

Groton Daily Independent

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



Put our experienced team to work for you!

GROTON
Ford

GROTONFORD.COM 605-397-2311

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Tuesday, November 6, 2018

Volleyball: Girls Varsity SoDak 16
7 p.m.: Groton Area vs. Roncalli at Aberdeen Central

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

NCRC Testing Seniors at Groton Area High School
6:00pm: FCCLA Food Drive at GHS Gymnasium

Thursday, November 8, 2018

5:30pm: Financial Aid Information Night at Groton Area High School

✓ **Vote Michael Nehls**

NOW is

the Time!

**Eastern Brown County
has not had
representation on the
commission for 33 years.**



- **30 year law enforcement veteran working with city and county governments.**
- **Progressive thinker.**
- **Conservative Spender**
- **Common Sense Approach to Solving Issues.**
- **Putting taxpayers first.**

My pledge is that I will always listen to the concerns of all county residents and to represent Brown County taxpayers as an experienced and trust worthy public servant.

Vote Lana Greenfield for District 2 House A WISE CHOICE; A STRONG VOICE



**LANA
GREENFIELD**
DISTRICT 2
FOR **HOUSE**
LANAGREENFIELD.COM

Background:

- ★ Raised on a farm near Bryant
- ★ Received a Bachelor of Science in education from BHSU
- ★ Married for 48 years, mother of three, grandmother

Experience:

- ★ Owner of Greeny's, a restaurant-lodging facility in Doland
- ★ Land owner
- ★ Retired 37 year veteran teacher

Lana Supports:

- ◆ Life
- ◆ Gun Rights
- ◆ Stable education curriculum
- ◆ Small business and entrepreneurship
- ◆ Veterans
- ◆ Elderly and homes for the disabled
- ◆ No new taxes
- ◆ Common sense government
- ◆ A strict interpretation of the Constitution

***Re-elect Lana Greenfield on
November 6th, a
fiscally conservative Republican,
endorsed by the NRA.***

Paid for by Lana Greenfield for House,
Box 143, Doland, SD 57436

 **VOTE** ★for★
**LYNN
HEUPEL**



FOR BROWN COUNTY AUDITOR

I am running for Brown County Auditor because I want to continue my dedication by working for you the people of Brown County. I have worked in the Auditor's office for 7 years and have been the Chief Deputy Auditor for 6 years. As the Chief Deputy Auditor, I have knowledge of the overall duties of the Auditor's Office; my main responsibilities are Accounts Payable, Monthly & Annual Financial Reports, Assist Legislative Audits during the Counties Annual Audits, Apportion the Taxes collected, Liquor Licenses and assisting with Elections, County Liens and Inventory. This along with my years of experience in accounting, management and customer service, I am prepared to step into this role upon Maxine Fischer's retirement. I ask for your support by voting for me in the General Election. Election Day is Tuesday, November 6th but Absentee voting started Friday, Sept. 21st at the Auditor's Office between 8am to 5pm, Monday- Friday.

Committed to Community
Experienced * Proven Performance

[Facebook.com/lynn.m.heupelforbrcoauditor](https://www.facebook.com/lynn.m.heupelforbrcoauditor)

Paid for by Heupel for Brown County Auditor



Madeline Schuelke wins Miss Jack's Outstanding Teen and Teen Miss Congeniality Award

Miss Brookings Outstanding Teen-Janelle Dickau; Miss Brookings-Courtney Remick; Miss SDSU, Miss Top Talent, Top Interview AND Miss Congeniality- Miranda O'Bryan; Miss Jack's Outstanding Teen and Teen Miss Congeniality-Madeline Schuelke. (Photo from Miss SDSU/Miss Brookings Scholarship Program)

(Photo from Miss SDSU/Miss Brookings Scholarship Program)

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Absentee Ballots Requested as of November 5, 2018, 3:00 pm

PIERRE, SD – Secretary of State Shantel Krebs announced that as of 3:00 pm on November 5, 2018, there have been 89,710 Absentee Ballots requested from South Dakota voters.

In the 2016 Presidential Election there were 108,733 Absentee Ballots cast.

In the 2014 Midterm Election there were 55,292 Absentee Ballots cast.

In the 2012 Presidential Election there were 91,145 Absentee Ballots cast.

Closing off Main Street for Halloween was good

Councilman Karyn Babcock talked about the Halloween on Main this year. Babcock said, "Closing off Main Street for Trick or Treats was super. The kids could go up and down Main Street without worrying about traffic." There were close to 300 trick and treaters that night.

During the department report, City Supervisor Terry Herron said that he did not order salt sand this year as there was a lot left over from last year. He also said they will be blading the alleys and gravel roads once again when the rain quits to get rid of the pot holes. If you have a white X on an ash tree in your boulevard, Herron said those are slated to be removed this winter. "A lot of towns are starting to get rid of ash trees that are half dead."

Waste Water Superintendent Dwight Zerr reported that two cells at the lagoon have been discharged and the lagoon should be ready for the winter. He is also doing street sweeping and should get through the whole city in the upcoming days. Zerr also reported on some issues with the controls at the Aspen Lift Station that they have been working on.

There was discussion on the inspection of the digger truck. Councilman Jay Peterson said, "I see there are four things marked as an "R" and unless they are fixed, it's out of service. Is this the way you see it?" Peterson asked Shawn Lambertz. Lambertz said no. The digger truck is operational. Peterson said he was concerned about the report and that those items should be taken care of. "It's probably worse than it looks," he said. Councilman David Blackmun said there are a lot of things on the report that the linemen can do as they are small items.

The new police car already has a water pump that is going out, but it is covered under warranty, according to Police Chief Stacy Mayou. He said the car should be back in service in a day or two. He also added that it will take 11-12 hours to replace the water pump on these new vehicles.

The council, at its October 15 meeting, determined that stop signs at the intersection of 5th Street and Washington Street will now stop North and South bound traffic instead of East and West bound traffic. It was asked when it would go into effect. The minutes had not been published as expected so the effective date has been affected. It was unknown when those minutes were published. The resolution becomes effective 20 days after publication.

In other action:

- * Declared a humidifier as surplus with a value of \$175.
- * Approved a utility easement with Northwestern Energy.
- * Tabled the pool and baseball reports
- * Approved taking applications for skating rink employees.
- * Approved a \$100 donation for Santa Day at Professional Management Services
- * Approved to open gravel bids December 17.
- * Discussed health insurance rates. The current company would increase rates by 18 percent. The South Dakota Retailers Association has an insurance plan that would save the city upwards of \$50,000 a year. Peterson said he was concerned about the coverage if it was about the same as the current plan.

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Groton Police Report

October 1-7

City miles driven 465, county miles driven 86.

2 assist other law enforcement agencies, 1 business security, 3 citizen assistance, 2 dog complaints, 1 funeral traffic, 2 locked vehicle assistance, 2 motorist assistance, 1 911 misdial/Hangup, 1 committal, 1 gas drive off, 1 request for family crisis, 1 suspicious activity, 1 county vehicle accident, 6 traffic warnings issued, 1 summons issued, 4 speeding tickets issued, 1 illegal U-Turn, 1 equipment failure.

October 8-15

City miles driven 568, county miles driven 40

1 assist other law enforcement agencies, 2 bad driving complaints, 1 business security, 3 citizen assistance, 1 dog complaint, 1 funeral traffic, 1 juvenile complaint, 1 lost/found item, 3 medical/rescue/ambulance, 1 911 misdial/hangup, 1 finger print a person, 3 traffic warnings issued, 2 speeding tickets, 1 stop sign violation, 1 warrant arrest.

October 15-21

City miles driven 502, county miles driven 38

1 assist other law enforcement agencies, 4 citizen assistance, 1 dog complaint, 1 domestic disturbance, 3 locked vehicle assistance, 1 medical/rescue/ambulance, 1 request for special watch, 2 suspicious activities, 11 traffic warnings issued, 1 summons issued, 10 speeding tickets issued, 1 stop sign violation, 1 equipment failure.

October 22-28

City miles driven 546, county miles driven 21

1 assist other departments, 1 assist other law enforcement agencies, 1 bad driving complaint, 1 welfare check on person, 8 citizen assistance, 2 dog complaints, 5 locked vehicle assistance, 2 medical/rescue/ambulance, 2 motorist assistance, 1 911 misdial/hangup, 3 suspicious activities, 1 theft/burglary/shoplifting, 6 traffic warnings issued, 1 summons issued, 5 speeding tickets issued, 1 stop sign violation, 1 tobacco violation.

STAND UP FOR SCHOOL SAFETY.

ANONYMOUSLY TEXT 'SAFE' TO 82257

**TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR
THREATS OR VIOLENCE.**

PROJECT
STANDUP



Doug **Fjeldheim** County Commission

**A devoted FAMILY MAN,
a FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE leader,
and a Commissioner who will make
decisions based on COMMON SENSE.**

My fellow taxpayers of Brown County:

I am seeking re-election to the Brown County Commission because I believe I can and have contributed to the greater good by spending our tax dollars wisely.

As a farmer I know how important it is to have good roads and to have a county government that works with the people of the area to protect their interests.

I would be honored to serve another 4 years as a commissioner and treat your tax dollars as my own because just like you, some of them are!

On November 6th, please cast your ballot for Doug Fjeldheim for Brown County Commission.

Doug Fjeldheim

Paid for by Fjeldheim for County Commission

Doug **Fjeldheim** County Commission

Doug Fjeldheim is seeking to be re-elected to the Brown County Commission. Having over 32 years of management experience in business, 30 years of farming experience, and as the Westport Township Clerk since 2003, Doug is familiar with the challenges each township faces.

As your County Commissioner, Doug Fjeldheim pledges to continue being prudent with how the tax dollars of Brown County are spent.

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It's SoDak 16 Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Roncalli
Cavaliers**



VS

Groton Area Tigers

Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018

7:00 p.m. at Aberdeen Central High School

Good Luck Lady Tigers from these GDILIVE.COM Sponsors

Allied Climate Professionals
Bahr Spray Foam
Blocker Construction
Dakota Risk Management
Groton Dairy Queen
Groton Ford
Groton Legion Post #39
Jungle Lanes
Lori's Pharmacy
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Professional Management Services
S & S Lumber
Sanford Health
Tyson DeHoet Trucking
Weber Landscaping

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Today in Weather History

November 6, 1959: A strong cold front that brought near blizzard conditions and cold temperatures on the 5th continued to bring record or near record lows during the morning hours on this day. Some low temperatures include; -13 in Murdo; -12 in Eureka; -11 in Britton; -10 in Castlewood; -9 near McIntosh and Redfield; -8 in Andover; -7 in Clear Lake and Kennebec; -6 degrees in Aberdeen; -5 in Watertown; and -4 in Pierre.

November 6, 2008: An area of low pressure moving across South Dakota and into Minnesota brought widespread rain, freezing rain, and snow to central, north central, and northeast South Dakota. Much of the freezing fell across central and north-central South Dakota west of the Missouri River. As the freezing rain changed over to snow and the winds increased, the ice and snow buildup on the power lines and poles caused hundreds of power poles to break across Jones, Stanley, Dewey, and Corson counties. East of the Missouri River, the colder air, and stronger winds moved in changing the rain over to snow. High winds of 30 to 45 mph with gusts near 60 mph brought widespread blizzard conditions to all of the areas.

Ice buildup from the freezing rain ranged from a tenth to as much as an inch for counties west of the Missouri River. Snowfall amounts across the entire area ranged from 2 to 8 inches with a 15-inch amount recorded in southwest Corson County. Other snowfall amounts include 3 inches in Eagle Butte, Blunt, Kennebec, Mission Ridge, and Onida; 4 inches in Pollock, Gettysburg, and Bowdle; 5 inches south of Harold, Iona, and near McIntosh; 6 inches in Mobridge; 7 inches in Murdo; 8 inches in McLaughlin, and 15 inches southwest of Keldron.

