for another assault, police said.

Luis Boudens, president of the National Federation of Federal Police, told AP that the assailant appeared to be mentally disturbed.

"Our agents there said the attacker said he was 'on a mission from God,'" Boudens reported. "Their impression is that they were not dealing with a mentally stable person. He didn't expect to be arrested so quickly; agents reacted in seconds."

Bolsonaro's son, Flavio Bolsonaro, initially posted on Twitter that the injury was superficial and his father was fine. However, an hour later he posted another tweet saying the wound was "worse than we thought."

He arrived at the hospital "almost dead," Flavio wrote. "His condition now seems stabilized. Please pray."

A statement from federal police said the candidate had bodyguards. In the videos, Bolsonaro does not appear to be wearing a protective vest. Such measures are rare for candidates in Brazil.

"This episode is sad," President Michel Temer told reporters in Brasilia. "We won't have a rule of law if we have intolerance."

Bolsonaro, a former army captain, is second in the polls to jailed ex-President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who has been barred from running but continues to appeal.

Despite being a congressman since 1991, Bolsonaro is running as an outsider ready to upend the establishment by cracking down on corruption in politics and reducing crime, in part by giving police a freer

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hand to shoot and kill while on duty.

While Bolsonaro has a strong following, he is also a deeply polarizing figure. He has been fined, and even faced charges, for derogatory statements toward women, blacks and gays.

He speaks nostalgically about the country's 1964-1985 military dictatorship and has promised to fill his government with current and former military leaders.

Earlier this week, Bolsonaro said during a campaign event that he would like to shoot corrupt members of the leftist Workers' Party, which made da Silva its candidate. The comment prompted an immediate rebuke from the attorney general, who asked Bolsonaro to explain that comment.

His vice presidential running mate, Hamilton Mourao, is a retired general who blamed leftists for the knife attack.

Underling Brazil's divisions, people took to Twitter to either to decry the stabbing and ask for prayers for Bolsonaro or to say the candidate had brought it upon himself and even may have staged it.

The top five trending topics in Brazil were related to the stabbing.

Other presidential candidates quickly denounced the stabbing and many of them decided to suspend their campaign events Friday.

"Politics is done through dialogue and by convincing, never with hate," tweeted Geraldo Alckmin, former governor of Sao Paulo who has focused negative ads on Bolsonaro.

Fernando Haddad, who is expected to take da Silva's place on the Workers' Party ticket, called the attack "absurd and regrettable."

The attack comes at a time of increasingly heated rhetoric, and sometimes violence, related to campaigns and candidates.

In March, while da Silva was on a campaign tour in southern Brazil before his imprisonment, gunshots hit buses in his caravan. No one was hurt, and da Silva, who is in jail on a corruption conviction, was not in the vehicles that were hit.

Also in March, Marielle Franco, a left-leaning black councilwoman in Rio de Janeiro, was shot to death along with her driver after attending an event on empowering black women.

It wasn't immediately clear how the attack on Bolsonaro might reshape a presidential race very much up in the air with the front-runner, da Silva, in jail. In many ways, the incident feeds Bolsonaro's narrative that Brazil is in chaos and needs a strong hand to steady it.

"It's likely that Bolsonaro will use the attack to argue his opponents are desperate, that they had no other way to stop him," said Mauricio Santoro, a political science professor at Rio de Janeiro's state university.

A handful of Bolsonaro supporters held a vigil in São Paulo on Thursday night, and briefly exchanged insults with leftists. 'They made Bolsonaro a martyr,' said Jonatan Valente, a student. 'I think the left shot itself in the foot because with this attack they will end up electing Bolsonaro.'"

Associated Press reporters Marcelo Silva de Sousa in Rio de Janeiro and Sarah DiLorenzo and Victor Caivano in Sao Paulo contributed to this report.

Twitter permanently bans Alex Jones, Infowars, citing abuse

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Twitter permanently banned right-wing conspiracy theorist Alex Jones and his Infowars show for abusive behavior, a day after CEO Jack Dorsey testified before Congress about alleged bias against conservatives on the platform.

The company said Jones won't be able to create new accounts on Twitter or take over any existing ones. In a tweet, it said it would continue to monitor reports about other accounts potentially associated with Jones or Infowars, and will "take action" if it finds any attempts to circumvent the ban.

Twitter said Jones posted a video on Wednesday that violates the company's policy against "abusive behavior." That video showed Jones berating CNN journalist Oliver Darcy for some 10 minutes in between two congressional hearings on social media. Dorsey testified at both hearings, but did not appear to wit-

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ness the confrontation.

Jones had about 900,000 followers on Twitter. Infowars had about 430,000. Jones did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

New Jersey Democratic Rep. Frank Pallone praised Twitter's action in a tweet. "Glad Twitter is taking steps to put an end to the abusive behavior from Alex Jones & Infowars," the tweet stated. "Tweets designed to threaten, belittle, demean and silence individuals have no place on this platform."

Twitter had previously suspended Jones for a week. But until now it had resisted muzzling Jones further. Other tech companies have limited Jones by suspending him for longer periods, as Facebook did, and by taking down his pages and radio stations.

Jones heckled Darcy in a Capitol Hill hallway where reporters were waiting to enter the House committee room. He criticized the journalist's reporting and appearance, referencing his "skinny jeans" and repeatedly saying, "just look at this guy's eyes" and "look at that smile."

At one point, he said Darcy was "smiling like a possum that crawled out of the rear end of a dead cow. That's what you look like. You look like a possum that got caught doing some really nasty stuff — in my view. You're a public figure too."

Darcy has aggressively questioned social media companies about the forbearance they showed Jones, asking why they have allowed him to remain on their platforms for as long as they have.

Jones is currently active on Facebook; his personal suspension there recently expired. Apple, YouTube and Spotify also permanently removed material Jones had published. Facebook did not immediately respond to a message asking whether it would also ban Jones.

Dorsey originally defended his company's decision not to ban Jones, tweeting that Jones "hasn't violated our rules" but if he does "we'll enforce."

"We're going to hold Jones to the same standard we hold to every account, not taking one-off actions to make us feel good in the short term, and adding fuel to new conspiracy theories," Dorsey tweeted on Aug. 7, after the other companies took action against Jones.

