

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 1 of 50

- 1- Blocker Construction Ad
- 1- Recycling Trailer
- 2- Stops signs moved on West 5th Ave
- 2- Groton Prairie Mixed League
- 2- Groton Care & Rehab Soup Supper Ad
- 3- CHS Foundation Announces \$1.5 Million Gift to Support SDSU Precision Agriculture Program
- 4- The season comes to an end for the No. 6 Wolves from the Central Region Tournament
- 5- December Climate Outlook Uncertain as El Nino Develops
- 6- National Precip December Forecast
- 7- National Temp. December Forecast
- 8- Receiver of 19 Skyline South Dakota Skilled Nursing Facilities Proposes Plan to Close Two Facilities
- 9- Proposed Nursing Home Closures in Madison and Mobridge Point to Continued Lack of Adequate Funding
- 10- Today in Weather History
- 11- Today's Forecast
- 12- Yesterday's Weather
- 12- National Weather map
- 12- Today's Weather Almanac
- 13- Daily Devotional
- 14- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 15- News from the Associated Press

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Friday, November 16, 2018

Debate & Oral Interp, McGovern at Mitchell High School

LifeTouch Retake Pictures at Groton Area Schools

Saturday, November 17, 2018

Debate & Oral Interp, McGovern at Mitchell High School

Robotics at Harrisburg High School

Monday, November 19, 2018

5:00pm- 7:00pm: Family Night at GHS Gymnasium
7:00pm: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

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



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 2 of 50

Groton Prairie Mixed League

Team Standings: Coyotes 28 ½, Foxes 23 ½, Shih Tzus 19 ½, Cheetahs 18, Jackelopes 18, Chipmunks 10 ½

Men's High Games: Roger Spanier 198, Randy Stanley 192, Tony Madsen 184

Women's High Games: Nicole Kassube 187, Vicki Walter 169, 166, 162, Darci Spanier 157, Lori Wiley 157

Men's High Series: Randy Stanley 558, Brad Waage 522, Doug Jorgensen 522

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter 497, Nicole Kassube 450, Darci Spanier 434



Stops signs moved on West 5th Ave

The stop signs that used to control traffic on West Fifth Avenue at Washington St. were moved yesterday. They now control traffic on Washington St. at the West Fifth Avenue intersection.



Thursday,
Nov. 29
5:30 p.m.
to 6:30 p.m.

Groton Care & Rehab

1106 N 2nd St, Groton

Free Will Donation

CHS Foundation Announces \$1.5 Million Gift to Support SDSU Precision Agriculture Program

BROOKINGS, S.D. – The CHS Foundation, funded by charitable gifts from CHS Inc., announced today a \$1.5 million grant to support the South Dakota State University precision agriculture program and construction of the new Raven Precision Agriculture Center on campus.

“The gift from the CHS Foundation is pivotal in allowing us to make our globally preeminent precision agriculture program a reality,” says John Killefer, the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council Endowed Dean of the SDSU College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

The gift aligns with CHS priorities around ensuring that educating the next generation of agricultural leadership includes technology and tradition.

“The CHS Foundation is committed to supporting projects that cultivate opportunity for students interested in the agriculture industry,” says Nanci Lilja, president, CHS Foundation. “By supporting the precision ag program at SDSU, there will be more qualified graduates entering the agriculture industry.”

SDSU is the nation’s first land-grant university to offer a bachelor’s degree and minor in precision agriculture. The degree is a collaborative effort encompassing the Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering Department and the Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science Department in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, as well as the Jerome J. Lohr College of Engineering.

SDSU’s precision agriculture degree will provide students with access to cutting-edge developments in the rapidly evolving intersection of agronomics, high-speed sensor technology, data management and advanced machinery development. Students will be prepared for lifelong careers that support economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture.

This facility will allow the state to lead the nation in precision agriculture research, teaching and innovation.

“The gift in support of the Raven Precision Agriculture Center will positively impact our students and industry for decades to come,” says Killefer. “This commitment from the CHS Foundation illustrates the leadership role and vision they have within the agricultural industry.”

The building has 129,000 square feet of floor space that will be able to house modern precision farm equipment and will provide collaborative learning spaces for student design projects. Flexible space will give scientists from a variety of departments and industry space to collaborate on research and education.

“Precision agriculture technology is ever-changing,” says Lilja. “It’s exciting to envision the impact students will have by developing new technologies through collaboration with their peers and industry leaders in this new environment.”

Final construction plans are in-progress. Some ground work is expected to begin this fall, with construction starting in the spring of 2019.

The season comes to an end for the No. 6 Wolves from the Central Region Tournament

Kearney, Neb. – The season ended on Thursday afternoon for the No. 6 Northern State University volleyball team as they fell to No. 8 Washburn in the opening round of the NCAA Central Region Tournament. The Wolves finish the year as the single season school record holders with 26 wins.

Washburn took the first set 25-9, however the Wolves sharpened things up and bounced back for 25-23 and 25-21 victories in the second and third. The fourth set went down to the wire, with Northern falling 25-23. The Wolves had the match in the grasp with an 8-6 lead in the fifth, but things slipped away late in the set, as they dropped it with a score of 15-12.

The Wolves hit .172 in the match, notching 58 kills, 55 assists, 74 digs, 18.0 blocks, and two aces. NSU hit match highs .353 and .333 in the second and third sets, and more than doubled the Ichabod's block total.

Hailey Busch led the team with 20 kills, averaging 4.00 per set. She was followed by freshman Sally Gaul with a career high 18 kills in the match. Gaul also led the team hitting at .350 clip. She was a spark for the Wolves in the later sets, recording eight of the team's 17 kills in the fourth. The pair combined for 38 of the team's 58 kills in the loss.

Jenna Reiff and Laura Snyder added seven kills apiece, while Morgan Baufield notched five and Ashley Rozell added one. Rozell tallied 46 total assists, bringing her season total to 1375. She also added a team high two aces, as well as five blocks and 12 digs.

Jaiden Langlie led five Wolves with double figure digs, notching 19 in the match. She was followed by Busch with 13, and Bry Goar and Lexi Boesl with 12 and 11 respectively. Baufield led the team at the net with nine blocks, while Reiff tallied eight. Gaul added five blocks of her own, and Busch and Snyder each recorded four.

The Wolves conclude the season with a 26-5 record overall with numerous milestones reached. NSU won the first conference championship in program history, named five to the All-NSIC teams, and was led by the NSIC Coach of the Year, Brent Aldridge. Northern State seniors Hailey Busch, Lexi Lockhart, and Alyssa Deobler wore the Wolves uniform for the final time in their careers, after leading the program to new heights.

Broton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 5 of 50

December Climate Outlook Uncertain as El Nino Develops

BROOKINGS, S.D. - As El Niño develops in the Pacific Ocean, the month ahead proves to be challenging for climate forecasters, said Laura Edwards, SDSU Extension State Climatologist.

"For South Dakota, there is an increased likelihood of wetter than average conditions in the western two-thirds of the state. However, the eastern one-third of South Dakota has equal chances of above, below or near normal precipitation in December," she said, pointing to the December Climate Outlook released November 15, 2018 by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center.

There is some confidence that a wetter pattern may affect the Rocky Mountains and just east of that region in the month ahead.

The temperature outlook, Edwards said, is less certain for the next several weeks. "A lot of attention has been paid to a developing El Niño in the Pacific Ocean, which has often brought warmer than average temperatures to the Northern Plains in December. This year, however, it is a weak El Niño, and other atmospheric patterns can affect our region as well," she said.

Currently, Edwards said climatologists are looking at the atmospheric pattern over the arctic. "The current pattern favors colder than average temperatures over South Dakota, which is contributing to lower confidence in the December outlook," she explained.

For December through February, the updated outlook indicates that El Niño may be a more significant player after December. "The temperature outlook for the next three months shows elevated chances of warmer than average temperatures overall," Edwards said.

She explained that this is consistent with a typical El Niño winter that South Dakota has experienced in the past. Current forecasts show it is about 80 percent likely to develop fully in the winter. One source of uncertainty, Edwards said, a weak El Niño event is forecasted.

"Wintertime snowfall or precipitation is generally not well correlated with El Nino in the Northern Plains region," she said. "This year's outlook is consistent with history, and is projecting equal chances of wetter, drier or near average precipitation for the next three months overall."