All 4,600 customers of the Moreau-Grand Electric Company lost power due to the storm. The last time this occurred was during the winter of 1967-68. The monetary loss to this cooperative and other electric cooperatives for Jones, Stanley, Corson, and Dewey counties was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Over 100 line workers were working countless hours with crews coming as far away as Nebraska and Iowa to assist in the power recovery. Over 1,000 customers were without power for an extended period. Cell phone coverage was also knocked out for parts of the West River area due to downed towers.

The blizzard resulted in numerous school, business, and road closures along with flight cancellations. Interstate 90 was shut down from Mitchell, South Dakota to the Wyoming border from Thursday the 6th until Friday evening of the 7th. Many semi-trucks and cars were stranded along the Interstate with many people rescued. Many travels took shelter in Murdo, Chamberlain, and Pierre until the Interstate reopened. There were several accidents across the area with a severe accident in Walworth County on Highway 83 near the Potter County line. In the early afternoon hours of Friday the 7th, slippery roads, high winds, and low visibilities contributed to the rollover of a passenger van carrying seven students. The passenger van rolled several times causing serious injuries to three of the students. The Governor declared a state of emergency on the 7th, and President Bush declared South Dakota a disaster area.

1977: Several possible causes lead to the collapse of the Kelly Barnes Dam in Georgia to give way. The failure allowed a 40-acre lake to flood the Toccoa Falls College, killing 39 people and injured 60 more.

2005: The deadliest tornado to strike Indiana since April 3, 1974, occurred around 2 am. A single F3 tornado inflicted 24 fatalities, 238 injuries, and nearly 90 million dollars in damage with a path length of 41 miles. This storm moved in a northeasterly direction from just north of Smith Mills Kentucky to Genyville, Indiana and crossed the Ohio River three times. Most of the damage occurred as the tornado passed southeast of the city of Evansville, Indiana.

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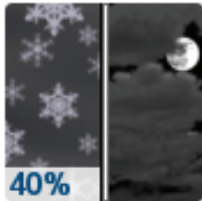
Today



Breezy.
Cloudy then
Chance Snow

High: 34 °F

Tonight



Chance Snow
and Blustery
then Mostly
Cloudy

Low: 23 °F

Wednesday



Partly Sunny

High: 30 °F

Wednesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 17 °F

Thursday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 29 °F



Colder air will be pouring into the region today with stiff and gusty northwest winds. Skies will remain mostly cloudy for most areas as highs rise into the 30s. Light snow is also expected to move into portions of northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota this afternoon and evening. Accumulations will remain light and could amount to around an inch in the Glacial Lakes region.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 40 °F at 12:35 PM

Low Outside Temp: 34 °F at 2:24 AM

High Gust: 27 mph at 8:55 PM

Precip: 0.42

Today's Info

Record High: 79° in 1904

Record Low: -8 in 1991

Average High: 46°F

Average Low: 24°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.15

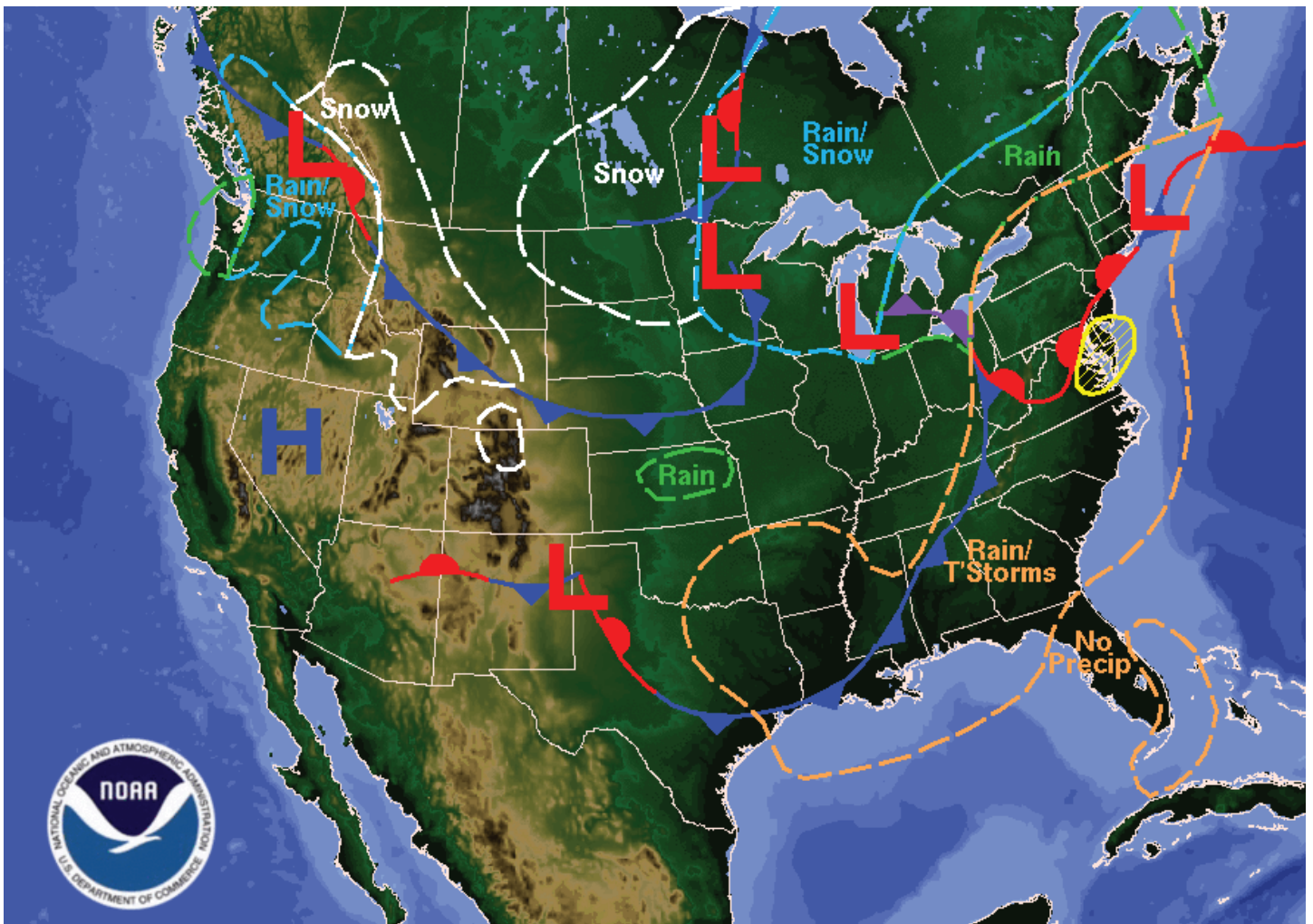
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.76

Average Precip to date: 20.62

Precip Year to Date: 15.81

Sunset Tonight: 5:14 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:22 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Nov 06, 2018, issued 4:18 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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FROM HUMILIATION TO EXALTATION

One evening when my son John came home from football practice, I noticed that his arms and hands had an unusual number of cuts and bruises on them. What happened? I asked.

Have you ever noticed, Dad, he replied, that pain is optional, but suffering isn't? I wanted to be on the starting team, so I knew it would take some pain on my part. I'd been playing, and now I wanted the coach to know I could be a winner at football.

The Psalmist reminded us that Joseph was sold as a slave, and that they bruised his feet with shackles and that his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true.

Tucked away in the great plan that God has for each of us is our fair share of suffering. After Joseph was sold into slavery, he did not complain about his situation. He persevered through the horrible conditions that were placed on him. By honoring God, the King honored him.

When he was tempted by King Potiphar's wife, he resisted her seductive behaviors. She did everything she could do to seduce him, but through his dependence on God, he did not give in to his passions. And, when she grabbed him physically, he was able to escape through God's strength. When she lied about him, he was thrown into prison. And, rather than becoming bitter, he became better. Because he was true to God, he triumphed and eventually became the premier of Egypt. His path to power was through pain and imprisonment. If we are true to God in our times of trial, we will be triumphant.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to be faithful to You, knowing that temptation and suffering, is part of Your plan for us. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 105:17 Then he sent someone to Egypt ahead of them Joseph, who was sold as a slave.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. 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)
- Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

News from the Associated Press

Police: Acid spill in Sioux Falls building was intentional

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say hydrochloric acid found on the floor of a Sioux Falls building was put there on purpose.

The Argus Leader reports some businesses in the Harvester Building closed briefly on Friday after the spill was discovered about 11 a.m. Firefighters in hazmat suits cleaned up the spill.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says the spill was “definitely intentional.” He says none of the businesses in the building use the acid that can cause severe chemical burns to skin.

There was no immediate word on any suspects or a possible motive.

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

Rarity in South Dakota: Close race for governor

By **JAMES NORD, Associated Press**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Voters in South Dakota’s top race are choosing Tuesday between making Republican Kristi Noem the state’s first female governor or embracing Billie Sutton’s moderate message to make him the first Democrat in the office in 40 years.

Noem, a four-term congresswoman, was the immediate favorite after surviving a GOP summer primary. But Sutton downplayed his party and rode his compelling backstory — a former rodeo cowboy who turned to politics after he was paralyzed in a 2007 accident — to a tight race with Noem.

The winner was replacing term-limited Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Sutton — a self-described “pro-life and pro-Second Amendment” moderate — cast himself as an anti-corruption crusader who would buck the status quo in the wake of financial misconduct scandals that grabbed South Dakota headlines.

“From what I’ve been hearing as I’ve traveled the state, South Dakotans are ready to move past partisan divisions, ready to part with politics as usual and ready to come together around shared values like honesty, integrity and hard work,” Sutton said late in the campaign at an event to unveil endorsements from Republicans and independents.

Sutton also got a boost with endorsements from the Rapid City Journal and the Sioux Falls Argus Leader. A key focus of his campaign was government integrity, and he called for government documents such as emails, correspondence and calendars to be public records under South Dakota law.

Noem fought back by reminding voters that Sutton is a Democrat and trying to tie him to 2016 Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. She also asserted — over Sutton’s denials — that he backs a state income tax for South Dakota, one of seven states without it.

“If Billie believed everything that he said in this campaign, he’d be a Republican, but he’s not. He’s a Democrat,” Noem said during a late October debate.

She’s promised to protect state residents from tax increases and more government regulations, improve state transparency and fight federal government intrusion.

Noem, who had roots in ranching and farming before turning to politics, brought major strengths to the race: a nearly 100,000-voter GOP advantage, experience running statewide campaigns and support from the state’s dominant political party and its top officials. She also significantly outraised and outspent Sutton.

For AP’s complete coverage of the U.S. midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/APPolitics>

Ethics amendment, House race go before South Dakota voters

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — After South Dakota's close governor's race, the main contests to watch Tuesday are ballot measures that could dramatically reshape the state's citizen initiative powers.

Voters will also decide on a cigarette tax hike that's sparked major opposition spending from the tobacco industry. They'll fill the state's open House seat, choose a state attorney general, and fill other statewide offices. In the Legislature, Republicans are hoping to retain supermajorities.

Here's a look at races of interest beyond the governor's race between Republican Kristi Noem and Democrat Billie Sutton:

BALLOT QUESTION CHANGES

South Dakota was the first state to let citizens propose and pass laws way back in 1898. This election may sharply reshape that citizen initiative process.

One citizen-backed constitutional amendment would prevent the Legislature from changing voter laws — or the ballot question system — without a public vote. It's a result of activists' frustration over lawmakers' repeal of a 2016 voter-approved ethics measure. The proposed amendment would also impose stricter lobbying and campaign finance rules and create a new government ethics watchdog.

Meanwhile, lawmakers have asked voters to make the constitution harder to change by raising the threshold for approval from a simple majority to 55 percent. Another legislative plan would require amendments to stick to a single subject. A third proposal spearheaded by the House speaker would ban out-of-state fundraising for ballot questions.