But a week later Twitter joined the other tech companies in muzzling Jones, even if it was only for a week. It was a significant move for a company one of its executives once called the "free speech wing of the free speech party."

But critics warn there is another side to high-profile cases such as this one.

"We should be extremely careful before rushing to embrace an internet that is moderated by private companies by default," said David Greene, civil liberties director at the Electronic Frontier Foundation in an email last month. While high-profile cases of highly offensive content being taken down gets a lot of attention, he added, content moderation "continues to silence" the voices of people around the world struggling to be heard.

Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this story from Washington; AP technology writer Ryan Nakashima contributed from San Francisco.

'A horrific situation: 4 dead in Cincinnati bank shooting

By **ANGIE WANG** and **DAN SEWELL**, Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — A gunman carrying enough ammunition to cause "a bloodbath beyond imagination" killed three people and wounded two others Thursday morning at a high-rise office building in the heart of Cincinnati before dying in a hail of police gunfire.

The shooting at the 30-story Fifth Third Center sent people running for cover across the city's Fountain Square amid cries of "Shooter!" Police responded within seconds, and four officers opened fire, bullets smashing through glass doors and the gunman falling to the floor, authorities said.

Police identified him as Omar Enrique Santa Perez, 29, but said they don't know what motivated the attack.

Police Chief Eliot Isaac said the killer used a 9 mm handgun and was carrying magazines with some 200 rounds of ammunition.

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"A very horrific situation," Isaac said at the scene.

The building is home to Fifth Third Bancorp's headquarters along with a number of other businesses, including ice cream, pastry and sandwich shops.

Police said the gunman, a Cincinnati-area resident since 2015, wasn't a current or past Fifth Third employee. They said he went into a sandwich shop and possibly other businesses before entering the lobby and opening fire around 9:10 a.m.

Hamilton County Prosecutor Joe Deters said the rapid police response probably prevented many more casualties. He said one investigator warned it could have been "a bloodbath beyond imagination."

Afterward, police swarmed the gunman's apartment in North Bend, Ohio, about 15 miles west of Cincinnati.

Michael Richardson, who works in the bank building, told The Cincinnati Enquirer that he was standing outside the entrance when he heard gunshots in the lobby.

"I looked behind me and saw the guy — he shot and then he shot again. After that, I started running," Richardson said.

Leonard Cain told The Enquirer he was going into the bank when someone alerted him about the shooting. He said a woman wearing headphones didn't hear the warnings and walked into the bank and got shot.

Jessica Hanson, who works on one of the lower floors, said a co-worker had taken the elevator down to get a drink, and when the doors opened, she nearly stepped on a man's body. The woman got back in the elevator and rode up to her floor, where Hanson said she was in shock and unable to form complete sentences.

"Then we knew what was going on," Hanson said.

Jaenetta Cook, who manages a bakery on the first floor, said she hurried to lock the door after the first two shots. Then, it "sounded as if they were getting closer and closer." Cook said she and two other employees hid in the bathroom.

"I made it out to see my kids, to see another day," she said with relief.

The Hamilton County Coroner's office identified the victims as Pruthvi Kandepi, 25; Luis Calderon, 48; and Richard Newcomer, 64.

One died at the scene. Two more died at University of Cincinnati Medical Center. The wounded were listed there in critical condition and fair condition.

Fountain Square is often the site of concerts, dancing, food trucks and other events around lunchtime or in the evenings.

"It could have been any one of us," Mayor John Cranley said. He praised police and other emergency personnel, saying, "It could have been much, much worse."

Associated Press writers John Seewer in Toledo, Alexandra Villarreal in New York and AP Photographer John Minchillo in Cincinnati contributed to this story.

Follow Dan Sewell at <http://www.twitter.com/dansewell>

Moscow envoy: Poisoning claims are 'anti-Russian hysteria'

By JIM HEINTZ and EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A top Russian diplomat on Thursday denounced British accusations that Russian military intelligence agents poisoned a former spy in England, calling them base untruths aimed at whipping up hostility toward Moscow.

The statement by Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia to a session of the U.N. Security Council came hours after Britain's security minister said Russian President Vladimir Putin is ultimately responsible for the nerve-agent poisoning in March of Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in the city of Salisbury.

Britain produced an "unfounded and mendacious cocktail of facts" and is refusing to cooperate with Russia in investigating the poisoning "to unleash a disgusting anti-Russian hysteria and to involve other countries in this hysteria," Nebenzia said.

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Moscow has denied involvement in the poisonings since the beginning of the case and the issue reared up again on Wednesday when Britain said it had identified two alleged agents of Russia's GRU military intelligence service as suspects.

Earlier at the Security Council, Ambassador Karen Pierce of Britain accused Russia of failing to uphold the ban on using chemical weapons and playing "dice" with the lives of the people of Salisbury. She said the international community must take steps to safeguard people against the use of chemical weapons and "the threat of hostile foreign interference."

Britain's security minister Ben Wallace called out Putin over the attack that used the nerve agent Novichok against the Skripals in Salisbury. Both Skripal, a GRU officer who turned double agent for Britain, and his daughter were hospitalized for weeks in critical condition.

Pierce said "they are progressing well."

Wallace told the BBC that Putin and his government "controls, funds and directs" the GRU.

Three months after the Skripals were poisoned, local woman Dawn Sturgess died and her boyfriend Charlie Rowley was sickened after they came across remnants of the nerve agent in a discarded perfume bottle.

Britain announced the charges in absentia against two Russians, Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov — names that are likely to be aliases. The murder attempt was approved "at a senior level of the Russian state," British Prime Minister Theresa May said Wednesday.

Moscow strongly denies involvement in the attack, and Russian officials said they didn't recognize the suspects.

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters Thursday that the accusations leveled against the Russian leader and the government were "unacceptable."

"Neither the Russian leadership nor its representatives have anything to do with the events in Salisbury," he said.

Peskov also said that Russia "has no reasons" to investigate the two individuals charged Wednesday because Britain has not asked for legal assistance in the case.

Britain has said it is not going to seek their extradition because Russian law does not allow for its nationals to be tried abroad.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova went on national television Wednesday evening and said the security camera footage of the two suspects arriving at Gatwick Airport released by the British authorities had been doctored because it shows them at the same time in the same place. A closer look, however, shows that the men were walking in different gate corridors.