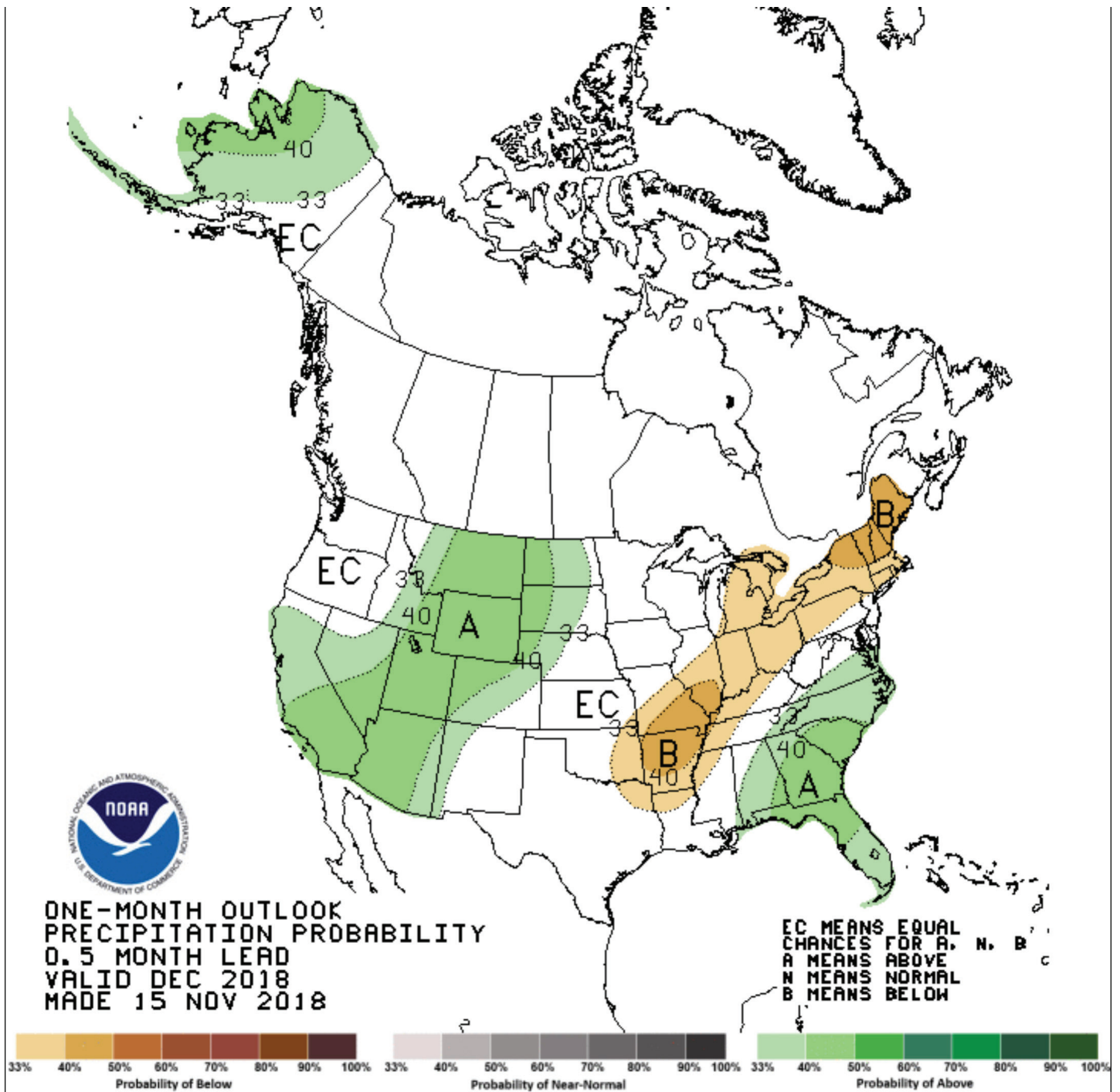
Frozen soils help with 2018 harvest

Fall harvest is still underway in South Dakota, particularly corn harvest.

Edwards said the recent drier, colder pattern has helped harvest progress in areas of the state where soils were too wet to run equipment. "Soil temperatures are cooling and frost depths for most locations are around four to six inches deep as of November 15," she said. "Frozen soils reduce mud and can ease the burden of heavy machinery on the field."

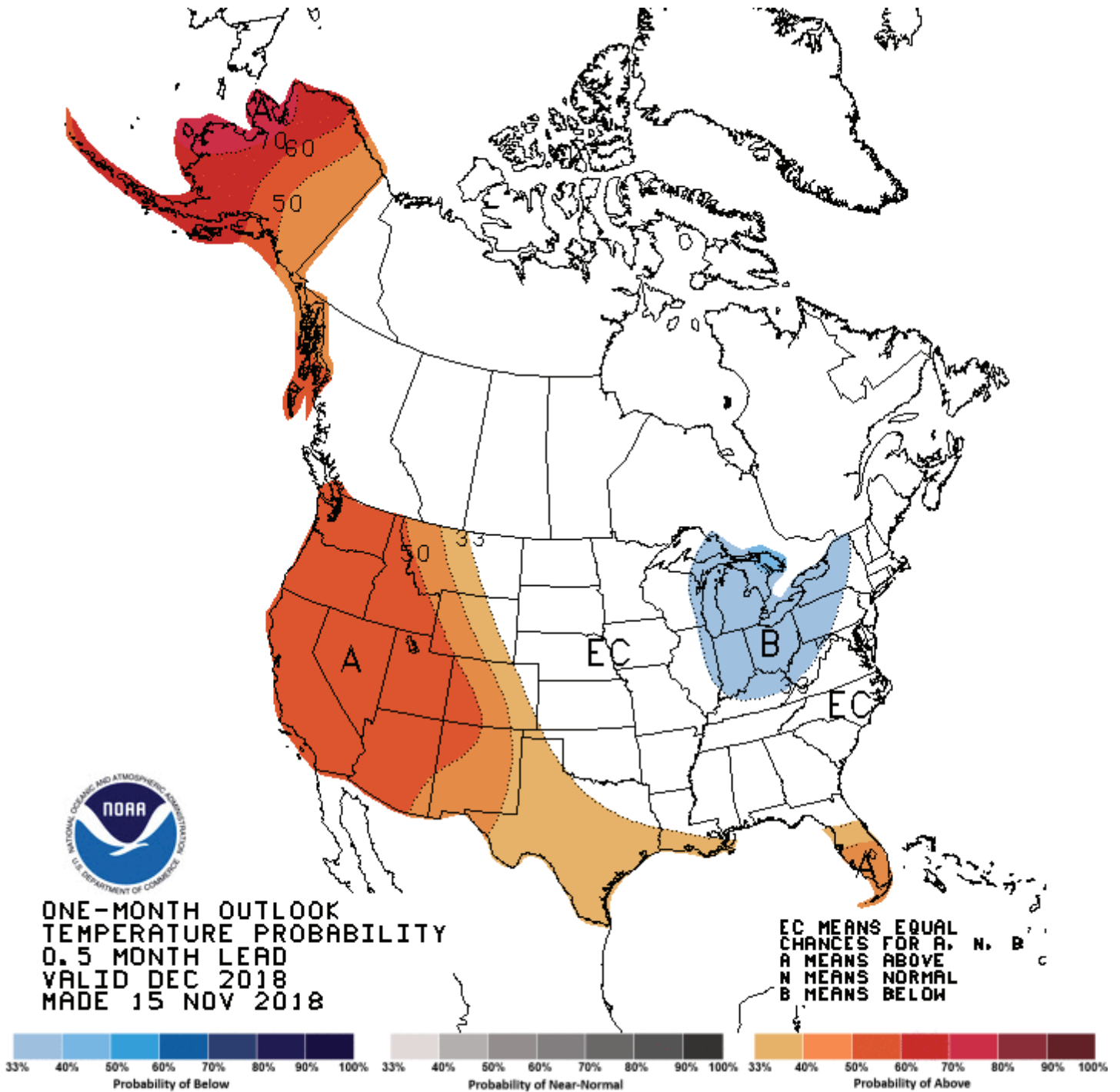
Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 6 of 50



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 7 of 50



Receiver of 19 Skyline South Dakota Skilled Nursing Facilities Proposes Plan to Close Two Facilities

The Court appointed Receiver for 19 skilled nursing facilities that were operated by Skyline Healthcare and its affiliates in South Dakota, Black Hills Receiver LLC, today announced that it has determined that it is in the best interest of the residents, under the circumstances, to carefully plan for and pursue closure of two skilled nursing facilities. After careful assessment and evaluation, the Receiver identified a projected lack of funds to operate these two facilities and, as a result, the Receiver has made the very difficult decision to propose a plan to close these skilled nursing facilities. If the request for closure is approved, the earliest date the facilities could close is January 31, 2019.

The Receiver has notified the Department of Health of the request to close the facilities and has submitted closure plans to ensure federal requirements are met.