TOBACCO TAX FOR TECH SCHOOLS

Smokers may foot the bill to make state technical schools more affordable. Voters are choosing whether to increase taxes on different tobacco products. The tax on a 20-cigarette pack would increase \$1 to \$2.53. Proceeds would go to lowering tuition and fees, offering scholarships and providing financial support for the state's four technical institutes. But it could go up in smoke, as the tobacco industry has dumped millions into the state to oppose it. South Dakota hasn't raised its tobacco tax since 2006.

U.S. HOUSE

Republican Dusty Johnson is the heavy favorite to succeed Rep. Noem as the state's lone representative. A recent poll showed a huge lead for Johnson, who has said he has the political will to make tough choices in Washington. Johnson's main opponent is Democrat Tim Bjorkman, a former judge.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Democrats hoped to end a long drought when they chose a longtime federal prosecutor to run to be the state's chief lawyer and law enforcement officer. Former U.S. Attorney Randy Seiler faces Republican lawyer and Army Reserve officer Jason Ravensborg.

Seiler has repeatedly touted his experience, and says Ravensborg has never tried a jury case in his role as a volunteer deputy state's attorney for Union County. Ravensborg says he's the candidate favored by law enforcement, casting Seiler as too liberal for South Dakota.

OTHER STATEWIDE OFFICES & LEGISLATURE

Voters will also make their choices for a slew of other statewide offices, including secretary of state, public utilities commissioner, state auditor and treasurer and school and public lands commissioner. All 105 seats of the Legislature — 70 in the House and 35 in the Senate — are up for grabs. Republicans currently control every statewide office and the Legislature.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/APPolitics>

South Dakota campaigns rally supporters as election looms

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Republican Kristi Noem turned to Vice President Mike Pence to help rally supporters in Rapid City as Democratic candidate Billie Sutton had events in the Sioux Falls area to close out the surprisingly competitive race for governor.

The candidates made their final arguments during the last full day of campaigning before Tuesday's election. They were both wrapping up statewide tours capping the race, which recent polls have found to be close despite South Dakota's heavy conservative tilt.

Meanwhile, Republican Sen. John Thune held events for Noem in eastern South Dakota. The four-term congresswoman also benefited from a September fundraiser featuring President Donald Trump.

Noem would be the state's first female governor. Sutton, a state senator and former professional rodeo cowboy, would be the first Democratic governor elected in over 40 years.

In the U.S. House race to succeed Noem, Republican front-runner Dusty Johnson had stops set in western South Dakota including the Pence event. Democrat Tim Bjorkman capped his campaign with a Sioux Falls rally.

Voters will also settle five ballot questions, among them measures that would reshape the state's citizen initiative system and raise tobacco taxes for the first time in more than a decade.

The most active are campaigns on either side of Amendment W, a government ethics overhaul, and a plan to increase tobacco taxes to make state technical schools more affordable called Initiated Measure 25. The tobacco industry has sunk millions of dollars into opposing the tax hike, which was losing in a recent poll.

Americans for Prosperity-South Dakota and the campaign against Amendment W planned to reach 75,000 South Dakota residents in the final days of the election cycle, Don Haggart, AFP's state director, said in a statement last week. Doug Kronaizl, spokesman for pro-amendment group Represent South Dakota, said in a statement that supporters' goal is to drop 10,000 pieces of literature in Sioux Falls to end the race.

An October poll found more people supporting Amendment W, the ethics measure, than opposing it, but a lot of respondents were undecided.

Polls are open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time on Tuesday.

Attorney: Computer of ex-chief accused of child porn hacked

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Court documents allege a co-worker hacked into the computer of a former Sioux Falls fire chief accused of possessing child pornography.

An attorney for Jim Sideras says he intends to possibly have testimony at the former chief's November trial about someone gaining access to Sideras' personal computer and altering it.

The Argus Leader says defense attorney Leo Flynn made the statement in a state motion to bar such third-party perpetrator evidence. The court heard arguments on the motion Monday and will make a decision later.

The state asked that the evidence be heard at a hearing before the trial to determine whether it would result in "undue delay" or was a "waste of time."

Sideras has pleaded not guilty to 10 counts of possessing, manufacturing or distributing child pornography.

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

Tribe challenges Corps findings on Dakota Access pipeline

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The Standing Rock Sioux is challenging new government conclusions that the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access oil pipeline poses no significant environmental threats to American Indian tribes in the Dakotas.

The Army Corps of Engineers in August finished more than a year of additional study ordered by a federal

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judge. The agency said the work substantiated its earlier determination that the chances of an oil spill are low, any impacts to tribal hunting and fishing will be limited and that the project does not pose a higher risk of adverse impacts to minority and low-income people.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, which is leading a four-tribe lawsuit against the four-state pipeline built by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, in court documents filed Thursday asked a federal judge to reject the findings.

"The corps has conducted a sham process to arrive at a sham conclusion, for the second time," tribal Chairman Mike Faith said in a statement.

The pipeline has the capacity to move half of the oil produced daily in North Dakota, the nation's second-leading producer behind Texas. It passes just north of the Standing Rock Reservation, beneath a Missouri River reservoir that is the tribe's water source.

The pipeline has been moving North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois since June 2017. That same month, U.S. District Judge James Boasberg ruled that the Corps largely complied with environmental law when permitting the pipeline but needed to do more study of its impact to tribal rights. The Corps filed its work with the court in late August.

Standing Rock's challenge says the Corps "failed to grapple with extensive technical input provided by the tribe and others undermining its conclusions." The major example the tribe offered is information it says shows the Corps has underestimated the risk and impact of an oil spill.

The tribe continues to maintain that the only lawful way to resolve the matter would be through a full environmental study that includes consideration of route alternatives.

The Corps had planned to do a more extensive environmental study before President Donald Trump took office in January 2017 and pushed through completion of the stalled project. The agency said in court documents in August that the additional study concluded a more thorough review is unwarranted. The tribe asks Boasberg to reject that conclusion.

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

Fiery crash in Minnehaha County kills both drivers

RENNER, S.D. (AP) — A fiery crash in Minnehaha County involving two pickup trucks killed both drivers. The Highway Patrol says a pickup driven by 18-year-old Nathan Seivert, of Renner, crossed the center line on state Highway 115 and collided with the other truck about 10:40 p.m. Thursday. Both vehicles started on fire, about 2 miles north of Renner.

Thirty-four-year-old Adam Hannon, of Worthing, was driving the other truck and died in the fire. Seivert was rescued by witnesses and taken to a Sioux Falls hospital, where he died Friday morning.

Authorities identify 2 children who died in crash near Leola

LEOLA, S.D. (AP) — The Highway Patrol has identified two children who died in a crash in McPherson County late last month.

Two-year-old Michael Van Duysen III and 4-year-old Josephine Van Duysen of Wagner were passengers in a car that went into the ditch on state Highway 10, came back onto the roadway and collided with another car. They died at the scene west of Leola the afternoon of Oct. 28.

Four other people were hurt in the crash. The patrol says the mother and older sister of the two children who died suffered life-threatening injuries.

Election Day to test Democratic resistance in Trump era

By STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A turbulent election season that tested President Donald Trump's slash-and-burn political style against the strength of the Democratic resistance comes to a close as Americans cast ballots in the first national election of the Trump era.

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With voters going to the polls Tuesday, nothing is certain.

Anxious Republicans privately expressed confidence in their narrow Senate majority but feared the House was slipping away. Trump, the GOP's chief messenger, warned that significant Democratic victories would trigger devastating consequences.

"If the radical Democrats take power they will take a wrecking ball to our economy and our future," Trump declared in Cleveland, using the same heated rhetoric that has defined much of his presidency. He added: "The Democrat agenda is a socialist nightmare."

Democrats, whose very relevance in the Trump era depended on winning at least one chamber of Congress, were laser-focused on health care as they predicted victories that would break up the GOP's monopoly in Washington and state governments.

"They've had two years to find out what it's like to have an unhinged person in the White House," said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, who leads the Democratic Governors Association. "It's an awakening of the Democratic Party."

Democrats could derail Trump's legislative agenda for the next two years should they win control of the House or the Senate. Perhaps more important, they would claim subpoena power to investigate Trump's personal and professional shortcomings.

Some Democrats have already vowed to force the release of his tax returns. Others have pledged to pursue impeachment, although removal from office is unlikely so long as the GOP controls the Senate or even maintains a healthy minority.

Democrats' fate depends upon a delicate coalition of infrequent voters — particularly young people and minorities — who traditionally shun midterm elections.

If ever there was an off-year election for younger voters to break tradition, this is it. Young voters promised to vote in record numbers as they waged mass protests in the wake of the February mass shooting at a Parkland, Florida, high school that left 17 students and staff dead.

Democrats are drawing strength from women and college-educated voters in general, who swung decidedly against Trump since his election. Polling suggests the Republican coalition is increasingly older, whiter, more male and less likely to have a college degree.

Democrats boast record diversity on the ballot.

Three states could elect their first African-American governors, while several others are running LGBT candidates and Muslims. A record number of women are also running for Senate, House, governorships and state legislative seats.

"The vast majority of women voters are angry, frustrated and they are really done with seeing where the Republican Party is taking them, particularly as it related to health care and civility," said Stephanie Schriock, who leads EMILY's List, a group that help elect Democratic women. "You're going to see the largest gender gap we've ever seen."

The political realignment, defined by race, gender and education, could re-shape U.S. politics for a generation. The demographic shifts also reflect each party's closing argument.

While the economy continues to thrive, Trump has spent much of the campaign's final days railing against a caravan of Latin American immigrants seeking asylum at the U.S. border. He dispatched more than 5,000 troops to the region, suggesting soldiers would use lethal force against migrants who throw rocks, before later reversing himself.

Republicans have privately encouraged the president to back off, to no avail.

Democrats, meanwhile, have beat their drum on health care.

"Health care is on the ballot," former President Barack Obama told Democratic volunteers in Virginia. "Health care for millions of people. You vote, you might save a life."

Tuesday's results will be colored by the dramatically different landscapes in the fight for the House and Senate.

Most top House races are set in America's suburbs where more educated and affluent voters in both parties have soured on Trump's presidency, despite the strength of the national economy. Democrats were

buoyed by a wave of Republican retirements and an overwhelming fundraising advantage.

They need to pick up two dozen seats to claim the House majority.

Democrats face a far more difficult challenge in the Senate, where they are almost exclusively on defense in rural states where Trump remains popular. Democratic Senate incumbents are up for re-election, for example, in North Dakota, West Virginia, and Montana — states Trump carried by 30 percentage points on average two years ago.

Democrats need to win two seats to claim the Senate majority.

Given Trump's stunning victory in 2016, few were confident in their predictions.

"I feel less comfortable making a prediction today than I have in two decades," Republican pollster Frank Luntz said.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/APPolitics>

Pipe bomb suspect scheduled for Election Day court hearing

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The man accused of sending pipe bombs to prominent critics of President Donald Trump is expected to make his first court appearance Tuesday in New York, where prosecutors said they will ask for him to be held without bail because he is considered dangerous.

Cesar Sayoc was being transferred from federal custody in Florida. His attorneys had said last week in Miami that it would be better if his lawyers in New York could take the case as soon as possible.

Sayoc has been accused of sending improvised explosive devices to numerous Democrats, Trump critics and media outlets in a scare that heightened tensions before the crucial midterm elections, happening the same day as his court appearance.

He was arrested a week ago outside a South Florida auto parts store in a van in which he had been living, a vehicle covered with stickers of Trump and showing images of some of the president's opponents with red crosshairs over their faces.

Sayoc faces nearly 50 years in prison if convicted on five federal charges that were filed in New York because some of the devices were recovered there.

His lawyers decided not to seek release on bail after prosecutors released a letter outlining more evidence against him, including DNA linking him to 10 of the explosive devices and fingerprints on two of them.