On Thursday, she accused Britain of "concealing the evidence" and demanded that it share the suspects' fingerprints and other data.

The Skripals' poisoning ignited a diplomatic confrontation in which hundreds of envoys were expelled by both Russia and Western nations. But there is limited appetite among Britain's European allies for further sanctions against Moscow.

Sergei Skripal's niece, Viktoria, on Thursday called on British authorities to allow her to visit her family in Britain after her visa applications were denied. She said that she does not know the men suspected to be behind the poisoning.

Viktoria Skripal also said that she doubts that Sergei Skripal is still alive because he has not communicated with the family since the poisoning.

Lederer reported from the United Nations. Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow and Jill Lawless in London contributed.

Trump administration moves to detain migrant families longer

By COLLEEN LONG and AMY TAXIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Thursday moved to abandon a longstanding court settlement that limits how long immigrant children can be kept locked up, proposing new regulations that

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would allow the government to detain families until their immigration cases are decided.

Homeland Security officials said that ending the so-called Flores agreement of 1997 will speed up the handling of asylum requests while also deterring people from illegally crossing the Mexican border.

The move angered immigrant rights advocates and is all but certain to trigger a court battle.

"It is sickening to see the United States government looking for ways to jail more children for longer," said Omar Jadwat, director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project. "And it's yet another example of the Trump administration's hostility toward immigrants resulting in a policy incompatible with the most basic human values."

The Flores agreement requires the government to keep children in the least restrictive setting possible and to release them generally after 20 days in detention. For decades, because of those restrictions, many parents and children caught trying to slip into the country have been released into the U.S. while their asylum requests wind their way through the courts — a practice President Donald Trump has decried as "catch-and-release."

Such cases can drag on for years, and some immigrants stop showing up to court when it becomes clear their asylum requests are going to be denied.

The newly proposed rules would allow the government to hold families in detention until their cases are completed.

Homeland Security did not say how long it expects families to be kept locked up. But immigration officials say asylum cases involving detained families move much more quickly, taking months instead of years to resolve, in part because there are none of the delays that result when immigrants set free in the U.S. fail to show up for a hearing.

"Today, legal loopholes significantly hinder the department's ability to appropriately detain and promptly remove family units that have no legal basis to remain in the country," said Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. "This rule addresses one of the primary pull factors for illegal immigration and allows the federal government to enforce immigration laws as passed by Congress."

Earlier this summer, a federal judge in California rejected a request by the administration to modify Flores to allow for longer family detention. Administration officials say they have the authority to terminate the agreement, but that is likely to be tested in court.

"They're essentially trying to accomplish through regulation what the court has not permitted," said Peter Schey, an attorney representing immigrant children under the settlement and president of the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law.

Schey said he will oppose any effort to end Flores unless the government proposes acceptable regulations for the safe and humane treatment of youngsters.

"Refugee children should not be made to suffer inhumane treatment and prolonged and unnecessary detention just to satisfy President Trump's zero-tolerance approach to refugees seeking safety in the United States from the violence and lawlessness spreading throughout Central America," Schey said.

The Flores agreement became an issue last spring when the Trump administration adopted a policy of prosecuting anyone caught crossing illegally. More than 2,900 children were separated from their parents, prompting international outrage.

Trump eventually backed down and stopped the separation of families. A federal judge ordered parents and children reunited; the government has said it has done so in as many cases as it could. But hundreds of parents were deported without their children, while others had criminal records or were not parents as they claimed to be, officials said.

Because under Flores children cannot be kept in criminal custody with their parents or held for an extended period in immigration detention, the administration has limited options when dealing with families.

The government operates three family detention centers that can hold a total of about 3,000 people, and they are at or near capacity. Homeland Security and the Pentagon have been working to line up as many as 12,000 beds for family members at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. Another request for up to 20,000 beds for youngsters who arrive without parents is also pending.

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The ACLU's Jadwat accused the administration of "trying to expand the trauma it is inflicting on these children in order to deter other people from coming to the country."

Rachel Prandini, staff attorney at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, said the erosion of Flores' protections would subject children to worsening conditions.

"The Trump administration's decision to exacerbate the suffering of kids, by imposing the cruel policy of family separation earlier this summer and now with this rule change to vastly expand detention of children, is horrifying," she said.

The regulations will be published in the Federal Register and will be subject to a 60-day public comment period starting Friday.

Taxin reported from Santa Ana, Calif.

North Korea's Kim has faith in Trump, frustrated at skeptics

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM, KIM TONG-HYUNG and FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un still has faith in U.S. President Donald Trump's commitment to ending their nations' hostile relations, but he's frustrated by questions about his willingness to denuclearize and wants his "goodwill measures" to be met in kind, South Korean officials said Thursday.

The trove of comments from Kim, including his commitment to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and to the suspension of all future long-range missile tests, were relayed by top South Korean security officials returning from meeting him in Pyongyang as well as by the North's propaganda specialists.

Even in their indirect form, each statement will be parsed for clues about Kim's mindset as North Korea and the U.S. move forward with efforts to resolve a nuclear standoff that just a year ago many feared could lead to war. Some of his reported comments were reiterations of past stances, but there will be sharp interest in whether they push negotiators back to diplomacy after recriminations that followed Kim and Trump's June summit.

Since then, neither side has seemed willing to make a substantive move, leading to skepticism over Trump's claims that Kim will really dismantle his nuclear weapons program. Recent satellite photos have indicated Kim's weapons factories were still operating to produce fissile materials to make nuclear weapons.

South Korean officials said they forwarded a message from Trump to Kim during their meeting and would send a separate message from Kim to Trump later Thursday. The officials wouldn't discuss the content of the messages.

Chung Eui-yong, Moon's national security adviser and the head of the South Korean delegation to Pyongyang, said Kim told him that he still had faith in Trump despite diplomatic setbacks. He said Kim emphasized that he has not once talked negatively about Trump to anyone, including his closest advisers.

Trump responded Thursday by tweeting, "Kim Jong Un of North Korea proclaims 'unwavering faith in President Trump.' Thank you to Chairman Kim. We will get it done together!"

Chung reported that Kim said he wishes for North Korea and the U.S. to put an end to their seven decades of hostile relations before the end of Trump's first term.