The facilities proposed for closure are Madison Care and Rehabilitation Center, located at 718 NE 8 [th] Street, Madison, SD 57042 and Mobridge Care and Rehabilitation Center, located at 1100 4 [th] Ave. E., Mobridge, SD 57601. These two facilities have had the benefit of a great leadership team. The residents have been served by a dedicated staff that has worked tirelessly to provide quality healthcare services. Black Hills Receiver is sincerely appreciative of the Madison and Mobridge staff for their dedication to the residents of these facilities.

On May 1, Black Hills Receiver began to immediately stabilize the health and safety of the facilities' residents as well as provide payroll and other much needed support to the staff. Over the past six months, Black Hills Receiver has worked to provide operational support to the facilities, including coordinating the use of available funds from Medicare, Medicaid, and other payor sources to cover the necessary costs of providing care to the residents, paying the staff, purchasing medical supplies, and providing other necessary items and materials required for care. During this time, the Receiver has monitored the financial feasibility of operating the facilities in a long-term capacity. Unfortunately, the Receiver determined that these two nursing facilities will not generate enough income to cover all of the necessary operating expenses on a long-term basis. This means that it is not feasible to operate these two facilities going forward. Only after full assessment, consideration, and evaluation did the Receiver determine that proposing an organized plan for closure and closing the facilities is in the best interest of the residents, under the circumstances.

The Receiver will provide each facility with a detailed closure plan in an effort to make this transition as smooth as possible for the residents, their families and the employees. The Receiver values each and every resident and will explore the best future care setting with each of them individually, along with their families and personal physicians. The Receiver will also meet with each employee to explore alternative employment options available to them and work with community members to provide support during this transition.

Proposed Nursing Home Closures in Madison and Mobridge Point to Continued Lack of Adequate Funding

In response to the recent announcement from Black Hills Receiver proposing to close nursing homes in Madison and Mobridge, the South Dakota Health Care Association (SDHCA) strongly urges legislators to commit additional resources to adequately fund long term care in South Dakota during the upcoming legislative session.

The proposed closures in Madison and Mobridge are only the latest in a string of closures over the last few years, which includes homes in Tripp, Bryant, and Rosholt as well.

"It is very sad to learn of these latest proposed nursing home closings. This development only further proves the point that improved Medicaid funding for long term care is desperately needed," said Mark B. Deak, SDHCA Executive Director. "We are at a crisis point. It is critical we change course."

Inadequate reimbursement is a primary driver of the closures. If additional funding is not secured, more closures will almost certainly occur. In addition, South Dakota's aging population is projected to require more access to long-term care services in the future.

Medicaid reimbursement for nursing centers is currently at such a low level that centers lose an average of \$32.24 each day for each resident paying through Medicaid. A significant majority (57%) of the total resident population in nursing centers relies on Medicaid to pay for their care. This disparity fuels staffing challenges, including difficulty hiring caregivers and high turnover among nursing center staff.

"As our incoming Governor and legislature sets priorities for the coming year, caring for our elderly and disabled loved ones must be of primary importance," continued Deak. "We respectfully ask lawmakers in the strongest possible terms to support adequate funding for nursing centers, caregivers, and the elderly and disabled South Dakotans they serve."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 10 of 50

Today in Weather History

November 16, 1996: An area of low pressure brought 6 to 9 inches of snowfall to most of central and parts of north-central South Dakota on the 16th, while widespread freezing rain associated with the warm front of the system, along with 4 to 10 inches of snow, fell in northeast South Dakota. Travel was significantly affected, and a few minor accidents occurred during the storm. Several sporting events and activities were postponed or canceled. Strong north winds late on the 16th into early the 17th resulted in near-blizzard conditions across northeast South Dakota. Some storm total snowfall amounts include, 9.0 inches 12SSW of Harrold; 8.5 inches near Highmore; 8.2 inches in Roscoe; 8.0 in Eureka; 7.9 inches near Mellette; 7.0 inches in Waubay; 6.5 inches in Murdo and Redfield; 6.0 inches in Kennebec and Miller; 5.5 inches near Victor; and 5.3 inches in Sisseton.

1958 - More than six inches of snow fell at Tucson, AZ. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1959 - The most severe November cold wave in U.S. history was in progress. A weather observing station located 14 miles northeast of Lincoln MT reported a reading of 53 degrees below zero, which established an all-time record low temperature for the nation for the month of November. Their high that day was one degree above zero. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - High winds and heavy snow created blizzard conditions across parts of eastern Colorado. Wind gusts reached 68 mph at Pueblo, and snowfall totals ranged up to 37 inches at Echo Lake. In Wyoming, the temperature dipped to 14 degrees below zero at Laramie. Strong thunderstorms in Louisiana drenched Alexandria with 16.65 inches of rain in thirty hours, with an unofficial total of 21.21 inches north of Olla. Flash flooding in Louisiana caused five to six million dollars damage. (15th-16th) (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A powerful low pressure system in the north central U.S. produced high winds across the Great Lakes Region, with wind gusts to 60 mph reported at Chicago IL. Heavy snow blanketed much of Minnesota, with eleven inches reported at International Falls. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Snow and gusty winds invaded the north central U.S. Winds gusting to 40 mph produced wind chill readings as cold as 25 degrees below zero, and blizzard conditions were reported in Nebraska during the late morning hours. High winds around a powerful low pressure system produced squalls in the Great Lakes Region. Winds gusted to 63 mph at Whitefish Point MI, and snowfall totals in Michigan ranged up to 19 inches at Hart, north of Muskegon. (15th-16th) (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2006: An early morning F3 tornado killed eight people, injured 20 others and left 100 people homeless in Riegelwood, North Carolina. This storm was the second deadliest tornado in the state in the past 50 years.

Broton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 11 of 50

Winter Weather Advisory

Today

Tonight

Saturday

Saturday Night

Sunday



90%

Heavy Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow

High: 33 °F



70% → 20%

Snow Likely and Patchy Blowing Snow

Low: 8 °F



Sunny

High: 16 °F



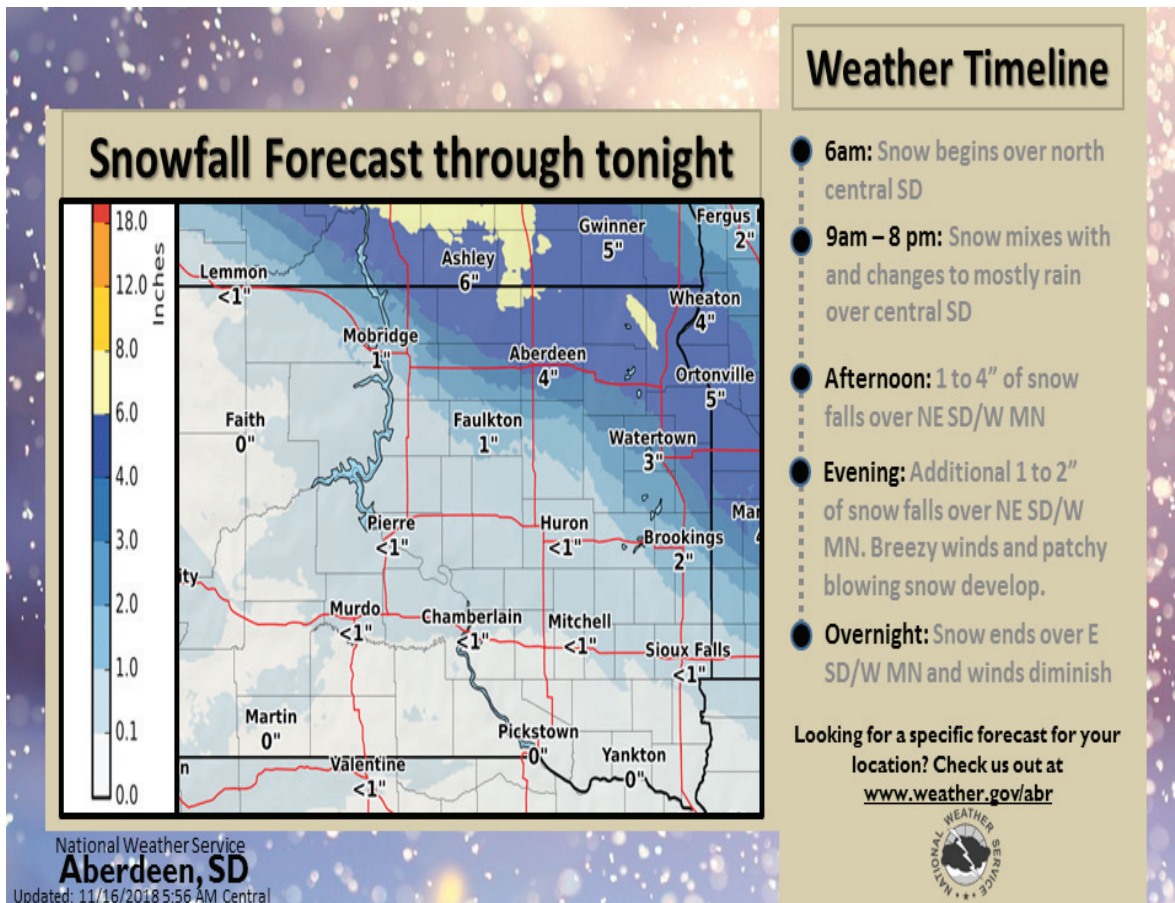
Mostly Clear

Low: 7 °F



Mostly Sunny

High: 31 °F



Published on: 11/16/2018 at 6:05AM

Light snow will slide into northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota from mid morning into this evening. Expect around 2 to 5 inches of snow to accumulate, before ending tonight. Warmer air will result in mainly rain, or a mix of rain and snow over much of central South Dakota. Breezy winds out of the north will bring in much colder air, and result in patchy blowing snow this evening (mainly after the evening commute). Latest forecast: www.weather.gov/abr