Other evidence includes online searches Sayoc did on his laptop and cellphone for addresses and photos of some of his intended targets, which included former President Barack Obama, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former Vice President Joe Biden, California Sen. Kamala Harris and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker. Packages were also mailed to CNN in New York and Atlanta.

Prosecutors say the most recent crude bomb was recovered Friday in California, addressed to the liberal activist Tom Steyer.

None of the devices exploded, and no one was injured in the pipe bomb scare.

Migrants straggle into Mexico City to shelter at stadium

By SONIA PEREZ D., MARK STEVENSON, and MARIA VERZA, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Thousands of Central Americans dreaming of getting to the United States streamed into Mexico's capital and bedded down in a sports stadium on the eve of U.S. midterm elections in which President Donald Trump has made the migrant caravan a central issue.

Authorities counted more than 2,000 migrants entering the Jesus Martinez stadium by midafternoon Monday, and a steady flow continued into the night. The facility has a capacity to hold 6,000, officials said, and four big tents set up for sleeping filled up.

Still hundreds of miles from the U.S. border, early arrivals eagerly sifted through donated clothes, gave themselves sponge baths and ate chicken and rice. They then picked up thin mattresses to hunker down for the night. Much in demand were blankets to ward off the chill in a city more than 7,300 feet (2,240

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meters) above sea level, a big change after trudging for three weeks in tropical heat.

Nashieli Ramirez, ombudsman for the local human rights commission, said the city was preparing to accommodate as many as 5,000 people. The lead caravan is estimated to have about 4,000 participants and several smaller groups are trailing hundreds of miles to the south.

"We have the space in terms of humanitarian help," Ramirez said.

Many of the migrants sought treatment for blistered and aching feet, illness and other maladies. "Since we got here, we have not stopped," said Tania Escobar, a nurse with Mexico City's public health department at the treatment tent.

Melvin Figueroa, a 32-year-old from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, was with his pregnant wife and two children, 6 and 8. He took the 6-year-old girl to the tent because her eyes were irritated and "she throws up everything she eats."

More migrants were trudging along the highway between the city of Puebla and the capital, trying to hitch rides from passing vehicles.

Trump has seized on the caravan and portrayed it as a major threat, even though such caravans have happened regularly over the years and largely passed unnoticed. He ordered thousands of troops to the U.S.-Mexico border when the migrants were still hundreds of miles to the south, threatened to detain asylum seekers in tents cities and has insinuated without proof that there are criminals or even terrorists in the group.

In dozens of interviews since the initial caravan set out from Honduras more than three weeks ago, migrants have said they are escaping rampant poverty and violence. Many are families traveling with small children. Some say they left because they were threatened by gang members or had lost relatives to gang violence. Others say they hope to work, secure a good education for their children and send money to support loved ones back home.

Alba Zoleida Gonzalez, 48, from Valle, Honduras, said she walked for five hours Monday, then was able to get a ride on a tractor-trailer with about 150 other migrants. Her calf muscles were aching, but that was a small price to pay for the chance at a life better than the one back home.

"I looked for work, and nothing," Gonzalez said, adding that her husband had been robbed and had to hand over everything he made selling crabs so his assailants wouldn't do worse. "And when one does find a little job they kill you for the money," she said.

Arriving in Mexico City, some migrants visited the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a major pilgrimage site, to thank the Virgin Mary for watching over them during the journey.

The caravan had spread out in recent days, with many participants advancing at a faster pace. Many said the caravan would now regroup in Mexico City. Oscar Ulloa, 20, an accountant from Honduras who was able to travel to the capital by bus from Puebla thanks to handouts from Mexicans, said he expected the group to vote in the coming days on its next moves.

The 178-mile (286-kilometer) route followed Monday to Mexico City from the city of Cordoba in the Gulf state of Veracruz was the longest single-day journey attempted by the group.

There were obstacles on this latest stretch. Truck after truck denied migrants rides as they trudged along the highway into the relatively colder November temperatures of central highland Mexico. Then migrants converged on tractor trailers, forcing the big rigs to stop so they could climb aboard. Such impromptu hitchhiking is precarious with dozens scrambling onto vehicles at a time.

Mexico City is more than 600 miles from the nearest U.S. border crossing at McAllen, Texas. A caravan last spring opted for a much longer route to Tijuana in the far northwest, across from San Diego. That caravan steadily dwindled to only about 200 people by the time it reached the border.

Many in the latest group said they remain convinced that traveling together is their best hope for reaching the U.S.

But Edgar Corzo, an official with the National Human Rights Commission, said that based on experiences with previous migrant caravans, the group probably will begin to break up now that it is in the capital.

"Each one goes to the place that he considers best," mainly wherever is closest to where they have

relatives or friends already in the United States, he said.

Associated Press writer Amy Guthrie contributed to this report.

Asian economies grateful for reprieve on Iran oil imports

By TONG-HYUNG KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Japan, South Korea and other major oil importers welcomed Tuesday the decision by the Trump administration to let them continue to import Iranian crude oil and other petroleum products despite the re-imposition of sanctions on Tehran.

The risk of excessive disruption to world markets was a key factor behind the decision to allow exemptions for some of the biggest, most oil-thirsty economies. It appeared to have paid off.

As of midday Tuesday oil prices had fallen moderately, with benchmark U.S. crude down 0.3 percent and Brent crude, which is used to price international oils, down nearly 0.4 percent. The fear was that the sanctions deadline would have pushed oil prices sharply higher.

Five of the eight economies granted waivers as long as they work to reduce oil imports from Iran to zero are in Asia: China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. The others were Greece, Italy and Turkey.

The sanctions on Iran were lifted under its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. President Donald Trump rejected that accord, and on Monday the U.S. Treasury Department imposed penalties on more than 700 Iranian and Iranian-linked individuals, entities, aircraft and vessels in the new sanctions.

The new sanctions were particularly aimed at Iran's vital oil industry, which provides a crucial source of hard currency.

Japan said it was pleased to be temporarily spared from possible penalties for importing Iranian oil. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters Tokyo was analyzing the potential impact and was in close consultations with the U.S. on protecting Japanese companies from "adverse consequences."

Those would include penalties for breaking long-term oil purchasing agreements.

Still, South Korean Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong said Tuesday that the waiver had "opened breathing room" for South Korea's oil refining industry, which relies on imports of a very light crude oil called condensate.

The waiver also is a relief for South Korean companies that export to Iran: The U.S. also agreed to uphold a special transaction system set up in October 2010 after discussions between Washington and Seoul that essentially allows South Korea to take Iranian oil as payments for its goods.

With the U.S. upholding the transaction system, South Korean companies will be able to continue exporting non-sanctioned items to Iran, officials said.

India has a similar arrangement whereby Iran can use crude oil to pay for food and other necessities.

"These countries currently take the lion's share of Iranian oil exports. It is therefore likely that Iranian oil exports will stabilize at their present level of a good 1 million barrels per day," analysts at Commerzbank said in a commentary.

They said Iran's exports could well recover somewhat since Japan and South Korea had sharply cut their imports in the past few months as they sought the waivers from the U.S.

For both Japan and China, Iran is a significant but not huge supplier. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Qatar and Kuwait export more crude oil to Japan than Iran.

China, which said it regretted the U.S. rejection of the deal with Iran, is the single-largest importer of crude oil, at about 9 million barrels a day, and also of Iranian oil, so cutting off all shipments could have jolted global markets.

But while its demand is huge, China has diversified and relies on Iran for less than 10 percent of its total crude oil imports, with Saudi Arabia, Angola, Russia, Oman and Iraq providing more than half, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Major European allies have opposed the U.S. decision to reject the nuclear deal with Iran. The 28-nation European Union reportedly is preparing a new financial mechanism to help its companies avoid U.S.

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sanctions, and that could help keep Iranian oil exports flowing.

British Prime Minister Theresa May's Downing Street office said Tuesday that the U.K. will continue to expand trade relations despite the decision.

"We regret the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.," May's spokesman James Slack said. "We continue to fully support expanding our trade relationship with Iran and encourage U.K. businesses to take advantage of the commercial opportunities that arise."

Associated Press writers Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Danica Kirka in London and Elaine Kurtenbach in Bangkok contributed.

In Texas, Ted Cruz squares off with rising star O'Rourke

By WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Beto O'Rourke has already used his once-longshot Texas Senate run to become a national Democratic phenomenon, shatter fundraising records and set off whispers that he could be a credible 2020 White House contender.

But will it be enough to upset — or even stay close to — incumbent Republican Ted Cruz in a state as deeply conservative as Texas?

The two candidates square off Tuesday in their hard-fought race that could help determine control of the Senate. Both say strong early voting statewide is a good sign for them. Early voting in the state's 30 largest counties alone already exceeded the total number of ballots cast during the 2014 midterm elections in Texas.

A three-term House member and onetime member of a punk rock band, O'Rourke was virtually unknown outside his Texas-Mexico border hometown of El Paso before announcing in March 2017 that he was taking on a seemingly unwinnable race against Cruz. A Democrat hasn't won a Texas Senate seat since 1988, and no one from the party has captured any statewide office since 1994, the nation's longest political losing streak.

But O'Rourke visited all 254 Texas counties and often drew larger-than-expected crowds, even in fiercely conservative areas. Preaching optimism and bipartisanship, he also refused to soften a liberal agenda that included calling for impeaching President Donald Trump, decriminalizing marijuana, implementing universal health care and gun control and relaxing federal immigration policies.

"My confidence is in the people of Texas," O'Rourke told reporters on Monday night, moments before staging a raucous rally with Mariachi band at the University of Texas at El Paso, mere blocks from his home. "I think we have every indication, based on turnout so far, that we're going to have a very good day tomorrow."

Cruz scoffs at the notion that O'Rourke could beat him. Still, late summer polls showed the challenger within striking distance. Though more recent ones indicate that the senator has regained his footing and maintained a modest lead, the race has gone from cakewalk to far closer than expected.

Even that was a shock for Cruz, who won 10-plus contests during the 2016 Republican presidential primary and has long been considered the most powerful and popular conservative in a state full of them. But the battle with O'Rourke proved that many Texas conservatives remained angry after Cruz clashed bitterly with Trump in 2016 and refused to endorse him during the Republican National Convention. Though the senator has since become one of Trump's staunchest defenders, the president nonetheless staged a massive rally in Houston just two weeks before Election Day to ensure his conservative base wouldn't abandon Cruz.

"It's the time for choosing. It's the time for action. We know that the hard-left right now, they're angry. They're energized," Cruz said Monday. "They're filled with rage and hatred for the president. And that's dangerous."

As Cruz has embraced the White House, O'Rourke has concentrated on mobilizing young voters, Texans

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living along the U.S.-Mexico border and people who moved to the state from elsewhere.

No matter what happens, O'Rourke is now a national Democratic star, using donations from across the nation to smash Senate race fundraising records — including raking in more than \$38 million in the three-month period from July through September alone. He insists he won't run for any office higher than Senate, but that's done little to quash speculation that he could challenge Trump for the presidency in two years.

Cruz, who has made no secret about wanting to run for president again once Trump leaves office, even gleefully tweeted national polls showing O'Rourke cracking the top 10 among potential Democratic White House hopefuls in 2020, arguing they show how liberal he is.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/APPolitics>

Fox's Hannity speaks onstage at Trump campaign rally

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Sean Hannity spoke from the stage of President Donald Trump's last midterm election rally on Monday, after Fox News Channel and its most popular personality had insisted all day that he wouldn't.

Hannity appeared on the podium in a Missouri arena after being called to the stage by Trump. Another Fox News host, Jeanine Pirro, also appeared onstage with the president.

"By the way, all those people in the back are fake news," Hannity told the audience.

It was an extraordinary scene after the news network had worked Monday to establish distance between Hannity and the campaign. Trump's campaign had billed Hannity as a "special guest" at the rally, but Fox had said that wasn't so. Hannity himself had tweeted: "To be clear, I will not be on stage campaigning with the president. I am covering final rally for the show."