Kim told Chung that work to dismantle the only missile engine test site in North Korea "means a complete suspension of future long-range ballistic missile tests." Kim said he'd take "more active" measures toward denuclearization if his moves are met with corresponding goodwill measures, Chung said.

Kim, however, expressed to Chung that he was frustrated by skepticism in the international community over his commitment to denuclearization.

"He said he's pre-emptively taken steps necessary for denuclearization and wants to see these goodwill measures being met with goodwill measures," Chung said.

Kim also said an end-of-war declaration that Seoul and Pyongyang have been pushing Washington to sign off on wouldn't weaken the U.S.-South Korean alliance or lead to the withdrawal of the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea to prevent North Korean attack, according to Chung.

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South Korea's liberal government is keen on keeping engagement with North Korea alive. The delegation to the North announced that they had set up a summit for Sept. 18-20 in Pyongyang between the North Korean leader and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, their third meeting since April.

That summit will be a crucial indicator of whether larger nuclear negotiations with the United States will proceed. Moon is seen as eager to keep the diplomacy alive in part so that he can advance his ambitious engagement plans with the North, which would need U.S. backing to succeed.

The inter-Korean summit would come just before a gathering of world leaders at the United Nations in New York at the end of September, but Seoul said Thursday that it was unlikely Kim would attend. Seoul has indicated an interest in Kim and Trump meeting in New York, and Trump, who is facing growing domestic turmoil, has hinted that another summit could happen.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed Kim's commitment to realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and "commends the continued momentum and efforts by both Koreas to further trust-building and reconciliation," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

He said the U.N. chief "looks forward to further progress at the inter-Korean summit later this month towards sustainable peace, security, and complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

While pushing ahead with summits and inter-Korean engagement, Seoul is trying to persuade Washington and Pyongyang to proceed with peace and denuclearization processes at the same time so they can overcome a growing dispute over the sequencing of the diplomacy.

Seoul and Pyongyang both want a declaration to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in an armistice. U.S. officials have insisted that a peace declaration, which many see as a precursor to the North eventually calling for the removal of all U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula, cannot come before North Korea takes more concrete action toward abandoning its nuclear weapons.

Such steps may include providing an account of the components of its nuclear program, allowing outside inspections and giving up a certain number of its nuclear weapons during the early stages of the negotiations.

While an end-of-war declaration wouldn't imply a legally binding peace treaty, experts say it could create political momentum that would make it easier for North Korea to steer the discussions toward a peace regime, diplomatic recognition, economic benefits and security concessions.

The North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Thursday said Washington must discard its "stubborn" stance that the North must denuclearize first before the United States agrees to a peace treaty. The article said the North has shown "goodwill and generosity" through actions such as returning U.S. war remains and dismantling a nuclear testing ground, but that the U.S. has failed to respond similarly.

After their June summit in Singapore, Trump and Kim issued a vague statement about a nuclear-free peninsula without describing when and how it would occur. Post-summit nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang were rocky and quickly settled into a stalemate.

Trump called off a planned visit to North Korea by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo last month, citing insufficient progress in denuclearization.

Speaking Thursday in India, Pompeo said the U.S. will continue to work with North Korea to "deliver for the world" in upholding U.N. Security Council resolutions against its nuclear and missile programs, and the commitment Kim made at his June summit with Trump on denuclearization. Pompeo declined to talk about what he described as "ongoing negotiations" with the North Koreans.

"It is the case that there is still an enormous amount of work to do," Pompeo told a news conference in New Delhi. "We haven't had any nuclear tests, we haven't had any missile tests, which we consider a good thing. But the work of convincing Chairman Kim to make the strategic shift that we've talked about for a brighter future for the people of North Korea continues."

The State Department also announced Thursday that its new special envoy for North Korea policy, Stephen Biegun, would be traveling to South Korea, China and Japan next week, his first assignment since his appointment last week as point-man for diplomatic efforts with Pyongyang.

In a move that will irk North Korea, the U.S. Justice Department in Washington was preparing Thursday to announce charges against a North Korean in connection with the hack of Sony Pictures Entertainment

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in 2014, according to a U.S. government official familiar the criminal case.

U.S. officials believed the Sony hack was retribution for "The Interview," a comedy film that starred Seth Rogen and James Franco and centered on a plot to assassinate Kim.

Associated Press writers Matthew Pennington in Washington and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

Big quake hits northern Japan, leaving 9 dead, 30 missing

By EUGENE HOSHIKO, HARUKA NUGA and MARI YAMAGUCHI, Associated Press

SAPPORO, Japan (AP) — A powerful earthquake Thursday on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido triggered dozens of landslides that crushed houses under torrents of dirt, rocks and timber, prompting frantic efforts to unearth any survivors.

At least nine people were killed, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said. Officials said at least 366 were injured, five of them seriously, and about 30 people were unaccounted for after the magnitude 6.7 earthquake jolted residents from their beds at 3:08 a.m.

Nearly 3 million households were left without power by the quake — the latest in an exhausting run of natural disasters for Japan.

It paralyzed normal business on the island, as blackouts cut off water to homes, immobilized trains and airports, causing hundreds of flight cancellations, and shut down phone systems.

In the town of Atsuma, where entire hillsides collapsed, rescuers used small backhoes and shovels to search for survivors under the tons of earth that tumbled down steep mountainsides, burying houses and farm buildings below. The area's deep green hills were marred by reddish-brown gashes where the soil tore loose under the violent tremors.

Twenty-eight people remained unaccounted for in the town, Atsuma Mayor Shoichiro Miyasaka told public broadcaster NHK.

"We will carry on searching for them," he said.

Miyasaka said the town had emergency meals for up to 2,000 people and that more than 500 had sought refuge in its emergency shelters.

The landslides ripped through some homes and buried others. Some residents described awakening to find their next-door neighbors gone.

"The entire thing just collapsed," said one. "It's unbelievable."

The island's only nuclear power plant, which was offline for routine safety checks, temporarily switched to a backup generator to keep its spent fuel cool. Nuclear regulators said there was no sign of abnormal radiation — a concern after a massive quake and tsunami in March 2011 that hit northeast Japan destroyed both external and backup power to the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant, causing meltdowns.

Japan's Meteorological Agency said the quake's epicenter was 40 kilometers (24 miles) deep. But it still wreaked havoc across much of the relatively sparsely inhabited island.