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 12 of 50

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 50 °F at 10:57 AM

Low Outside Temp: 27 °F at 7:51 AM

High Gust: 29 mph at 1:00 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 71° in 2001

Record Low: -12 in 1955

Average High: 39°F

Average Low: 19°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.41

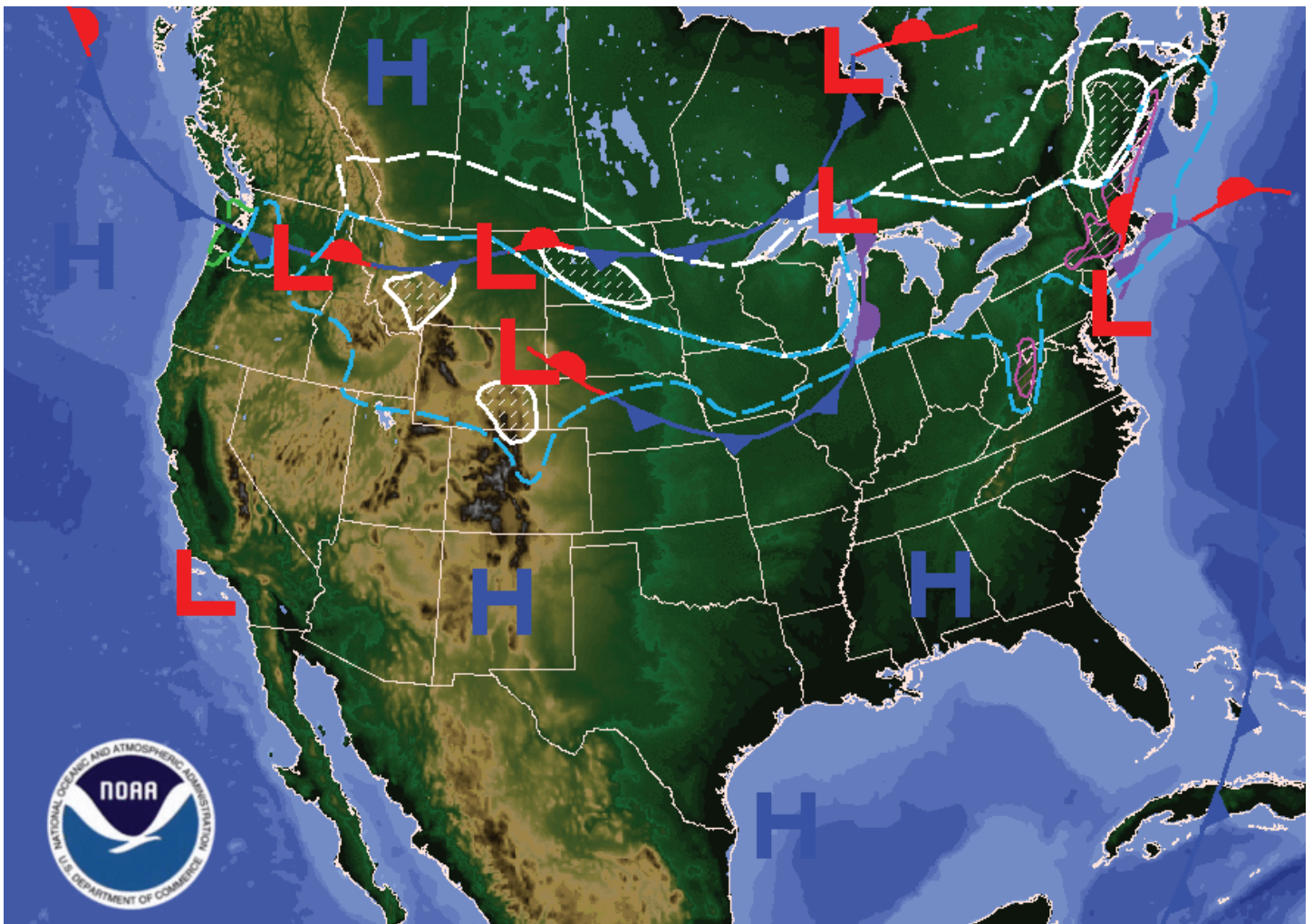
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.76

Average Precip to date: 20.88

Precip Year to Date: 15.81

Sunset Tonight: 5:03 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:35 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Nov 16, 2018, issued 4:51 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)



TRYING TO ESCAPE GOD

God seems to appear when we least expect Him. He certainly will not be confined within the walls of a church or restrained within the rituals of a religion. He is, after all, God the Creator, Sustainer, and Savior. He makes Himself known when and where and as He pleases.

Once, during the transatlantic crossing of a large ocean liner, a major storm erupted, breaking the silence of calm seas. A huge wave swept over the bow of the ship and swept a sailor into the raging waters. His cry for help went unheard.

But in Philadelphia, his Christian mother, who was sound asleep, suddenly awoke with an urgent desire to pray for him. Even though she was not aware of what had happened or his threatening situation, she prayed for his safety with urgency and intensity. She then returned to bed and fell asleep with peace in her heart.

Weeks later her son returned home, opened the door and shouted, Mother, Im saved! Then he described what had happened, how he had been swept overboard. As he was sinking in the swirling waves, he remembered thinking, Im lost forever! Then he remembered a hymn he once sang in church about looking to Jesus to be saved. He cried out, O God, I look to Jesus to be saved, and another wave swept him back onto the ship.

When he finished his story, his mother told her story. They then thanked God for the storm that saved his soul. As the Psalmist wrote, Pursue them with Your tempest and terrify them with your storm. Our God is amazing.

Prayer: Thank You, God, for what You are willing to do to save the lost. We will never understand Your love. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 83:15 Pursue them with Your tempest and terrify them with your storm.

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

South Dakota turkeys head to White House seeking pardons

HURON, S.D. (AP) — A pair of South Dakota turkeys will make their way to the nation's capital in the hopes of receiving presidential pardons and avoiding ending up as Thanksgiving dinner at the White House.

Tourism officials in the birds' hometown of Huron paraded the turkeys around the city on Wednesday as part of a formal send-off, the Daily Republic reported. Although the turkeys have been presented to presidents for about 70 years and have been receiving pardons since 1989, this is the first year South Dakota was chosen to present a gobbler.

The 40-pound birds were chosen from a flock of 50 plump candidates that were raised on a farm north of Huron, which is about 90 miles (145 kilometers) northwest of Sioux Falls. Turkey farmer Ruben Waldner, who requested the privilege of raising the birds, also assisted in picking the pair to present to the president.

"It took a little (time), because there were a lot of nice birds this year," Waldner said. "I look at how they are feathered, their personality, how they look and how they act. That was the main criteria in choosing these fellows."

On Saturday, Waldner will help escort the turkeys in an SUV on the 1,400-mile drive to the nation's capital. The birds are scheduled to arrive Sunday at a five-star hotel, the Willard InterContinental Hotel, where they'll be staying until the pardoning ceremony.

The turkeys, temporarily named Jeff and Ruben, will be "interviewed" at a press day on Monday. White House representatives will also select and announce the birds' official names, which will be chosen from a list of more than 600 suggestions from South Dakota residents.

"People had a good time with thinking about names and in less than a week, we received all these suggestions from the public, like Rushmore or Dakota," said Katlyn Richter, a South Dakota Department of Tourism spokeswoman.