But Trump called him to the stage after saying, "they're very special, they've done an incredible job for us. They've been with us from the beginning."

Hannity hugged the president when he came onstage and, after echoing Trump's traditional epithets about the media, recited some economic statistics.

A Fox News spokeswoman did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

"Either Fox News lied all day about their direct collaboration with the Trump campaign, or the network simply doesn't have any control over Sean Hannity," said Angelo Carusone, president of the liberal media watchdog Media Matters for America, which has urged an advertiser boycott of Hannity in the past. "This is a problem. It's dangerous for democracy and a threat to a free press."

Hannity has been rebuked by Fox in the past. In 2016, he was part of a Trump political video, which Fox said it had not known about in advance and told Hannity not to do so again. When Fox found out in 2010 that the Tea Party had advertised that Hannity would be appearing at one of his fundraising rallies, Fox said it had not approved the arrangement and ordered him back to New York.

Monday's rally appearance was not shown on Fox News Channel, but was aired on C-SPAN.

It came after Hannity's prime-time show aired from the rally site. He played the role of cheerleader from the side as the crowd waited for Trump's appearance. He pleaded with viewers to vote Republican on Tuesday to support Trump, and his opening monologue echoed a campaign slogan seen on signs at the arena: "Promises made, promises kept."

He moved backstage, and with six minutes before the end of his show, Trump appeared for a billed interview that was largely bereft of questions. Trump told Hannity he had seen the beginning of his show.

"I never miss your opening monologue," he said.

Hannity's role at the rally had been put in question by Trump campaign itself. It announced on Sunday that Hannity was to be a guest, along with radio commentator Rush Limbaugh and singer Lee Greenwood. Fox said it did not know how that impression had been created and Michael Glassner, chief operating officer for the campaign, did not respond to a request for comment.

Despite Fox's disavowal, the Trump campaign continued to list Hannity as a guest throughout Monday

at the link where people could seek tickets to the event.

Associated Press writer Lou Kesten in Washington contributed to this report.

National voting system faces test on Election Day

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Federal and state officials have been working for nearly two years to shore up the nation's election infrastructure from cyberattacks by Russians or others seeking to disrupt the voting process.

It turns out that many of the problems are closer to home.

Early voting leading up to Tuesday's midterm election revealed a wide variety of concerns with voting and registration systems around the country — from machines that changed voter selections to registration forms tossed out because of clerical errors.

Election officials and voting rights groups fear that voter confidence in the results could be undermined if such problems become even more widespread on Election Day, as millions of Americans head to the polls to decide pivotal races for Congress and governor.

Already there is concern that last-minute court rulings on voter ID requirements, the handling of absentee ballots and other issues in a handful of states will sow confusion among voters and poll workers.

"We expect poll workers will be overwhelmed, just as voters are overwhelmed, and there will be lots of provisional ballots," said Sara Henderson, head of Common Cause in Georgia, where voting-rights groups have been raising numerous concerns about election security and voter access.

The problems come amid a surge of interest, with registrations and early-voting turnout running well ahead of what is typically seen during a midterm election.

The election marks the first nationwide voting since Russia targeted state election systems in the 2016 presidential race. Federal, state and local officials have been working to make the nation's myriad election systems more secure. They have beefed up their cybersecurity protections and improved communications and intelligence-sharing.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FBI and other federal agencies have opened a command center to help state and local election offices with any major problems that arise.

"We want them to be as informed as possible," said Matt Masterson, senior cybersecurity adviser with the Department of Homeland Security.

There have been no signs so far that Russia or any other foreign actor has tried to launch cyberattacks against voting systems in any state, according to federal authorities.

But early voting and voter registration has been problematic in a number of states. Problems include faulty machines in Texas and North Carolina, inaccurate mailers in Missouri and Montana, and voter registration problems in Tennessee and Georgia.

In other states, including Kansas, Election Day polling places have been closed or consolidated, leading to worries that voters will be disenfranchised if they can't find a way to get there and cast a ballot.

Questions about election integrity erupted in recent days in Georgia, where the governor's race is among the most closely watched elections in the country.

Over the weekend, reports of security vulnerabilities within the state's online voter registration portal prompted a flurry of accusations from the Secretary of State's office, which is overseen by Republican gubernatorial candidate Brian Kemp. His office claimed without providing evidence that Democrats had tried to hack into the system. Democrats dismissed that as an effort to distract voters from a problem in a system Kemp oversees.

DHS officials have boasted that the 2018 midterms will be the most secure election in U.S. history, pointing to federal intrusion-detection sensors that will protect "90 percent of election infrastructure," as DHS Undersecretary Christopher Krebs tweeted in mid-October. Those sensors sniff for malicious traffic, and are installed on election systems in 45 states.

But similar sensors used at the federal level have performed quite badly. According to a Sept. 14 letter

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from the Office of Management and Budget, those sensors had a 99 percent failure rate from April 2017 onward, when they detected only 379 out of almost 40,000 "incidents" across federal civilian networks.

Nationally, some 6,500 poll watchers are being deployed by a coalition of civil rights and voting advocacy groups to assist people who encounter problems at the polls. That is more than double the number sent to polling places in 2016, while the number of federal election monitors has declined.

Long reported from Washington.

Follow Christina Almeida Cassidy at https://twitter.com/AP_Christina and Colleen Long at <http://twitter.com/ctlong1>
<https://twitter.com/>

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/APPolitics>

Voting officials under scrutiny amid heavy election turnout

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

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"In a sense, I am on the ticket," Trump seeks voter support

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, CATHERINE LUCEY and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (AP) — President Donald Trump, his shadow hanging over midterm elections that will determine the future of his administration, used his final pitch to ask voters to help preserve "fragile" GOP victories that could be erased by Democratic gains in Congress.

With the monthslong fight serving as a testing ground for his nationalist appeals and the strength of the coalition that powered him to the White House two years ago, Trump closed out a campaign season that has been defined by his racially charged rhetoric, hard-line immigration moves and scattershot policy proposals. Acknowledging the stakes in the closing days of campaigning, Trump stressed to voters that everything is on the line.

"It's all fragile. Everything I told you about, it can be undone and changed by the Democrats if they get in," Trump told supporters Monday on a telephone "town hall" organized by his re-election campaign. "You see how they've behaved. You see what's happening with them. They've really become radicalized."

In an election-eve interview, Trump struck a gentler note with media conglomerate Sinclair Broadcasting, saying he regretted some of his caustic campaign rhetoric.

"I would like to have a much softer tone. I feel to a certain extent I have no choice, but maybe I do," Trump said.

There was little of that on display as Trump spent his final hours on the trail Monday in Ohio, Indiana and Missouri, where his rhetoric on illegal immigration turned harsh and he lobbed attacks at Democrats.

"The contrast in this election could not be more clear. Democrats produce mobs," Trump said at his final rally Monday night in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. "That's what's happened. Republicans produce jobs."

In a Monday tweet, he warned that law enforcement was "strongly notified to watch closely for any ILLEGAL VOTING which may take place in Tuesday's Election (or Early Voting)." Trump has falsely claimed that millions of illegal votes were cast in 2016, which he says deprived him of a victory in the popular vote, and has stoked concerns, without providing evidence, of rampant fraudulent voting.

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"I do eventually want to unite," Trump said in Fort Wayne, Indiana, "but I'm driving them crazy."

Trump has also sought to distance himself from any potential blame if Republicans lose control of the House, saying, "My primary focus has been on the Senate."

Whatever the outcome, Trump made clear he knew his political future was on the line.

"In a sense, I am on the ticket," he told a raucous crowd in Cleveland.

He warned supporters on the telephone town hall to get out and vote because "the press is very much considering it a referendum on me and us as a movement."

Republicans are increasingly confident they will retain control of the Senate, but they face Democratic headwinds in the House. In an interview with The Associated Press last month, Trump said he would not accept blame for a GOP defeat at the polls.

Trump has maintained a busy campaign schedule in the final stretch of the race, with 11 rallies over six days. In the closing days Trump has brought out special guests to join him. Country singer Lee Greenwood performed Trump favorite "God Bless the USA" on Sunday in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and appeared with the president Monday night in Missouri.

In Indiana and again in Missouri, Trump invited White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders and counselor Kellyanne Conway on stage to speak along with his daughter Ivanka Trump.

Fox News personality Sean Hannity and conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh served as "special guests" at the final rally, according to Trump's campaign, though Hannity insisted on Twitter he would only be "covering (the) final rally for my show." Trump, however, did call Hannity to the stage.

At his rallies and on Twitter, Trump's closing argument has largely focused on fear — warning, without evidence, that a Democratic takeover would deliver the country into socialism, spurring an influx of illegal immigration and a wave of crime.

Attacks on favorite Trump foes House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters were staples of Trump's closing message to voters as he argued that Democrats would plunge the country into Venezuela-like chaos.

Faced with low Republican enthusiasm, Trump is convinced that immigration will again be an animating issue for his base. He seized on the caravans of Central American migrants to reinforce an immigration message that recalls the racially charged immigration talk of his 2016 campaign.

"That's an invasion. I don't care what they say," Trump said Monday of the thousands of migrants marching toward the U.S.-Mexico border.

Trump has also used the confirmation battle for Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh to stir up his most loyal supporters, with his aides believing it to be one of the most effective arguments for bringing GOP voters to the polls.

"We energized the Republican Party with that," Trump said in Missouri. "The Democrats overplayed their hand."

In the final sprint to Election Day, Trump has pushed forward with rallies amid news events that would have halted previous leaders — holding a massive event in Illinois the same day a gunman massacred 11 people in a Pittsburgh synagogue.

Often the candidates Trump has traveled to support feel like supporting actors in the theater of his rallies, though in the final days of the campaign Trump has been more generous in his praise of the Republicans he wishes to see elected.

In cramped aircraft hangars and packed arenas across battleground states, Trump has boasted about the energetic displays of support from his most loyal backers, drawing parallels to his own White House bid. "There's electricity in the air like I haven't seen since '16," he said Monday.

"This is a very important election," Trump added, emphasizing the stakes. "I wouldn't say it's as important as '16, but it's right up there."

Trump's midterm efforts will not stop with his Missouri rally on Monday night. He plans to spend Election Day encouraging voters to get to the polls from the White House. And his own bid for re-election in 2020 is already underway.

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Lucey and Miller reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Lemire at <https://twitter.com/JonLemire>, Lucey at https://twitter.com/catherine_lucey and Miller at <https://twitter.com/ZekeJMiller>

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/APPolitics>

WHAT TO WATCH: Voters to go polls to weigh in on Trump era

By **KEN THOMAS, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tweetstorms and a trade war. Kanye in the Oval Office. Kavanaugh in the hearing room.

President Donald Trump's presidency has been a wild, turbulent, two-year ride. Now it's time for voters to weigh in how much they're enjoying it.

Republicans' across-the-board control of Congress is at stake in Tuesday's midterm election, along with command of governors' offices and statehouses around the country.

The president has barnstormed the nation this fall, holding multiple rallies a week, mindful that his future will be shaped by Election Day. "Even though I'm not on the ballot, in a certain way I am on the ballot," Trump said Monday.

A guide to what to watch as results come in Tuesday night. All times are EST.

THE TIMELINE

Polls start closing at 6 p.m. in Kentucky. But things will really get rolling at 7 p.m., when polls close in Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, South Carolina and Virginia. Another wave of numbers will begin coming in after 7:30 p.m. from North Carolina, Ohio and West Virginia. A big chunk of data will come after 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. when states such as Texas, New York, Michigan and Pennsylvania begin reporting. The 11 p.m. batch of states includes California, home to several competitive congressional races. Alaska, where polls close at 1 a.m. Wednesday, will end the night.