Many roads were closed and some were impassable. NHK showed workers rushing to clean up shattered glass and reinstall ceiling panels that had fallen in the region's biggest airport at Chitose.

Japan is used to dealing with disasters, but the last few months have brought a string of calamities. The quake came on the heels of a typhoon that lifted heavy trucks off their wheels and triggered major flooding in western Japan, leaving the main airport near Osaka and Kobe closed after a tanker rammed a bridge connecting the facility to the mainland. The summer also brought devastating floods and landslides from torrential rains in Hiroshima and deadly hot temperatures across the country.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that up to 25,000 troops and other personnel would be dispatched to Hokkaido to help with rescue operations.

As Japan's northern frontier and a major farming region with rugged mountain ranges and vast forests, Hokkaido is an area accustomed to coping with long winters, isolation and other hardships. But the blackouts brought on by the quake underscored the country's heavy reliance on vulnerable power systems:

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without electricity, water was cut to many homes, train lines were idled and phone systems out of order.

In the prefectural capital of Sapporo, a city of 1.9 million, the quake ruptured roads and knocked houses askew. A mudslide left several cars half buried. By evening the city's streets were dark and shops closed.

Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko told reporters that the extensive power outage was caused by an emergency shutdown of the main thermal power plant at Tomato-Atsuma that supplies half of Hokkaido's electricity.

The hope had been to get power back up within hours and some electricity was gradually being restored. However, damage to generators at the plant meant that a full restoration of power could take more than a week, Seko said.

Utilities were starting up several other thermal and hydroelectric plants and power was restored to 340,000 households, but even with those stopgap supplies thousands will still be without electricity for some time.

Authorities sent power generator vehicles to hospitals and other locations and water tanker trucks to communities in Sapporo, where residents were collecting bottles to tide them over until electricity and tap water supplies come back online. Long lines of people waited to charge their cellphones at the city's regional government office.

The quake's impact was widespread. To the north, in the scenic town of Biei, residents lined up outside of supermarkets and convenience stores, quickly clearing shelves of water, toilet paper and food.

"Only a few cartons of instant ramen were left," said Mika Takeda, who lives in the town of 10,000. The one local gas station was limiting customers to only 20 liters (5 gallons) of gas, she said.

Yamaguchi reported from Tokyo. AP writer Elaine Kurtenbach contributed from Tokyo.

Eagles stop Ryan to Jones again, beat Falcons 18-12

By **ROB MAADDI, AP Pro Football Writer**

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Matt Ryan to Julio Jones failed in Philly again.

Jay Ajayi had a pair of touchdown runs, Nick Foles caught another pass to jump-start a sputtering offense and the defending champion Philadelphia Eagles needed another defensive stand to open the NFL season with an 18-12 victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Thursday night.

A sloppy, mistake-filled game that featured 26 penalties came down to Ryan throwing an incomplete pass to Jones in the left corner of the end zone on the final play from Philadelphia's 5.

Jones couldn't come down with Ryan's pass from the 2 in the right corner of the end zone in Atlanta's 15-10 loss in the divisional round in January.

"It was deja vu," said cornerback Ronald Darby, who covered Jones on the last play this time around instead of Jalen Mills. "Jones is one of the best but we got the stop."

A weather delay pushed kickoff back 45 minutes, forcing fans to wait for the unveiling of the "world champions" banner following the franchise's first Super Bowl victory. Wearing his gold Hall of Fame jacket, former safety Brian Dawkins riled up the sellout crowd with owner Jeffrey Lurie by his side and led a chorus of "Fly Eagles Fly."

The defense fed off that energy with a strong goal-line stand on the opening series, stopping the Falcons three times at the 1.

"We put a big emphasis on red zone," safety Malcolm Jenkins said. "We trust our matchups and do we do our job."

They did it again at the end.

After Ajayi's 11-yard TD run and 2-point conversion gave the Eagles a lead with 2:25 left, Ryan led the Falcons down the field. He completed a 36-yard pass to Jones and connected with him again for 18 yards on third-and-17.

The Falcons had a first down at the 10 but Ryan threw four straight incomplete passes. A penalty on Jordan Hicks gave them one more chance and the Eagles held again.

"That's a great defense and a great team," Jones said. "You aren't going to score at will on that team."

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They won a Super Bowl for a reason, they have the same guys on defense.”

Needing a spark on offense, Eagles coach Doug Pederson resorted to the “Philly Special” play that helped the Eagles beat the New England Patriots 41-33 in the Super Bowl. This time, Foles caught a 15-yard pass from Nelson Agholor to extend a drive that ended with Ajayi scoring a go-ahead 1-yard TD run in the third quarter.

“It was in our third-down men,” Pederson said.

Foles, the Super Bowl MVP still filling in for Carson Wentz, played it safe and the offense was conservative until Pederson turned to his favorite play on third-and-5 midway through the third quarter. Corey Clement took a toss and flipped to Agholor, who threw it to Foles running open down the right side for a gain to the Falcons 26.

Foles hit Zach Ertz for 18 yards on third-and-6 and Ajayi ran in a few plays later to put Philadelphia up 10-6.

“No panic, we’re resilient,” Pederson said.

Against New England, tight end Trey Burton took a flip from Clement on a reverse and threw a 1-yard TD pass to Foles to give the Eagles a 10-point halftime lead.

Philadelphia’s defense overcame a pair of blunders to temporarily preserve the lead. Tre Sullivan kicked a loose ball on a punt and the Falcons recovered the fumble at the Eagles 32. A sack by Fletcher Cox on third down was negated by Derek Barnett’s offside penalty to keep the drive going. But Rasul Douglas intercepted Ryan’s pass at the 4. Jones said he lost the ball in the lights.

Deion Jones then intercepted Foles’ pass that bounced out of Dallas Goedert’s hands and returned it 20 yards to Philadelphia’s 27, setting up Tevin Coleman’s 9-yard TD run that gave the Falcons a 12-10 lead in the fourth quarter. Matt Bryant hit the right post on the extra point.

On a hot, muggy night, it looked more like an August preseason game than a playoff rematch. Both teams looked rusty after many starters didn’t play much in preseason. It didn’t compare to the action in Kansas City’s 42-27 victory at New England in the 2017 NFL opener.