President Donald Trump will likely pardon the turkeys during a Rose Garden ceremony Tuesday. From there, the birds will be brought to Gobbler's Rest, an agricultural outreach and educational facility at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia, where they can live out the rest of their years.

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

2 South Dakota nursing homes may close

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Two South Dakota nursing homes may be closing soon.

The company that took over management of nursing homes in Mobridge and Madison is taking steps to close them.

A representative for Black Hills Receiver LLC told Dakota Radio Group that Mobridge Care and Rehabilitation Center and Madison Care and Rehabilitation Center could close as early as Jan. 31.

In May, Black Hills Receiver took control of 18 nursing homes and one assisted living center in South Dakota operated by Skyline Healthcare. Black Hills Receiver says it's determined those two facilities won't generate enough income to cover operating expenses long-term.

The receiver has notified the state Department of Health and submitted closure plans. Residents will get advance notice of their transfer date and proposed transfer location.

Other facilities will remain open.

Information from: KGFX-AM, <http://www.drgnews.com/>

Survey: Rural economy being hurt by tariffs, low prices

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — For the first time this year, a monthly survey of bankers in parts of 10 Plains and Western states indicates the regional rural economy is shrinking.

The overall index of the Rural Mainstreet survey for November sank to 49.9, the first time it's dipped below 50 since January and down from October's 54.3. Any score above 50 suggests a growing economy in the months ahead, while a score below 50 indicates a shrinking economy.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss says the farm sector continues to be weakened by tariffs and low commodity prices.

Jeffrey Gerhart, CEO of the Bank of Newman Grove in northeastern Nebraska, says the tariffs are affecting farmers' income and are "bad policy from the White House."

Bankers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming were surveyed.

South Dakota Supreme Court rejects Dollar Loan Center appeal

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's Supreme Court has rejected an appeal from Dollar Loan Center over whether the short-term lender could bring its case to a circuit judge.

The high court said in an opinion publicly released Thursday that Dollar Loan Center must first go through an administrative review.

The legal dispute came after voters in 2016 limited interest charged by payday and auto title lenders to 36 percent annually. But Dollar Loan Center began offering a new product that the state found had interest rates between 300 and 487 percent after factoring in late fees.

KELO-TV reports the state ordered Dollar Loan Center to stop offering the loans and set a hearing. Before the hearing, the company brought the issue to court.

The Supreme Court ruling affirmed that Dollar Loan Center didn't exhaust administrative remedies available.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

Sioux Falls man accused of abusing 3 dating back to 2003

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man is accused of sexually abusing three girls dating back 15 years.

Bond for the 61-year-old man was set at \$100,000 cash during an appearance in Minnehaha County court Wednesday. He's accused of 12 charges of rape, aggravated incest and sexual contact with a child under 16.

The Argus Leader reports the three females, now in their teens or 20s, told investigators they were inappropriately touched multiple times when they were as young as 4 years old. Court documents say staff at one of the victims' school alerted law enforcement that they were concerned the girl may have been sexually abused.

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

South Dakota US Sen. John Thune elected majority whip

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota U.S. Sen. John Thune has climbed to the second-highest rung on the Senate Republican leadership ladder with a promotion to majority whip.

Thune had served in the No. 3 leadership post as chairman of the Senate Republican Conference since 2012.

A term limit for majority whips forced Texas Sen. John Cornyn out of the job. Thune was unopposed for the position and was elected by his Senate colleagues.

Whips are responsible for counting heads and rounding up party members for votes and quorum calls,

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 17 of 50

and they occasionally stand in for the majority or minority leaders in their absence. The majority whip ranks behind only the majority leader among the leadership positions to which senators are elected by their colleagues.

The term "whip" is a reference to the member of a British hunting team who would ensure the dogs did not stray from the rest of the group. Thune acknowledged that keeping the narrow Republican majority together on controversial votes can be a challenge.

"When you've got a conference that has people on different ends of the spectrum like Ted Cruz and Susan Collins, it creates challenges," he said, noting the differences between the conservative Texan Cruz and the moderate Collins, who is from Maine.

Thune will relinquish his chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation to serve as whip.

Thune served in the U.S. House from 1997 to 2003 before beginning his service in the U.S. Senate in 2005. He is currently serving his third term.

Capitol flags to fly at half-staff to honor former lawmaker

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard is ordering flags to fly at half-staff at the state Capitol on Monday to honor former South Dakota House Speaker Roger Hunt.

Hunt died Friday following complications from surgery. He was 80. His funeral is Monday morning at Central Church in Sioux Falls.

Hunt served one term as speaker during his 20 years in the House. He championed conservative causes, including sponsoring bills to restrict abortion. Daugaard says Hunt was a gentleman and "true public servant."

Upper Midwest Guard soldiers return from Afghanistan

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — National Guard soldiers from the Upper Midwest who served almost a year of duty in Afghanistan are back home in time for Thanksgiving.

About 15 members of the North Dakota Army National Guard's 191st Military Police Company returned home Wednesday. More will come back next month.

The soldiers are from 20 communities in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota.

Late-season crop harvests progress in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's soybean harvest is nearly wrapped up, and the corn and sorghum harvests have reached about three-fourths complete.

The federal Agriculture Department in its weekly crop report says 96 percent of soybeans, 75 percent of sorghum, 71 percent of corn and 55 percent of sunflowers are harvested. All are behind the average pace.

Ninety-two percent of the state's winter wheat crop has emerged.

Subsoil moisture is rated 70 percent adequate to surplus, and topsoil moisture is 89 percent in those categories.

Pasture and range conditions are rated 47 percent in good to excellent condition, unchanged the week.

10 Things to Know for Today

The Associated Press

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

1. PARADISE LOST

In a matter of hours last week, the town of 27,000 in California disappeared — it literally went up in smoke in the deadliest, most destructive wildfire in state history. Memories are all that's left for many of the survivors.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 18 of 50

2. THE DEATH TOLL KEEPS RISING

At least 63 are now dead from a Northern California wildfire, and officials say they have a missing persons list with 631 names on it in an ever-evolving accounting of the missing.

3. WHERE A NEW VOTE MIGHT HAPPEN

Democrat Stacey Abrams is considering an unprecedented legal challenge in the unresolved Georgia governor's race that could leave the state's Supreme Court deciding whether to force another round of voting, the AP learns.

4. WHICH FORMER HACKER MAY FACE U.S. INDICTMENT

Possible charges against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange may help clarify whether Russia coordinated with the Trump campaign to sway the 2016 presidential election.

5. HAND RECOUNT COMING IN FLORIDA SENATE CONTEST

An initial review by ballot-counting machines showed Republican Gov. Rick Scott and Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson separated by less than 13,000 votes.

6. WHITHER GOES BREXIT?

Prime Minister Theresa May is battling to save her Brexit plan, and her job, after the draft withdrawal agreement between Britain and the EU sparked fierce opposition from some politicians in her Conservative Party.

7. A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Nearly 2,000 caravan migrants have reached the U.S. border in Mexico's northwestern corner, with prospects growing that they would be stuck waiting in Tijuana for months.

8. NORTH KOREA TO DEPORT AMERICAN

Pyongyang said that it will deport an American citizen it detained for illegally entering the country recently as it boasted of a new unspecified "ultramodern" weapon.

9. GENOCIDE VERDICT FOR "THE KILLING FIELDS"

The last surviving leaders of the communist Khmer Rouge regime that brutally ruled Cambodia in the 1970s have been convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes by an international tribunal.

10. YOU PAID HOW MUCH?

A painting by the British artist David Hockney fetched \$90.3 million at Christie's, easily breaking the record for a work by a living artist sold at auction.

WikiLeaks chief could see charges, US court filing suggests

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department inadvertently named Julian Assange in a court filing in an unrelated case that suggests prosecutors have prepared charges against the WikiLeaks founder under seal.

Assange's name appears twice in an August court filing from a federal prosecutor in Virginia, who was attempting to keep sealed a separate case involving a man accused of coercing a minor for sex.

In one sentence, the prosecutor wrote that the charges and arrest warrant "would need to remain sealed until Assange is arrested in connection with the charges in the criminal complaint and can therefore no longer evade or avoid arrest and extradition in this matter." In another sentence, the prosecutor said that "due to the sophistication of the defendant and the publicity surrounding the case, no other procedure is likely to keep confidential the fact that Assange has been charged."

Any charges against Assange could help illuminate the question of whether Russia coordinated with the Trump campaign to sway the 2016 presidential election. It would also suggest that, after years of internal wrangling within the Justice Department, prosecutors have decided to take a more aggressive tact against the secret-sharing website.