THE EARLY VOTE

Much of America has already voted. Based on reports from 49 states, through Monday, at least 36.4 million people voted in the midterms before Election Day. And in a sign of the growing influence of early voting, 30 states reported exceeding their total number of mail and in-person votes cast ahead of the 2014 midterm elections.

A big question: Does it mean a higher turnout?

Turnout in midterm elections is typically near 40 percent, much lower than presidential elections, where turnout has hit around 60 percent in recent cycles. University of Florida professor Michael McDonald, who studies voting patterns, estimated recently that about 45 percent of eligible voters could cast ballots this year, a turnout level that hasn't been seen in nearly a half century.

EARLY TEA LEAVES

For an early read on how things are going, keep an eye on two congressional races in Virginia: a district in the Washington suburbs represented by Republican Rep. Barbara Comstock and another in the Richmond area held by Republican Rep. Dave Brat.

Trump has struggled with college-educated women in the suburbs and Comstock's district could be among the first casualties as she faces Democrat Jennifer Wexton. Brat, meanwhile, won his seat by upsetting then-House Majority Leader Eric Cantor in the 2014 GOP primary. But this time he is facing a serious threat from Democrat Abigail Spanberger, a former CIA officer.

Another district to watch is in Kentucky — the Lexington-area battle pitting third-term Republican Rep.

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Andy Barr against Democrat Amy McGrath, a retired Marine fighter pilot. Trump won the 6th District by more than 15 percentage points in 2016. But McGrath has pushed Barr to the edge with the help of sharp campaign ads that went viral.

AP VOTECAST

The Associated Press will debut a new survey of the American electorate in Tuesday's elections that aims to more accurately capture the story of how Americans voted and why.

The launch of AP VoteCast is the largest change in the way final information about voters' choices is collected by media organizations since CBS News first conducted an exit poll in 1972.

VoteCast is conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago for AP and Fox News. Both AP and Fox were members of the National Election Poll, which has for decades conducted the exit poll.

The remaining members of the pool — CNN, ABC, CBS and NBC — will again rely on an exit poll conducted by Edison Research. Several other major news organizations, such as the Los Angeles Times, will use VoteCast.

HOUSE STAKES

Republicans have had control of the House since the tea party helped sweep them into power in the 2010 midterms. Nearly a decade later, the GOP is trying to avoid a "blue wave" that returns Nancy Pelosi and House Democrats to the majority.

Control of the House is expected to be determined by a few dozen districts, many of them in the nation's suburbs. Democrats need a net increase of 23 seats to win back control — a number that many GOP officials concede is a very possible outcome.

The House races will offer clues to where Americans stand in 2018 on immigration, guns, health care, gender equality in the #MeToo era — and determine who they want representing them in Washington during the next two years of Trump's presidency.

SENATE STAKES

Republicans hold a narrow Senate majority, 51-49, but have a huge advantage in these contests because the battle for control runs mostly through states that Trump won in 2016.

To put it simply: Democrats are on defense. Of the 35 Senate races, 10 involve Democratic incumbents seeking re-election in states won by Trump, often by large margins. Democrats' hopes of recapturing the Senate hinge on all their incumbents winning — a difficult task — and on flipping seats in Nevada, won by Hillary Clinton in 2016, and a few states that lean Republican, most notably Arizona, Tennessee and Texas.

Trump has coveted seats held by several red-state Democrats, including Joe Donnelly of Indiana, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Jon Tester of Montana and Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota. Strategists from both parties consider Heitkamp the most vulnerable Democrat but say the Senate makeup could be shaped by a number of narrowly contested races, including Arizona, Missouri, Indiana and Montana.

Another epic clash to watch: a race involving Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, Trump's one-time GOP presidential rival, against Democratic Rep. Beto O'Rourke, who hauled in a massive \$70 million during the campaign. Cruz is still considered the favorite — Texas hasn't elected a Democrat to the Senate in 30 years.

TRUMP

Air Force One ferried Trump across the country on Monday for rallies in Ohio, Indiana and Missouri, and the president didn't return to the White House until well after midnight. On Election Day, the president was appearing in local interviews around the country but wasn't expected to make any public appearances at the White House.

But any viewer should keep a second screen handy to watch Trump's Twitter feed. The president is known for offering his first take on many key events on Twitter — and that could certainly happen as the election results come into fuller view.

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YEAR OF THE WOMAN?

A record number of women are on the ballot — and could become the story of the 2018 election .

Two years after Clinton's defeat, more women than ever before won major party primaries for governor, the Senate and the House this year. The results could significantly increase the number of women in elected office.

About 235 women won their primaries for the House, according to records kept by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. In the Senate, a record 22 women won their primaries. And a record 16 women were nominated for gubernatorial races.

Many Democratic women, including first-time candidates, have said Trump's election motivated to run for office. But the election is also following the emergence of the #MeToo movement, the massive women's march after Trump's inauguration and the pitched battle over the Supreme Court confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

Women currently account for one-fifth of the 535 House members and senators. By next January, that number could change.

MAKING HISTORY

The night could witness a generational change in Congress and herald in a number of barrier-breaking officeholders.

In New York City, 29-year-old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is expected to become the youngest woman elected to Congress. In Georgia, Stacey Abrams is vying to become the first black woman to be elected governor in the nation. Andrew Gillum could become Florida's first black governor. And Ayanna Pressley is the favorite to become Massachusetts' first black woman elected to Congress.

South Dakota Rep. Kristi Noem could become her state's first female governor. Vermont's Christine Hallquist could become the nation's first openly transgender governor. And Idaho's Paulette Jordan is trying to become the country's first Native American governor.

Native American women could also win seats in Congress. In New Mexico, former state Democratic Party chairwoman Deb Haaland is trying to become the first Native American woman elected to Congress. She could be joined by Sharice Davids of Kansas, a Native American woman who is also attempting to become the state's first openly LGBT candidate to win a major office.

In Michigan, Rashida Tlaib could become first Muslim woman and first Palestinian-American in Congress. She could be joined by Minnesota's Ilhan Omar, who is also trying to become the first Muslim woman elected to Congress along with the first Somali-American elected to the House.

And no matter what, Arizona's Senate race expects to make history. Democrat Kyrsten Sinema could become the first openly bisexual senator and the state's first female senator. If Republican Martha McSally wins, she will become Arizona's first female senator.

VOTING PROBLEMS

The elections will mark the first nationwide voting since Russia targeted state election systems in the 2016 presidential race. Federal, state and local officials have sought to reassure the public that their voting systems are secure.

So far, there have been no signs that Russia or any other foreign actor has tried to launch cyberattacks against voting systems in any state, according to federal authorities.

Some states have already dealt with voting problems. Voters casting ballots early have encountered faulty machines in Texas and North Carolina, inaccurate mailers in Missouri and Montana, and voter registration problems in Tennessee and Georgia. In other states, including Kansas, Election Day polling places have been closed or consolidated.

INDICTED, YET VICTORIOUS?

Two Republican members of Congress are trying to win another term while facing separate federal charges.

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Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., and his wife are accused of mispending more than \$250,000 in campaign funds on everything from tequila shots to airfare for a family pet. Prosecutors say the couple tried to conceal the illegal spending as donations to charities, including groups for wounded veterans. Hunter faces Democrat Ammar Campa-Najjar in a GOP-friendly district in the San Diego area.

Rep. Chris Collins, R-N.Y., is accused of illegally leaking confidential information about a biopharmaceutical company to his son and the father of his son's fiancée that allowed them to avoid hundreds of thousands of dollars in stock losses.

Collins' most serious charge carries a potential prison term of up to 20 years. If Collins wins in the western New York district and is later convicted and forced to resign, a special election would be held.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is still under indictment — he pleaded not guilty to two felony counts of securities fraud. But the Republican is favored to win a second term, helped by a positive assessment from Trump, who singled him out at a recent rally in Houston as doing a "great job."

Follow Ken Thomas on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/KThomasDC>

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. ELECTORATE TO RENDER JUDGMENT ON TRUMP ERA

Democratic resistance vs. slash-and-burn politics: Voters across America cast ballots of the first nationwide election of Trump's presidency.

2. VOTING PROBLEMS APPEAR CLOSER TO HOME

Early voting leading up to the midterm election exposed machines that changed voter selections and registration forms tossed because of clerical errors.

3. IRAN SANCTIONS NOT FOR ALL

South Korea and seven other countries receive waivers from the U.S. to continue importing Iranian crude and other petroleum products without penalty.

4. PIPE BOMBING SUSPECT DUE IN COURT

Prosecutors say they will ask for Cesar Sayoc, accused of sending explosive devices to Trump critics, to be held without bail because he is considered dangerous.

5. 'I LOOKED FOR WORK, AND NOTHING'

Thousands of Central Americans dreaming of getting to the U.S. stream into Mexico City and bed down in a sports stadium.

6. WHAT PUERTO RICO IS NOT READY FOR

More than a year after Hurricane Maria caught the island nation off guard, government officials say they're still lacking a plan to cope with the next such disaster.

7. AMAZON MUM ON NEW HEADQUARTERS PLAN

The online retail giant refuses comment on reports that it plans to split its new headquarters between two locations, possibly in New York City and northern Virginia.

8. HANNITY'S ACTIONS DON'T BACK WORDS

The popular Fox News Channel host spoke from the stage of Trump's last rally in Missouri after the cable news channel insisted all day that he wouldn't.

9. WHO IS THE SEXIEST MAN ALIVE

People magazine chooses British actor Idris Elba, star of the television series "The Wire" and "Luther."

10. TITANS RUIN RECEIVER'S DEBUT

Marcus Mariota throws two touchdown passes and runs for another score and Tennessee spoils Amari Cooper's first game with Dallas with a 28-14 win over the Cowboys.

Spain finds 17 dead migrants, 100 survivors in Mediterranean

By ARITZ PARRA, Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spanish rescue workers combed the seas and shores of southern Spain on Tuesday, searching for 17 missing migrants a day after finding the bodies of 17 other migrants who died trying to cross the Mediterranean in boats departing from North Africa.

The Spanish Civil Guard said it had found four bodies of migrants and 22 survivors Monday, all men from northern Africa, after their wooden dinghy hit a reef close to the coast, west of the Strait of Gibraltar. The Civil Guard said 13 of the survivors were thought to be unaccompanied minors.

It also said 17 other people traveling were missing, but could have reached Spanish shores. The Civil Guard on Tuesday resumed the search for them both on sea and land.

Earlier on Monday, Spanish maritime rescuers found 80 people, including five women, and recovered the bodies of 13 dead migrants in the Alboran Sea, part of the western Mediterranean migrant route into Europe.

The migrants were traveling in two different boats, the Spanish Maritime Rescue Service said, adding that they were all transferred to the Spanish enclave of Melilla, which borders Morocco.

The U.N. says over 2,160 people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe this year, 564 of them trying to reach Spain.

At the Strait of Gibraltar on the western edge of the Mediterranean, Africa and Europe are only 14 kilometers (8.7 miles) apart but the waters there can be dangerous due to high winds and strong currents. Still, the short distance has made that route the most popular choice for migrants heading to Europe after fleeing violence or poverty at home.

Nearly 54,000 migrants have entered Europe this year through Spain, more than the combined migrant arrivals to Italy and Greece, which had been the most popular migrant destinations in previous years. One-fifth of them arrived in October, the month with most migrant arrivals so far this year, according to U.N. statistics.

Amazon mum on reports it will split new headquarters

NEW YORK (AP) — Online leader Amazon Inc. refused comment Tuesday on reports that it plans to split its new headquarters between two locations, possibly in New York City and Arlington, Virginia.

The Wall Street Journal and New York Times reported that the company would locate the new facilities in Arlington's Crystal City area and in another city. Queens on Long Island in New York appears a likely choice, but the Wall Street Journal said Dallas, Texas, was also in discussions.

A company spokesman, Adam Sedo, reached by phone in Seattle said that Amazon would not comment on "rumors and speculation."

An update from the company is widely expected soon.