Bryant kicked field goals of 52 and 21 yards in the first quarter.

ANTHEM

Jenkins and defensive end Michael Bennett were on the sideline when the national anthem was played and made no overt demonstrations while it was played. Jenkins raised his fist during “The Star-Spangled Banner” last year and in the first preseason game as one of the most high-profile NFL players protesting racial inequality and other social injustices. He stayed in the tunnel for the last three weeks. Bennett mostly stayed off the field in the preseason. He wandered behind teammates near the bench and adjusted his equipment this time.

INJURIES

Falcons: S Keanu Neal left the game with a knee injury in the first half. ... LS Josh Harris had his streak of 103 consecutive games played end because of a hip injury.

Eagles: WR Mack Hollins was placed on injured reserve hours before the game because of a groin injury.

UP NEXT

Falcons: Host the Carolina Panthers on Sept. 16.

Eagles: Visit the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sept. 16.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/tag/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

AP source: Kaepernick watches ad’s TV premiere from Nike HQ

By **ROB MAADDI**, AP Pro Football Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — As Colin Kaepernick watched from the apparel giant’s headquarters in Oregon, Nike aired its highly anticipated ad featuring the quarterback known for his social protests during the NFL season opener Thursday night.

The spot highlighting the former 49ers quarterback locked in a grievance with the league aired during the first ad break in the third quarter of the Eagles-Falcons game, which started with no overt demonstra-

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tions by players during the national anthem.

A person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press that Kaepernick was watching the ad's first television airing on NBC at an event held at Nike's world headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because details of the visit were not announced publicly.

Still, some attendees posted accounts of the visit on social media, including video of Kaepernick speaking to a crowd Thursday several hours before the ad aired.

"You have to think beyond what you see around you," said Kaepernick, who hasn't spoken to the media publicly since opting out of his contract with San Francisco and becoming a free agent in 2017.

"You have to see the future that you believe in and that you want not just for yourself but all the people you see globally," he said.

Kaepernick's deal with Nike for the 30th anniversary of the "Just Do It" campaign was the most polarizing issue in sports this week, prompting heated debate on several topics including athletes protesting social injustice and Nike wading into political waters. Some fans responded to Kaepernick's sponsorship deal by cutting or burning gear with Nike's signature swoosh logo. Others argued the backlash and calls for a Nike boycott showed how debate has morphed beyond how to react to athletes trying to highlight issues like racial inequality and police shootings of unarmed minorities.

"I don't like what Nike did. I don't think it's appropriate what they did," President Donald Trump said in an interview with Fox News before a rally in Montana. "I honor the flag. I honor our national anthem and most of the people in this country feel the same way."

There were no clear-cut protests as "The Star-Spangled Banner" played before the game with both teams on the field and the song broadcasted nationally.

Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins and defensive end Michael Bennett were on the sideline and neither really demonstrated during the song. Jenkins and Bennett regularly have either knelt or stayed off the field during the anthem to protest social injustice and racial inequality. They have been among the most vocal protesters since Kaepernick began similar demonstrations in 2016. Jenkins stood with teammates while Bennett wandered behind them near the Eagles bench and adjusted his equipment.

Jenkins said he thinks players should shift the focus of the debate away from the anthem itself and back to the issues they are trying to highlight.

"I think there's a huge need for us to turn the attention to not only the issues, but what players are actually doing in their communities to promote change," he said. "We're trying to move past the rhetoric of what's right or what's wrong in terms of the anthem and really focus on the systematic issues that are plaguing our communities."

No Falcons players were absent from the sideline and none has protested in the recent past.

The anthem has been a particularly thorny issue for the NFL, especially Trump urging owners to bench or fire players who demonstrate. Players say their message has been misconstrued into something against the American flag or the military.

Kaepernick's grievance against the league and team owners accuses owners of colluding to keep him off any roster. An arbitrator gave Kaepernick an incremental victory by allowing the challenge to go to trial.

Jenkins said Nike's commercial is changing the portrayal of Kaepernick in the public eye.

"Quite frankly, long after all of this is done (Kaepernick) will be looked at as somebody that changed this sport and changed the dynamics of all athletes in general in our country," Jenkins said.

The league and players union still haven't resolved whether players will be punished this season if they choose to kneel or demonstrate during the anthem. Owners approved a policy requiring players to stand if they are on the sideline during the song, allowing them to stay off the field if they wish.

But the league and union put that on hold after the Miami Dolphins faced backlash for classifying the protests as conduct potentially detrimental to the team — putting players at risk of fines or suspensions.

AP Pro Football Writer Barry Wilner and sports writer Ben Nuckols contributed to this report.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/tag/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Disney workers approve new contract raising minimum wage

By MIKE SCHNEIDER, Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Thousands of Walt Disney World workers on Thursday overwhelmingly approved a new contract that increases the starting minimum wage to \$15 an hour over the next three years while enabling Disney to use more part-time workers and require new workers to stay in their positions longer before transferring.

Scores of union workers chanted "Union! Union!" and "Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, hey, hey, we got a raise!" as they waited for the votes to be counted at a hotel in the heart of Orlando's tourism district.

"We got a fair deal," Matt Hollis, who leads a coalition of six unions, told the workers after the vote was counted.

Union officials said the new contract would have an impact outside of Walt Disney World as other non-unionized businesses in central Florida's low-wage service economy compete for tourism workers in a tight job market. The contract covers more than half of the 70,000 workers at Disney World, the largest single-site employer in the United States. Those workers include costumed characters, bus drivers, laundrers, retail workers, monorail drivers, custodians, housekeepers, servers, cooks, florists, makeup artists and lifeguards.

"The way I feel is we won this for our members at Disney but we also won this for the ride operator at Universal Studios who doesn't have a union," said Eric Clinton, president of Unite Here Local 362, one of the six unions that represents 38,000 workers covered by the contract. "This affects Hyatt, Hilton. They are going to have to raise wages to compete with others. This is 38,000 people. This isn't a small amount."

Besides raising the starting minimum wage almost 50 percent to \$15 an hour in three years, the new four-year contract would raise wages for existing workers by at least \$4.75 an hour by October 2021. Each Florida worker also will receive a \$1,000 bonus that Disney had paid to other employees after last year's tax cut by Congress. Those bonuses were withheld during the contract negotiations.