It was not immediately clear why Assange's name was included in the document, though Joshua Stueve, a spokesman for the Eastern District of Virginia — which had been investigating Assange — said, "The court filing was made in error. That was not the intended name for this filing."

The Washington Post reported late Thursday, citing people familiar with the matter, that Assange had

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 19 of 50

indeed been charged. The Associated Press could not immediately confirm that.

It was not immediately clear what charges Assange, who has been holed up for years in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, might face.

But recently ousted Attorney General Jeff Sessions last year declared the arrest of Assange a priority. Special counsel Robert Mueller has been investigating whether Trump campaign associates had advance knowledge of Democratic emails that were published by WikiLeaks in the weeks before the 2016 election and that U.S. authorities have said were hacked by Russia. Any arrest could represent a significant development for Mueller's investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to influence the election.

Barry Pollack, a lawyer for Assange, told the AP earlier this week that he had no information about possible charges against Assange.

In a new statement, he said, "The news that criminal charges have apparently been filed against Mr. Assange is even more troubling than the haphazard manner in which that information has been revealed. The government bringing criminal charges against someone for publishing truthful information is a dangerous path for a democracy to take."

The filing was discovered by Seamus Hughes, a terrorism expert at the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, who posted it on Twitter hours after The Wall Street Journal reported that the Justice Department was preparing to prosecute Assange and said, "To be clear, seems Freudian, it's for a different completely unrelated case, every other page is not related to him, EDVA just appears to have assange on the mind when filing motions to seal and used his name."

Assange, 47, has resided in the Ecuadorian Embassy for more than six years in a bid to avoid being extradited to Sweden, where he was wanted to sex crimes, or to the United States, whose government he has repeatedly humbled with mass disclosures of classified information.

The Australian ex-hacker was once a welcome guest at the Embassy, which takes up part of the ground floor of a stucco-fronted apartment in London's posh Knightsbridge neighborhood. But his relationship with his hosts has soured over the years amid reports of espionage, erratic behavior and diplomatic unease.

Any criminal charge is sure to further complicate the already tense relationship.

Ecuadorian officials say they have already cut off the WikiLeaks founder's internet, saying it will be restored only if he agrees to stop interfering in the affairs of Ecuador's partners - notably the United States and Spain. Officials have also imposed a series of other restrictions on Assange's activities and visitors and - notably - ordered him to clean after his cat.

With shrinking options — an Ecuadorian lawsuit seeking to reverse the restrictions was recently turned down — WikiLeaks announced in September that former spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson, an Icelandic journalist who has long served as one of Assange's lieutenants, would take over as editor-in-chief.

WikiLeaks has attracted U.S. attention since 2010, when it published thousands of military and State Department documents from Army Pvt. Chelsea Manning. In a Twitter post early Friday, WikiLeaks said the "US case against WikiLeaks started in 2010" and expanded to include other disclosures, including by contractor Edward Snowden.

"The prosecutor on the order is not from Mr. Mueller's team and WikiLeaks has never been contacted by anyone from his office," WikiLeaks said.

Associated Press writer Raphael Satter in Paris contributed to this report.

This story has been updated to clarify in first paragraph that the court filing suggested prosecutors had prepared charges against Assange

Florida: bitter US Senate race headed to a hand recount

By GARY FINEOUT and BRENDAN FARRINGTON, Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Florida's acrimonious U.S. Senate contest is headed to a legally required hand recount after an initial review by ballot-counting machines showed Republican Gov. Rick Scott and Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson separated by fewer than 13,000 votes.

The contest for governor between Republican Ron DeSantis and Democrat Andrew Gillum appeared all but over Thursday, with a machine recount showing DeSantis with a large enough advantage over Gillum to avoid a hand recount in that race.

Gillum, who conceded on Election Night only to retract his concession later, said in a statement that "it is not over until every legally casted vote is counted."

The recount has been fraught with problems. One large Democratic stronghold in South Florida was unable to finish its machine recount by the Thursday deadline due to machines breaking down. A federal judge rejected a request to extend the recount deadline.

"We gave a heroic effort," said Palm Beach Supervisor of Elections Susan Bucher. If the county had three or four more hours, it would have made the deadline to recount ballots in the Senate race, she said.

Meanwhile, election officials in another urban county in the Tampa Bay area decided against turning in the results of their machine recount, which came up with 846 fewer votes than originally counted. And media in South Florida reported that Broward County finished its machine recount but missed the deadline by a few minutes.

Counties were ordered this past weekend to conduct a machine recount of three statewide races because the margins were so tight. The next stage is a manual review of ballots that were not counted by machines to see if there is a way to figure out voter intent.

Scott called on Nelson to end the recount battle.

It's time for Nelson "to respect the will of the voters and graciously bring this process to an end rather than proceed with yet another count of the votes — which will yield the same result and bring more embarrassment to the state that we both love and have served," the governor's statement said.

Six election-related lawsuits are pending in federal court in Tallahassee, and at least one in state court.

The situation drew the ire of U.S. District Judge Mark Walker, who slammed the state for repeatedly failing to anticipate election problems. He also said the state law on recounts appears to violate the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that decided the presidency in 2000.

"We have been the laughingstock of the world, election after election, and we chose not to fix this," Walker said at a hearing Thursday.

Walker vented his anger at state lawmakers and Palm Beach County officials, saying they should have made sure they had the equipment to handle this kind of a recount. But he said he couldn't extend the recount deadline because he didn't know when Palm Beach County would finish its work.

The overarching problem was created by the Florida Legislature, which Walker said passed a recount law that appears to run afoul of the 2000 Bush v. Gore decision, by locking in procedures that do not allow for potential problems.

Walker also ordered that voters be given until 5 p.m. Saturday to show a valid identification and fix their ballots if they haven't been counted due to mismatched signatures. Republicans challenged this order and were turned down by an appeals court.

State officials testified that nearly 4,000 mailed-in ballots were set aside because local officials decided the signatures on the envelopes did not match the signatures on file. If those voters can prove their identity, their votes will now be counted and included in final official returns due from each county by noon Sunday.

Walker was asked by Democrats to require local officials to provide a list of people whose ballots were rejected. But the judge refused the request as "inappropriate."

Under state law, a hand review is required when the victory margin is 0.25 percentage points or less. A state website's unofficial results show Scott ahead of Nelson by 0.15 percentage points. The margin between DeSantis and Gillum was 0.41 percent.

The margin between Scott and Nelson had not changed much in the last few days, conceded Marc

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 21 of 50

Elias, an attorney working for Nelson's campaign. But he said that he expects it to shrink due to the hand recount and the ruling on signatures.

Democrats want state officials to do whatever it takes to make sure every eligible vote is counted. Republicans, including President Donald Trump, have argued without evidence that voter fraud threatens to steal races from the GOP.

Associated Press writers Tamara Lush in St. Petersburg and Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale contributed to this report.

Only on AP: Abrams prepares push for new Georgia Gov. vote

By **BILL BARROW** and **KATE BRUMBACK**, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Stacey Abrams' campaign and legal team is preparing an unprecedented legal challenge in the unresolved Georgia governor's race that could leave the state's Supreme Court deciding whether to force another round of voting.

The Democrat's longshot strategy relies on a statute that's never been used in such a high-stakes contest. It is being discussed as Georgia elections officials appear to be on the cusp of certifying Republican Brian Kemp as the winner of a bitterly fought campaign that's been marred by charges of electoral malfeasance.

Top Abrams advisers outlined her prospective case to The Associated Press, stressing that the Democratic candidate hasn't finalized a decision about whether to proceed once state officials certify Kemp as the victor. That could happen as early as Friday evening.

Allegra Lawrence-Hardy, Abrams' campaign chairwoman, is overseeing a team of almost three-dozen lawyers who in the coming days will draft the petition, along with a ream of affidavits from voters and would-be voters who say they were disenfranchised. Abrams would then decide whether to go to court under a provision of Georgia election law that allows losing candidates to challenge results based on "misconduct, fraud or irregularities ... sufficient to change or place in doubt the results."

The legal team is "considering all options," Lawrence-Hardy said, including federal court remedies. But the state challenge is the most drastic. And some Democratic legal observers note Abrams would be dependent on statutes that set a high bar for the court to intervene.

She already faces a narrow path to the governor's mansion. Unofficial returns show Kemp with about 50.2 percent of more than 3.9 million votes. That puts him about 18,000 votes above the threshold required to win by a majority and avoid a Dec. 4 runoff. The Associated Press is not calling the race until state officials certify the results.

Abrams would assert that enough irregularities occurred to raise the possibility that at least 18,000 Georgians either had their ballots thrown out or were not allowed to vote.