The Wall Street Journal said the main reason for having the two new facilities is to be able to recruit enough talent. Dividing the 50,000 employees expected to staff the headquarters between two locations also would relieve pressures from demand for housing and transportation.

The newspapers cited unnamed people familiar with the matter.

The New York Times said Amazon executives met last month with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the state had offered possibly hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of subsidies. They also met with New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, it said.

"I'll change my name to Amazon Cuomo if that's what it takes," the report cited Cuomo as saying.

Amazon's decision to set up another headquarters set off an intense competition to win the company and its promise of 50,000 new jobs. Some locations sought to stand out with stunts, but Amazon emphasized it wanted dollars and cents incentives, like tax breaks and grants. It also wanted a city with more than 1 million people, an airport within 45 minutes away, direct access to mass transit and room to expand.

The company received 238 proposals before narrowing the list to 20 in January.

Amazon has said it could spend more than \$5 billion on the new headquarters over the next 17 years,

about matching the size of its current home in Seattle, which has 33 buildings, 23 restaurants and 40,000 employees.

The company isn't leaving Seattle, and Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos has said the new headquarters will be "a full equal" to its current home.

Amazon already employs 600,000. That's expected to increase as it builds more warehouses across the country to keep up with online orders. The company recently announced that it would pay all its workers at least \$15 an hour, but the employees at its second headquarters will be paid a lot more -- Amazon says they'll make an average of more than \$100,000 a year.

USOC moves to shut down USA Gymnastics after Nassar scandal

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

The U.S. Olympic Committee took steps Monday to decertify USA Gymnastics as the governing body for the sport at the Olympic level, choosing to pursue the nuclear option for an organization that botched its own rebuilding attempt in the wake of a sex-abuse scandal involving former team doctor Larry Nassar.

In an open letter to the gymnastics community, USOC CEO Sarah Hirshland said "you deserve better," and that the challenges facing USA Gymnastics are more than it is capable of overcoming as currently constructed.

The USOC itself also has faced criticism for not responding quickly and appropriately to sex abuse cases, and though the move was cheered by the gymnast whose own revelations helped propel Nassar's years of abuse to the fore — "THANK YOU," tweeted Rachel Denhollander — others viewed it as a ploy to shift blame for the scandal.

"Today's announcement by USOC seeks only to deflect from their total failure over decades to protect the gymnasts in their care," said a statement from attorneys Michelle Simpson Tuegel and Mo Aziz, who represent Olympian Tasha Schwikert and her sister, Jordan, in their lawsuit against USAG and the USOC.

Earlier this year, the USOC said it was seeking to remove itself as a defendant from a number of lawsuits — including those filed by gold medalists McKayla Maroney, Jordyn Wieber and Aly Raisman — claiming Nassar never worked for the federation, nor were his crimes foreseeable by the USOC. The lawsuits claim the USOC, as the umbrella organization that oversees USA Gymnastics, should have done more when it learned of the abuse.

It did push for new leadership at USA Gymnastics, but even with a new board of directors that started in June, the organization made repeated mistakes while dealing with the aftermath of revelations that the now-imprisoned Nassar molested Olympians while working as a volunteer. Those included the botched hiring of a program coordinator and an interim CEO to replace Kerry Perry, who lasted barely nine months on the job after the USOC forced out Steve Penny.

The announcement comes only days after the U.S. team brought home nine medals from the World Championships in the first major meet in the lead-up to Tokyo in 2020. Five of those were individual medals won by Olympic champion Simone Biles, who is among the athletes who have not hesitated to criticize the organization.

By moving to decertify USA Gymnastics, the USOC is taking major action against an organization that never grasped control over its own rebuilding. But the move could also leave a void that cannot be easily filled. In addition to supporting elite and Olympic athletes, and selecting teams and coaches for international competitions, USA Gymnastics serves more than 150,000 athletes in 3,000 clubs around the country. There is no other organization standing by to fill that need.

"Seeking to revoke recognition is not a decision that we have come to easily, but I believe it is the right action," Hirshland said. "In the short-term, we will work to ensure that America's gymnasts have the support necessary to excel on and off the field of play. We are building plans to do just that no matter the outcome of the revocation process."

The federal law that governs the USOC gives the federation final say on which organizations represent

each sport at the Olympics, and also establishes a process to decertify the organizations. But that process is used only under the most extreme circumstances. One example came in 1994 when the USOC recommended decertifying the NRA as the governing body for shooting, and the NRA accepted the decision. The USOC also has dictated changes and placed its own administrators in charge of smaller NGBs in need of overhauls. The USOC could take a major role in shaping, even possibly running, whatever agency takes USA Gymnastics' place.

Hirshland said she has given USA Gymnastics the option of surrendering its recognition voluntarily, though there was no indication of which direction USAG would go. It issued a statement saying it was looking at the USOC letter "and is evaluating the best path forward for our athletes, professional members, the organization and staff."

The statement detailed the challenges the new board has faced since taking over in June.

It is in search of its fourth president and CEO in the last 19 months thanks to a series of resignations, all of them under pressure from the USOC or the gymnastics' community at large.

Penny — named as a co-defendant in several civil lawsuits filed by former elite gymnasts— stepped down in March 2017. He was arrested last month and charged with destroying or hiding documents related to Nassar's activities at the Karolyi Ranch, the ex-national training center near Huntsville, Texas, where a number of gymnasts said Nassar abused them.

The organization named Perry as Penny's replacement but her tenure lasted barely nine months. She was criticized by several high-profile gymnasts, Biles included, for failing to offer a clear vision on the way forward and quit in September.

Her resignation came shortly after the hiring, then quick removal, of Mary Lee Tracy as elite development coordinator; Tracy had been supportive of Nassar when the allegations first surfaced.

USA Gymnastics brought on former U.S. Representative Mary Bono to serve as interim president and CEO last month. Bono didn't last a week, stepping away after drawing criticism for an Instagram post she made shortly before she was hired that was critical of Nike placing former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick at the forefront of a marketing campaign.

All these moves simply added fuel to those who were seeking the total dismantling of USAG.

Olympian Jamie Dantzscher, the first gymnast to sue USAG, said she grew tired of USAG's "cynical PR statements about how much they care about athletes."

"It is time for this organization to be replaced," she said. "My only regret is that it has taken the U.S. Olympic Committee so long to act."

AP Sports Writer Will Graves contributed to this report.

Relatives struggle with Wisconsin deaths of Girl Scout, mom

By IVAN MORENO, Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Relatives of a Girl Scout and her mother who were killed in a hit-and-run crash in Wisconsin that also claimed the lives of two other girls struggled Monday to come to terms with their sudden, heartbreaking loss, saying "we all expect them to come back."

Sara Jo Schneider, 32, and her 10-year-old daughter Haylee Hickle were among a group of adults and children who were picking up trash in the ditches of a rural highway when a pickup truck that veered off the road struck them Saturday morning, said police in Lake Hallie, a town about 95 miles (152 kilometers) east of Minneapolis. The truck driver later told authorities he was inhaling chemical vapors before the crash.

Schneider's mother, Judy Schneider said her daughter and granddaughter's deaths are "still not real for any of us," and her 6-year-old grandson, Jasper, can't grasp what happened.

"He doesn't understand," Schneider said. "He said, 'If the doctors work real hard, sometimes God lets them come back.'"

Lake Hallie police said the 21-year-old pickup driver, Colten Treu, and a passenger told investigators they had been huffing just before striking the Girl Scout troop. Authorities said Treu sped off after the collision,

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but surrendered hours later. He is being held in the Chippewa County Jail on \$250,000 bond and faces 13 possible charges, including four counts of intoxicated use of a motor vehicle.

Treu made his first court appearance Monday and has another hearing scheduled for Tuesday, when prosecutors are expected to formally charge him.

Schneider said her daughter, granddaughter and grandson moved in with her a couple of years ago and they expected the house in the Town of Lafayette to be their "forever home."

"It was a little piece of heaven," she said. Now, she said, "It's going to be hollow."

Nine-year-old Jayna Kelley and 10-year-old Autum Helgeson, both of Lake Hallie, were also killed. Another 10-year-old girl who was struck was in stable condition at a hospital Monday.

The Girl Scouts out on the highway that day were all fourth-graders at Halmstad and Southview elementary schools in the Chippewa Falls School District. The children and their adult chaperones wore bright green safety vests as they walked along both sides of County Highway P, which they had adopted as a community service project.

Hundreds of community members huddled under umbrellas in the rain Sunday evening for a candlelight vigil outside Halmstad Elementary. Girl Scouts sang songs in memory of the victims, who were members of Troop 3055. A makeshift memorial of teddy bears, balloons and candles was set up on two wooden benches.

Schneider said her daughter's "favorite time with her kids was all in their jammies, curled up to watch a movie."

She said Haylee and her mom "were both exceptional artists" and Haylee dreamed of being an animator. She hated bugs, loved reading "Warrior Cats" books, and could sketch "a wonderful picture in 15 minutes or less," Schneider recalled.

Haylee also enjoyed painting and working on clay pottery with her mother. Haylee's father died when she was 3, Schneider said.

"Haylee would've never made it if she lost her mother," the grandmother said. "And Sara would've never been able to come back from losing Haylee."

Associated Press researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York contributed to this story.

The Latest developments: <https://bit.ly/2ztjggZ>

Economic realities moderate Trump's hard line on Iran

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration was caught between allies at home and abroad and the reality of global economics as it reinstated sanctions Monday on Iran, forced to carve out exemptions for important allies and back off on measures that could have been even more punishing for Tehran.

The U.S. granted waivers to allow China and seven close U.S. partners and allies to continue importing Iranian crude and other petroleum products without penalty, bowing to concerns that a complete end to Iran's exports would cause a major spike in world oil prices and cause other economic disruptions. Trump conceded that reality on his way to a last-minute campaign event a day before critical midterm congressional elections.

"We have the toughest sanctions ever imposed but on oil we want to go a little bit slower because I don't want to drive the oil prices in the world," he told reporters. "I could get the Iran oil down to zero immediately, but it would cause a shock to the market."

The newly reinstated sanctions target Iran's energy, financial and shipping sectors and are aimed at forcing Iran to end ballistic missile program and end its support for armed movements throughout the Middle East.

The measures restore all the U.S. sanctions that had been lifted under the 2015 accord that gave Iran billions of dollars in sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, a deal that Obama ad-

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ministration critics had argued was too soft on the Islamic Republic.

In reinstating the measures, the Treasury Department imposed penalties on more than 700 Iranian and Iranian-linked individuals, entities, aircraft and vessels. Among those are 50 Iranian banks and subsidiaries, more than 200 people and ships, Iran's state-run airline Iran Air and more than 65 of its planes.

The sanctions freeze any assets that those targeted have in U.S. jurisdictions and bar Americans from doing business with them. They will also affect non-Iranian companies that deal with sanctioned Iranian firms and officials.

Yet, while the administration seeks to cut off Iran's oil revenue, it is allowing Greece, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey to continue purchasing Iranian oil as long as they work to reduce imports to zero.

"When I look at the list, it's obviously very large economies that still in many ways depend on Iran oil imports and at this time don't have any strong alternatives," said Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank.

"This is part of the Trump team's trying to balance its maximum pressure campaign against Iran versus its concerns over where the global prices of oil might go and how that could negatively impact everyone including America. I don't support this policy, but if you are going down this path, it's a way to lessen the risk of economic blowback in America."

Three of the eight waiver recipients — Greece, Italy and Turkey — are members of NATO. Japan and South Korea have mutual defense treaties with the U.S. and have a key part in the North Korea de-nuclearization initiative. India, the world's largest democracy, plays a critical role in the administration's "Indo-Pacific" strategy, which seeks to unite countries in the region into forming a bloc to counter China's growing assertiveness.

All of them lobbied heavily to be granted the six-month exemptions while promising to further reduce or end their imports and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the waivers were based on the specific circumstances of each and the need "to ensure a well-supplied oil market."