"Our 50 percent wage increase will have a real, meaningful impact on our cast and their families and is part of our commitment to the thousands of cast members who make magic for our guests each and every day," said George Kalogridis, president of Walt Disney World Resort. "Increasing wages for cast members represents a significant investment in central Florida and will provide a powerful boost to the local economy."

The new contract expands anti-discrimination protections to include gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, military or veteran status and genetic information.

In return for the higher wages, the coalition of unions, known as the Service Trades Council Union, agreed to allow Disney to use more part-time workers. Under the old contract, 35 percent of the union workforce can be part-timers, but that was raised to 38 percent in the new deal, although Disney doesn't currently reach its limit on part-timers.

New hires also will have to wait longer to switch jobs under the new deal. The old contract allowed for a transfer after six months, but that changed to a year under the new contract. The new contract also allows Disney the ability to expand the probationary period for some new workers from three months to six months.

The new contract expanded the types of workers who could be subject to random drug tests. It also added extra language giving managers the right to "supervise, and control the manner, means and details by which employees perform their work duties as well as the ends to be accomplished."

"The focus was about how Disney workers need a raise — current workers and those coming into the workforce," said Hollis, president of the Service Trades Council Union. "These are historic raises, not just entry level but for every hourly cast member."

Major hotels giving panic buttons to staff nationwide

By DEE-ANN DURBIN, AP Business Writer

Tens of thousands of employees at more than 18,000 U.S. hotels will soon carry panic buttons to help protect them from harassment and assault in an era of heightened awareness around the #MeToo movement.

More than a dozen big hotel chains — including Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG and Wyndham — said Thursday that they will provide personal safety devices by 2020 to all employees who deal one-on-one with guests. The companies will also train staff to identify and report harassment and publish anti-sexual harassment policies in multiple languages.

The devices will vary by hotel. In a new, Wi-Fi enabled hotel, for example, companies may give out devices that automatically send the employee's location to security officers. In an older or smaller hotel, they might distribute devices that emit a loud shriek.

The American Hotel and Lodging Association, which is backing the effort, says around three-fourths of its 25,000 member hotels are participating right now. It is working with harassment and human trafficking organizations to develop training and testing devices to help hotels figure out what works best.

This isn't the first time hotels are giving panic buttons to staff. New York has required them since 2012, after a hotel maid there accused French politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn of sexually assaulting her in his suite. Chicago and Seattle began requiring them more recently.

But increasing public discussion about harassment and the #MeToo movement has given the effort a new sense of urgency. Red Roof Inn, Best Western, AccorHotels, Four Seasons and Caesar's are other participants in the rare display of unity from a fiercely competitive industry.

"The cultural conversations have changed, and we have gotten smarter," said Erika Alexander, Marriott's chief lodging officer for the Americas. Marriott plans to make the devices standard at all of its nearly 5,000 hotels in North America by 2020. Eventually it hopes to expand the devices globally.

Rani Accettola, a housekeeper at the Embassy Suites by Hilton in Seattle's Pioneer Square, has a safety fob clipped to the front of her uniform at all times. If she presses a button, hotel managers and security are immediately notified of her location. Accettola said the system gives her an added feeling of security, especially when she works late.

"At any moment, help is there if you should need it," she said.

It's unclear how often the devices will be used, but harassment of hotel staff is an ongoing issue. In a 2016 survey of 500 housekeepers in Chicago, 49 percent said guests had flashed them, exposed themselves or opened the door naked.

The rollout of the devices will be messy. Hotel companies only manage some of their properties; others are managed by franchisees. Some companies may require franchisees to add the devices; others may not. Properties vary widely, from sprawling 2,500-room resorts to 65-room, cookie-cutter hotels by the highway.

Some hotels have already begun the process. Hyatt mandated electronic safety devices last fall and has already distributed them to 4,500 employees at 120 hotels in the Americas, Hyatt CEO Mark Hoplamazian said. Hyatt has also strongly recommended the devices for franchisees, and expects to expand the program globally, Hoplamazian said.

He said the cost of the devices is easily absorbed by the company. Shrieking alarms — the kind most widely used at Hyatt right now — cost around \$25 each. A React mobile device, like the one Accettola wears, retails for \$70, but big hotel chains will likely be able to get bulk discounts.

Hoplamazian said there haven't been many reported usages. In one instance, a guest was acting strangely so a housekeeper summoned help. It turned out there was no threat, but Hoplamazian is glad the system worked.

"While the frequency may not be high, the importance of it is really, really high," he said.

Wyndham CEO Geoff Ballotti said his company expects to distribute safety devices by the end of next year to 5,000 employees in the 450 U.S. hotels it owns and manages. Hilton CEO Chris Nassetta said "tens

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of thousands" of staff at 4,500 hotels will get the devices by 2020.

Nassetta said the rollout will take time because training staff members how to respond to the devices is as important as the devices themselves.

"We don't want to create the appearance of safety without the reality behind it," he said.

This story has been corrected to read that the announcement was made Thursday, not Tuesday.

Asian markets fall as US, China renew tariff threat

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian stocks were mostly lower on Thursday as the U.S. and China moved closer to imposing tariffs on billions of dollars of each other's goods, sounding a call of caution in the markets.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 tumbled 1.0 percent to 22,264.11 and the Kospi in South Korea dropped 0.4 percent to 2,278.90. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.3 percent to 26,895.00. The trade spat is one reason the Hong Kong index has dropped 18 percent since its peak in late January. The Shanghai Composite index was 0.7 percent higher at 2,710.70. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.9 percent to 6,105.70.

WALL STREET: On Thursday, U.S. technology companies suffered sharp losses for the second day in a row and emerging markets slid on trade fears. The S&P 500 index dropped 0.4 percent to 2,878.05. The Nasdaq composite, which has a high concentration of technology companies, dipped 0.9 percent to 7,922.73. The index has lost 2.3 percent this week. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks was 0.8 percent lower at 1,714.47. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.1 percent to 25,995.87, as industrial companies and high-dividend stocks rose.