Lawrence-Hardy told the AP that Abrams will weigh legal considerations alongside her belief that many of her backers — particularly minority and poorer voters who don't regularly go to the polls — heeded her call to participate and ran into barriers.

"These stories to me are such that they have to be addressed," said Lawrence-Hardy, who was among the army of lawyers who worked on the Bush v. Gore presidential election dispute in 2000. "It's just a much bigger responsibility. I feel like our mandate has blossomed. ... Maybe this is our moment."

Kemp, who served as the state's chief elections officer until two days after the election when he resigned as secretary of state and declared victory, has maintained that any uncounted ballots won't change the outcome. His campaign has called Abrams' legal maneuvers so far a "disgrace to democracy" and an attempt to "count illegal votes."

The circumstances leave Abrams, a 44-year-old rising Democratic star, with a tough decision. The former state lawmaker became a national political celebrity with her bid to become the first black woman in American history to be elected governor. Her strategy of running as an unapologetic liberal who attracts new voters to the polls resonated in a rapidly changing state. Yet Abrams also must consider her own political future and the consequences of a protracted legal fight she might not win.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 22 of 50

All of that is playing out against the backdrop of Kemp's unabashed embrace of President Donald Trump's nationalism.

Since Election Day, Abrams campaign workers have transitioned from get-out-the-vote efforts to helping voters determine whether their ballots were counted and documenting reported problems. The idea is to assemble a body of evidence to support the claim that the problems could account for Kemp's 18,000-vote margin above the runoff trigger.

Affidavits from poll workers reviewed by the AP describe long lines that discouraged people from voting, poll workers failing to offer provisional ballots to people who didn't show up on the rolls or were at the wrong polling place and election equipment that froze and had to be rebooted.

Cathy Cox, a Democrat who served as secretary of state from 1999 through 2007 and is now the dean of Mercer University's law school, said Georgia law puts a heavy burden on candidates such as Abrams who ask a court to intervene.

"I would say with pretty great confidence there has probably never been an election ... without some irregularity, where some poll worker did not make some mistake," Cox said in an interview. The key, she said, is proving someone erred to the point that it could change the outcome.

Lawrence-Hardy agreed the law requires a quantitative analysis. She said Abrams' team doesn't have a list of 18,000 disenfranchised voters. The evidence, she said, would consist of hundreds, if not thousands of such examples, along with data analysis of projected lost votes based on other problems, such as a lack of paper ballots at precincts where voting machines broke down and voters left long lines.

Cox said courts must attempt to apply a nonpartisan standard of "doubt" to the election. "Would a reasonable person have a reason to doubt this election? Not would a hard-core partisan Democrat doubt a partisan Republican opponent," she said.

Abrams and voting rights activists have argued for months that Kemp mismanaged the elections system as secretary of state, with Abrams often calling Kemp "an architect of suppression."

Under Georgia law, Abrams could file a challenge against Kemp or his successor as the secretary of state. The challenge must be filed within five days of certification in a trial court of the county where the chosen defendant resides. The defendant has between five and 10 days to respond, and the presiding judge sets a hearing within 20 days after that deadline, a calendar that could push a dispute well beyond what would have been a Dec. 4 runoff.

If the judge determines the election is so defective that it casts doubt on the results, the judge can declare the election invalid and call a new vote among the same candidates. Cox called that "the real extreme remedy."

A more "surgical" course, she said, would be to affirm irregularities but only order that certified results be reopened and recertified once those problems are remedied. The judge could then declare a winner or order a runoff if the results are close enough.

The judge could also declare a winner after hearing the evidence, but Cox said that's unlikely because the case will probably hinge on uncounted votes and there's no way to know before a count which candidate won those votes.

Once the judge rules, the loser has 10 days to appeal to the Georgia Supreme Court.

Follow Barrow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP> and Brumback at <https://twitter.com/kate-brumback>.

Remembering the sweet life of a town wiped out by wildfire

By MARTHA MENDOZA, Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. (AP) — There's a sweet legend about this town: On a blazing summer day in the 1850s, a lumber mill crew with wagon and ox took a break under a grove of tall evergreens. The air was cool, the pine needles fragrant.

"Boys," said the team boss, "this is paradise."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 23 of 50

Thus, more than 170 years ago, Paradise was born. From the start, it was enriched with gold mined from nearby hills and lumber harvested from the forests. Over generations, thousands lived and loved here; they built homes and businesses, schools and houses of worship, parks and museums that proudly honored Paradise's place in American history.

In a matter of hours last week, it all disappeared.

Nearly 9,000 homes. Hundreds of shops and other buildings. The Safeway supermarket. The hardware store. The Dolly-O-Donuts & Gifts, where locals started their day with a blueberry fritter and a quick bit of gossip.

This town of 27,000 literally went up in smoke in the deadliest, most destructive wildfire in California history. The death toll, for now, is 63, but many more are missing. And memories are all that's left for many of the survivors.

Driving past the smoldering ruins of downtown, Patrick Knuthson, a 49-year-old, fourth-generation local, struggled to make sense of what he was seeing. He pointed out places that once were, and were no more: a saloon-style pub, his favorite Mexican restaurant, a classic California motel, the pawn shop, a real estate office, a liquor store, the thrift center and auto repair shop, the remodeled Jack in the Box burger outlet, entire trailer parks.

At the ruined Gold Nugget Museum, the ground was crunchy and hot, a few birds chirped nearby, and a half dozen soot-covered deer stood eerily still under a blackened tree.

Paradise was a town where families put down roots, and visitors opted to stay. Children could bike to the park, go fishing in the town pond, shoot bows and arrows at the nearby archery range. As they got older, they'd kayak in the canyons or hike in the forests after school.

"We could tell the kids to go outside and play, and be back when the street lights come on," said Kaitlin Norton, whose uncle is still missing. She does not know if her home still stands.

Like all places, Paradise had problems. There were issues with addiction and poverty, but residents felt safe. And while prices were rising, it was still affordable for many in a state where housing costs have soared.

"You would never miss a meal here," said Terry Prill, 63, who often sought lunch and dinner at community churches. "The people are good people. They don't look down at you."

The pace was relaxed. Neighbors waved to each other in the morning, shouting hello as they headed off to work on tree-lined, winding streets and cul-de-sacs. Families kept tidy gardens and planted vegetables, trading their bounty up and down the block.

Louise Branch, 93, says Paradise was a lovely place to retire. "It's a slow town, really. People have yards and dogs," she said. "I especially liked it in the fall when the trees are full of color."

Parks burst with bright orange California poppies and wildflowers in the spring, and soften with light snow in the winter. At 2,500 feet, on a ridge that rises above deep canyons carved by the Feather River and Butte Creek, Paradise offers cool respite from hot, dry weather in the valleys below.

Spanning the creek was the Honey Run Covered Bridge, built in 1886. It was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988 and was the only covered bridge in America with three unequal sections. It, too, is gone.

Glenn Harrington raised two sons in Paradise. He found it so picturesque he started the Visions of Paradise page on Facebook; image after image chronicles the town's history and spirit, its seasonal colors and its many festivals.

Each spring there were Gold Nugget Days, marking the discovery of a 54-pound lump in 1859. The Donkey Derby in nearby Old Magalia would get silly, as locals recreated how miners heaved the famous chunk of gold into town. The highlight was a parade of homemade floats.

"My daughter's going out for the Gold Nugget Queen this year," said Krystin Harvey, whose mobile home burned down. "Well, it's been going for 100 years, but we don't know — there's no town now."

In the fall they'd celebrate Johnny Appleseed days, gathering at the recreation center for a crafts fair and games. This is when Paradisians would feast on more than 1,000 pies baked with fruit from Noble

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 24 of 50

Orchards, a nearly century-old farm on Paradise Ridge where trees were heavy with cherries, nectarines, pluots and 17 varieties of apples.

"Paradise is everything the name implies," said Tom Hurst, 67, who grew up there and raised horses at his 7-acre Outlaw's Roost ranch. He has relatives in the local cemetery dating back to the early 1900s, and he refuses to talk about the town in the past tense. In fact, some buildings still stand, among them the town hall, the 750-seat performing arts center, the Feather River Hospital, its newer sections damaged but intact.

"Don't use the word 'was,' use the word 'is,' because we ain't done, we're just getting restarted," Hurst said.

And yet, there's so much to mourn.

A month ago, the Paradise Symphony was rehearsing for the local "Nutcracker" ballet, and kids were pulling out their skates as the outdoor ice rink was set to open for the winter. The Paradise Post reported that fifth graders were building cardboard arcade games, and warned of backyard bats with rabies.