China is the single-largest importer of Iranian oil and forcing it to look elsewhere to fuel its dynamic economy would likely have rocked the market.

For some waiver recipients, domestic concerns were paramount.

South Korea, for example, is reliant on oil imports to drive its economy. It had been consultation with the Trump administration since the U.S. pullout from the Iran nuclear deal in May. Seoul says it will reduce oil imports from Iran by a "significant" amount but the waiver will allow it to maintain a stable supply of a light form of crude known as condensate.

Seeking to deflect criticism from some Iran hawks concerned that the sanctions don't go far enough, Pompeo stressed that U.S. pressure on countries to stop buying Iranian oil had already reduced its exports by more than a million barrels of crude per day costing the country \$2.5 billion revenue.

Some leading Iran hawks appeared to agree with the administration's approach.

"We are encouraged that these waivers will only be temporary and one-time," said United Against a Nuclear Iran, a prominent group that was harshly critical of the nuclear deal and the sanctions relief it brought.

In addition to the oil exemptions, Pompeo said limited waivers had been issued to allow European and other firms to continue conversion work on three of Iran's nuclear facilities.

"Permitting these specific activities to continue is an interim measure that preserves oversight of Iran's civil nuclear program," the State Department said. "This oversight enhances our ability to constrain Iran's program and keep pressure on the regime while we pursue a new, stronger deal."

Maria Danilova and Matthew Pennington contributed to this report.

US election systems more secure, but voting problems persist

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Tuesday's midterm elections will mark the first nationwide voting since Russia targeted state election systems in the 2016 presidential race, with federal, state and local officials seeking to reassure the public their voting systems are secure.

There have been no signs so far that Russia or any other foreign actor has tried to launch cyberattacks against voting systems in any state, according to federal authorities.

The Department of Homeland Security has been working over the last year to improve communication and intelligence-sharing with state and local election officials who were largely left in the dark about Russian activities in 2016. Federal agencies including Homeland Security and the FBI have opened a command center to help state or local election offices with any major cybersecurity problems that arise.

"Things are running pretty smoothly around the country," said Matt Masterson, senior cybersecurity adviser with the Department of Homeland Security.

The same can't be said for all security preparations, or for early voting and the voter registration process in some states.

DHS officials have boasted that the 2018 midterms will be the most secure election in U.S. history, pointing to federal intrusion-detection sensors that will protect "90 percent of election infrastructure," as DHS Undersecretary Christopher Krebs tweeted in mid-October. Those sensors sniff for malicious traffic, and are installed on election systems in 45 states.

But similar sensors used at the federal level have performed quite badly. According to a Sept. 14 letter from the Office of Management and Budget, those sensors had a 99 percent failure rate from April 2017 onward, when they detected only 379 out of almost 40,000 "incidents" across federal civilian networks.

Voters casting ballots early have encountered faulty machines in Texas and North Carolina, inaccurate mailers in Missouri and Montana, and voter registration problems in Tennessee and Georgia. In other states, including Kansas, Election Day polling places have been closed or consolidated.

Some of the problems have prompted lawsuits, and there is concern that last-minute court rulings on voter ID requirements in a handful of states will sow confusion among voters and poll workers.

The challenges come amid a surge of interest, with registrations and turnout running well ahead of what is typically seen during a midterm election.

Wendy Weiser, who oversees the democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU, said she believes efforts to restrict voting access have been "more intense" than in previous elections but said efforts to combat them also have increased dramatically.

"These hurdles often work because people aren't willing to go to the trouble of going through the various hoops that the state puts in front of them," Weiser said. "Really motivated voters can overcome these kinds of hurdles."

The issue of election security is clearly on the minds of voters. A recent Chicago Harris/AP-NORC poll found that nearly eight in 10 Americans are at least somewhat concerned about potential hacking of election systems, with 45 percent saying they are extremely or very concerned.

A key concern is that five states exclusively use electronic voting machines that do not produce a paper trail that can be used to verify election results if questions about the final tally arise.

Georgia, where the governor's race is among the most closely watched elections in the country, is one of the states where voting rights groups have been raising numerous concerns about election security and voter access.

Over the weekend, reports of security vulnerabilities within the state's online voter registration portal prompted a flurry of accusations from the Secretary of State's office, which is overseen by Republican gubernatorial candidate Brian Kemp. His office claimed without providing evidence that Democrats had tried to hack into the system. Democrats dismissed that as an effort to distract voters from a problem in a system he oversees.

Kemp is one of two Republicans who are overseeing elections this year while also running for governor. Former President Jimmy Carter is among those who have called for him to step down, but Kemp has in-

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sisted that he will continue to do the job while warning of the potential for voter fraud.

While experts have said voter fraud is exceedingly rare, Republicans have used it to justify strict voter ID laws, purging of voter rolls and other measures that make it more difficult to vote.

President Donald Trump has often cited voter fraud as a reason he lost the popular vote two years ago and has raised the issue during his recent campaigning. On Monday, he was asked what proof he had of people attempting to vote illegally in the midterms.

"All you have to do you is go around, take a look at what's happened over the years and you'll see," he said outside Air Force One on his way to a rally. "There are a lot of people, a lot of people, my opinion and based on proof, that try and get in illegally and actually vote illegally."

Nationally, some 6,500 poll watchers are being deployed by a coalition of civil rights and voting advocacy groups, including Common Cause, to assist people who encounter problems at the polls. That is more than double the number sent to polling places in 2016, while the number of federal election monitors has declined.

The U.S. Justice Department announced Monday that it is sending personnel to 35 jurisdictions in 19 states, which is less than the 67 jurisdictions in 28 states that received assistance in 2016.

Long reported from Washington.

Follow Christina Almeida Cassidy at http://twitter.com/AP_Christina and Colleen Long at <http://twitter.com/ctlong1>

Asian shares meander, oil lower ahead of US midterms vote

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Share prices are mixed in Asia as markets await the outcome of the U.S. midterm elections.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index jumped 1.0 percent to 22,104.37 and the Kospi in South Korea added 0.1 percent to 2,078.75. The Shanghai Composite index slipped 1.1 percent to 2,637.35 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged 0.2 percent lower to 25,894.70. Australia's S&P ASX 200 advanced 0.3 percent to 5,940.22. Shares fell in Taiwan but rose in Jakarta and Thailand. Markets were closed in Singapore for a public holiday.

ELECTION WATCH: Financial markets have been on a roller-coaster ride and the election Tuesday could roil things further. U.S. midterm elections, votes on lawmakers and other officials that fall between presidential elections, are often marked by low voter turnout. But political watchers are expecting voter angst over which party will control the U.S. House and Senate to drive more Americans to cast votes. Asia will be watching to see how the vote might influence U.S. trade and security policies.

ANALYST VIEWPOINT: "The markets are understandably jumpy given the next 48 hours of headline risk," Stephen Innes of OANDA said in a commentary. But ultimately it's unlikely any asset market will venture out of current boundaries given the plethora of risk events facing traders over the next day to two. There is absolutely no incentive to press the edges today whatsoever."

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks mostly rose Monday as financial and health care companies finished higher, while Apple and other technology companies fell further. Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, which owns GEICO and other insurance businesses, led the rally in financial stocks after it reported strong results over the weekend. The S&P 500 index added 0.6 percent to 2,738.31. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.8 percent to 25,461.70, but the Nasdaq composite sank 0.4 percent, to 7,328.85. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks slipped 0.47 point to 1,547.51.

CHINA-U.S. TRADE: Keeping hopes alight for a resolution of a punishing trade war between the two biggest economies, a Chinese vice president, Wang Qishan, said at a conference in Singapore that Beijing is ready to discuss issues with the Trump administration. That followed positive assessments by both Chinese officials and President Donald Trump of a phone conversation last week between Trump and China's

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President Xi Jinping.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude slipped 13 cents to \$62.97 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost 4 cents to \$63.10 a barrel on Monday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, dropped 27 cents to \$72.90 per barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 113.32 yen from 113.20 yen. The euro slipped to \$1.1403 from \$1.1408.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay contributed. He can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 6, the 310th day of 2018. There are 55 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 6, 1860, former Illinois congressman Abraham Lincoln of the Republican Party was elected President of the United States as he defeated John Breckinridge, John Bell and Stephen Douglas.

On this date:

In 1861, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was elected to a six-year term of office.

In 1893, composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky died in St. Petersburg, Russia, at age 53.

In 1906, Republican Charles Evans Hughes was elected governor of New York, defeating newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower won re-election, defeating Democrat Adlai E. Stevenson.

In 1962, Democrat Edward M. Kennedy was elected Senator from Massachusetts.

In 1977, 39 people were killed when the Kelly Barnes Dam in Georgia burst, sending a wall of water through Toccoa Falls College.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan won re-election by a landslide over former Vice President Walter Mondale, the Democratic challenger.

In 1986, former Navy radioman John A. Walker Jr., the admitted head of a family spy ring, was sentenced in Baltimore to life imprisonment. (Walker died in prison in 2014 at age 77.)

In 1990, about one-fifth of the Universal Studios backlot in southern California was destroyed in an arson fire.

In 1995, funeral services were held in Jerusalem for assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

In 1997, former President George H.W. Bush opened his presidential library at Texas A&M University; among the guests of honor was President Clinton, the man who'd sent him into retirement.

In 2001, billionaire Republican Michael Bloomberg won New York City's mayoral race, defeating Democrat Mark Green.

Ten years ago: President-elect Barack Obama spoke by phone with nine world leaders and met privately at the FBI office in Chicago with U.S. intelligence officials, preparing to become commander in chief.

Five years ago: Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, testifying before the Senate Finance Committee on the nation's health care law, was blistered by Republicans who bluntly challenged her honesty, pushed for her resignation and demanded unsuccessfully that she concede President Barack Obama had deliberately misled the public about his signature domestic program. At the Country Music Association Awards, Miranda Lambert won her fourth straight female vocalist of the year award while her husband, Blake Shelton, won album of the year and male vocalist — a category he also won for the fourth year in a row.

One year ago: President Donald Trump told reporters in Tokyo that North Korea was "a threat to the civilized world." The Television Academy became the latest movie or TV organization to expel Harvey Weinstein. Former Democratic congressman Anthony Weiner reported to prison in Massachusetts to begin a 21-month sentence for sexting with a 15-year-old girl. The Air Force acknowledged that it had failed to report to the FBI that Devin Patrick Kelley, the gunman who killed more than two dozen people at a Texas

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church, had been convicted of domestic violence at an Air Force court-martial in 2012.

Today's Birthdays: Actress June Squibb is 89. Country singer Stonewall Jackson is 86. Singer P.J. Proby is 80. Actress Sally Field is 72. Singer Rory Block is 69. Jazz musician Arturo Sandoval is 69. TV host Catherine Crier is 64. News correspondent and former California first lady Maria Shriver is 63. Actress Lori Singer is 61. Actor Lance Kerwin is 58. Rock musician Paul Brindley (The Sundays) is 55. Former Education Secretary Arne Duncan is 54. Rock singer Corey Glover is 54. Actor Brad Grunberg is 54. Actor Peter DeLuise is 52. Actress Kelly Rutherford is 50. Actor Ethan Hawke is 48. Chef/TV judge Marcus Samuelsson is 48. Actress Thandie Newton is 46. Model-actress Rebecca Romijn (roh-MAYN') is 46. Actress Zoe McLellan is 44. Actress Nicole Dubuc is 40. Actress Taryn Manning is 40. Retired NBA star Lamar Odom is 39. Actress Patina Miller is 34. Actress Katie Leclere (LEH'-klehr) is 32. Singer-songwriter Ben Rector is 32. Singer-songwriter Robert Ellis is 30. Actress Emma Stone is 30. Actress Mercedes Kastner is 29.

Thought for Today: "Quotation is a serviceable substitute for wit." — Oscar Wilde (1854-1900).