US-CHINA TENSIONS: The Trump administration may impose tariffs of up to 25 percent on an additional \$200 billion in Chinese goods, after a public comment period ended Thursday. The imports are equal to nearly 40 percent of all the goods China sold the United States last year. Doing so would escalate a confrontation between the world's two biggest economies and likely squeeze U.S. companies that import everything from handbags to bicycle tires. China has said that it is ready to retaliate with "necessary countermeasures" if President Donald Trump goes ahead with the tariff hike. Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said Thursday that the country is confident it can maintain "steady and healthy" economic growth. It has announced a \$60 billion list of American products targeted for retaliation. The Chinese government has said it would help local and even foreign businesses in the country mitigate the effects of the trade dispute.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "The market is risk-off and pricing in the effects of new tariffs. It's a done deal as far as investors are concerned," said Francis Tan, investment strategist at UOB Private Bank. "I don't think that China will retaliate with a full-fledged devaluation of the yuan. They will turn to other non-tariff measures," he added.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude remained flat at \$67.77 a barrel. Brent crude, used to price international oils, lost 5 cents to \$76.45 a barrel. It lost 1 percent to \$76.50 a barrel in London on Thursday.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 110.55 yen from 110.83 yen. The euro eased to \$1.1624 from \$1.1625.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Sept. 7, the 250th day of 2018. There are 115 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 7, 1940, Nazi Germany began its eight-month blitz of Britain during World War II with the first air attack on London.

On this date:

In 1901, the Peace of Beijing ended the Boxer Rebellion in China.

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In 1927, American television pioneer Philo T. Farnsworth, 21, succeeded in transmitting the image of a line through purely electronic means with a device called an "image dissector" at his San Francisco laboratory.

In 1936, rock-and-roll legend Buddy Holly was born Charles Hardin Holley in Lubbock, Texas.

In 1963, the National Professional Football Hall of Fame was dedicated in Canton, Ohio.

In 1972, the International Olympic Committee banned Vince Matthews and Wayne Collett of the U.S. from further competition for talking to each other on the victory stand in Munich during the playing of the "Star-Spangled Banner" after winning the gold and silver medals in the 400-meter run.

In 1977, the Panama Canal treaties, calling for the U.S. to eventually turn over control of the waterway to Panama, were signed in Washington by President Jimmy Carter and Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos (toh-REE'-hohs). Convicted Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy was released from prison after more than four years.

In 1979, the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) made its cable TV debut.

In 1987, the syndicated TV talk show "Geraldo," hosted by Geraldo Rivera, began an 11-season run.

In 1996, rapper Tupac Shakur was shot and mortally wounded on the Las Vegas Strip; he died six days later.

In 2001, Venus Williams and Serena Williams reached the finals of the U.S. Open, defeating Jennifer Capriati and Martina Hingis respectively, becoming the first sisters to play for a Grand Slam championship in more than 100 years.

In 2002, President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, meeting at Camp David, said the world had to act against Saddam Hussein, arguing that the Iraqi leader had defied the United Nations and reneged on promises to destroy weapons of mass destruction.

In 2007, Osama bin Laden appeared in a video for the first time in three years, telling Americans they should convert to Islam if they wanted the war in Iraq to end.

Ten years ago: Troubled mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were placed in government conservatorship. Hurricane Ike roared across low-lying islands in the Atlantic as a Category 4 storm. Serena Williams outlasted Jelena Jankovic 6-4, 7-5 to win her third U.S. Open championship and ninth Grand Slam title. Hall of Fame basketball coach Don Haskins died in El Paso, Texas, at age 78. Mystery author Gregory McDonald (cq) died in Pulaski, Tenn., at age 71. Astroland, New York City's world famous amusement park at Coney Island, closed after 46 years. Britney Spears won three MTV Video Music Awards, including video of the year for "Piece of Me."

Five years ago: Tony Abbott's conservative Liberal-led party won a crushing victory in Australia against the center-left Labor Party which had ruled for six years. Tokyo was awarded the 2020 Summer Olympics, defeating Istanbul in the final round of secret voting by the International Olympic Committee.

One year ago: More than a half million people were ordered to leave South Florida as Hurricane Irma approached; Georgia's governor ordered nearly 540,000 coastal residents to move inland. One of the most powerful earthquakes ever recorded in Mexico struck off the country's southern coast, toppling hundreds of buildings and killing at least 90 people. (A deadlier quake would strike central Mexico nearly two weeks later.) Equifax, one of the three major U.S. credit bureaus, announced that hackers gained access to credit information on 143 million Americans between mid-May and July. A federal appeals court rejected the Trump administration's limited view of who is allowed into the country under the president's travel ban, saying grandparents, cousins and other close relatives of people in the United States should not be kept out. Donald Trump Jr. told a Senate panel that he did not collude with Russia to hurt Hillary Clinton's campaign.

Today's Birthdays: Jazz musician Sonny Rollins is 88. Singer Gloria Gaynor is 75. Singer Alfa Anderson (Chic) is 72. Actress Susan Blakely is 70. Rock musician Dennis Thompson (MC5) is 70. Actress Julie Kavner is 68. Rock singer Chrissie Hynde (The Pretenders) is 67. Rock musician Benmont Tench (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers) is 65. Actor Corbin Bernsen is 64. Actor Michael Emerson is 64. Pianist Michael Feinstein is 62. Singer/songwriter Diane Warren is 62. Singer Margot Chapman is 61. Actress J. Smith-Cameron is 61. Actor W. Earl Brown is 55. Actor Toby Jones is 52. Actress-comedian Leslie Jones (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 51. Model-actress Angie Everhart is 49. Actress Diane Farr is 49. Country singer Butter (Trailer

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Choir) is 48. Actress Monique Gabriela Curnen is 48. Actor Tom Everett Scott is 48. Rock musician Chad Sexton (311) is 48. Actress Shannon Elizabeth is 45. Actor Oliver Hudson is 42. Actor Devon Sawa (SAH'-wuh) is 40. Actor JD Pardo is 39. Actor Benjamin Hollingsworth (TV: "Code Black") is 34. Actress Alyssa Diaz (TV: "Ray Donovan"; "Zoo") is 33. Singer-musician Wes Willis (Rush of Fools) is 32. Actress Evan Rachel Wood is 31. Actor Ian Chen (TV: "Fresh Off the Boat") is 12.

Thought for Today: "Nothing is more unpleasant than a virtuous person with a mean mind." — Walter Bagehot (BAJ'-uht), English editor and economist (1826-1877).