Now, crews search for live power lines and gas leaks. Rescue teams continue to pull human remains from cars and homes. Fire crews tamp out smoking piles, and a heavy layer of gray-brown haze hangs over the town.

The toxic, smoky air is a visceral reminder of what's missing in this place where the skies were so blue by day, and dark by night.

"The most cherished thing for me about Paradise were the summer nights my mother and I would sit out on the porch under the clear, starry night," said Harold Taylor, who moved to Paradise eight years ago, caring for his mother until she died.

Patrick Knuthson said visitors always were amazed by the glittering stars and the meteor showers, brilliant streaks of light that shot across the summer skies.

"We used to tell people all the time, 'We made sure to turn all of them on for you,'" he said. "It's going to take a long time to get that back."

Associated Press journalists Jocelyn Gecker contributed from San Francisco and Gillian Flaccus contributed from Paradise.

After midterms success, Democrats develop 2020 strategies

By JUANA SUMMERS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaking before a gathering of black leaders on Capitol Hill this week, Sen. Kamala Harris offered guidance on when Democrats should fight President Donald Trump and Republicans.

"What I've found myself recently saying is this: 'If it's worth fighting for, it's a fight worth having,'" the California Democrat and potential presidential candidate said, pausing, before repeating the phrase once more. "And I say that because I think sometimes there is a conversation that suggests that before we decide we're going to engage in a fight, some might say, 'Well, let's sit back and consider the odds of winning.'"

"No," Harris continued. "If it's worth fighting for, it's a fight worth having."

Energized by their success in last week's midterms and courting potential primary voters outraged by the actions of the Trump administration, virtually every Democrat considering a White House run is talking about fighting in one form or another — and trying to prove he or she is prepared for the match.

Some, like Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, have taken aggressive stances that suggest a willingness to take on Trump directly. Others, such as Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, talk about fighting for workers and espouse an aspirational vision of America. And former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, another potential presidential candidate, urges a higher form of politics that moves past the bitter rancor of the moment. In the process, all the possible presidential contenders are offering signs of how they would approach their candidacies.

Dan Pfeiffer, who was a senior adviser to former President Barack Obama, said the best Democratic campaign will be the one that can "raise the stakes."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 25 of 50

"You need someone who is tough enough to take on Trump, for sure. But what you want is someone who is inspiring," he said, cautioning that it's still early and potential candidates could change their approach.

"If your message is 'They punch me in the gut, I punch them in the face,' that is not an inspiring message," he said. "We have to make this election about big things, and we have to inspire people."

Last week's election showcased a variety of strategies.

On election night, Warren declared that Trump and his "corrupt friends" had spent two years "building a wall of anger and division and resentment." In her speech, she referenced the "fight" ahead more than two dozen times.

"Tonight, as the first cracks begin to appear in that wall, let us declare that our fight is not over until we have transformed our government ... into one that works, not just for the rich and the powerful but for everyone," Warren said.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat and potential presidential candidate, spoke of an electorate that voted for the way politics can and should be.

She described a final meeting with the late Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona in which he pointed to a passage in his book that said, "There is nothing more liberating than fighting for a cause larger than yourself."

"That is what Minnesota voted for today," Klobuchar said. "Minnesota voted for patriotism, Minnesota voted for tolerance, Minnesota voted for people who believe in opportunity."

In a victory speech in Ohio, where Brown notched an easy win even as other Democrats there struggled, he appeared to test a populist pitch for the White House.

"When we fight for workers, we fight for all people, whether they punch a clock or swipe a badge, earn a salary or make tips. Whether they are raising children or caring for an aging parent," he said.

Later, Brown urged the nation to look to the Midwest, and particularly Ohio, and to take note of how his state celebrates workers.

"That is the message coming out of Ohio in 2018, and that is the blueprint for our nation in 2020," he said.

Diane Feldman, a pollster for Brown's 2018 race, said Brown tends to talk "about who he's for, rather than who he's against," and described his message as an "affirmative one."

"There's going to be a discussion about whether the Democratic Party defines itself in opposition to Trump or whether the Democratic Party really has something to assert about who we're for or what we're for and what that means," Feldman said. "While we're all against Trump, we also need to be clear on what we would change in ways that would be helpful to people."

Perhaps no one in the potential field has demonstrated the impulse to fight than Michael Avenatti, the lawyer for adult-film star Stormy Daniels and a vocal Trump critic. Avenatti, who has said he is considering a 2020 run, said in his first early state speech as a potential political candidate that Democrats "must be a party that fights fire with fire."

Avenatti was arrested this week in Los Angeles on allegations of domestic violence, which he has denied.

Tom Steyer, the billionaire investor and Democratic activist who is considering jumping into the 2020 race himself, said Democrats need someone who can explain to voters "not just how stupid and misguided what's going on right now is," but who can also speak to the opportunity ahead of the country to course-correct."

"It's a hell of a good thing to run your mouth, but when the time comes, the American people need someone to produce, someone who understands what's going on and is not just flapping their gums," Steyer said.

Donna Edwards, who represented Maryland in Congress for four terms before giving up the seat to run for Senate, said she hoped that Democrats would not "take on Trump by being Trump," and would be capable of speaking to the broader interests of Democrats and left-leaning independents across the country.

"I think as Democrats we have to be smart — we're always so good at doing policy," Edwards said. "We live and die on our policy, but we have to have that unique combo of the policy and the personality that fits the entire country, and I think that's going to be the challenge."

Fire death toll hits 63; sheriff says hundreds still missing

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and BRIAN MELLEY, Associated Press

CHICO, Calif. (AP) — At least 63 people are now dead from a Northern California wildfire, and officials say they have a missing persons list with 631 names on it in an ever-evolving accounting of the victims of the nation's deadliest wildfire in a century.

The high number of missing people probably includes some who fled the blaze and don't realize they've been reported missing, Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said. He said he's making the list public so people can see if they are on it and let authorities know they survived.

"The chaos that we were dealing with was extraordinary," Honea said of the early crisis hours last week. "Now we're trying to go back out and make sure that we're accounting for everyone."

Some 52,000 people have been displaced to shelters, the homes of friends and relatives, to motels — and to a Walmart parking lot and an adjacent field in Chico, a dozen miles away from the ashes.

At the vast shelter parking lot, evacuees from California's deadliest fire wonder if they still have homes, if their neighbors are still alive — and where they will go when their place of refuge shuts down in a matter of days.

"It's cold and scary," said Lilly Batres, 13, one of the few children there, who fled with her family from the forested town of Magalia and didn't know whether her home survived. "I feel like people are going to come into our tent."

The Northern California fire that began a week earlier obliterated the town of Paradise. Searchers have pulled bodies from incinerated homes and cremated cars, but in many cases, the victims may have been reduced to bits of bones and ash. The latest toll: 63 dead and 9,800 homes destroyed.

At the other end of the state, more residents were being allowed back into the zone of a wildfire that torched an area the size of Denver west of Los Angeles. The fire was 62 percent contained after destroying nearly 550 homes and other buildings. At least three deaths were reported.

Air quality across large swaths of California remains so poor due to huge plumes of smoke that schools from Sacramento to the Pacific Coast were closed on Friday, and San Francisco's iconic open-air cable cars were pulled off the streets.

Northern California's Camp Fire was 40 percent contained Thursday, but there was no timeline for allowing evacuees to return because of the danger. Power lines are still down, roads closed, and firefighters are still dousing embers, authorities said.

Anna Goodnight of Paradise tried to make the best of it, sitting on an overturned shopping cart in the parking lot and eating scrambled eggs and tater tots while her husband drank a Budweiser.

But then William Goodnight began to cry.

"We're grateful. We're better off than some. I've been holding it together for her," he said, gesturing toward his wife. "I'm just breaking down, finally."

More than 75 tents had popped up in the space since Matthew Flanagan arrived last Friday.

"We call it Wally World," Flanagan said, a riff off the store name. "When I first got here, there was nobody here. And now it's just getting worse and worse and worse. There are more evacuees, more people running out of money for hotels."

Word began to spread Thursday that efforts were being made to phase out the camp by Sunday, by gradually removing donated clothing, food and toilets.

"The ultimate goal is to get these people out of tents, out of their cars and into warm shelter, into homes," said Jessica Busick, who was among the first volunteers when she and her husband started serving free food from their Truckaroni food truck last week. "We've always known this isn't a long-term solution."

A Sunday closure "gives us enough time to maybe figure something out," said Mike Robertson, an evacuee who arrived there on Monday with his wife and two daughters.

It's unclear what will be done if people don't leave Sunday, but city officials don't plan to kick them out, said Betsy Totten, a Chico spokeswoman. Totten said volunteers — not the city — had decided to shut down the camp.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 27 of 50

Walmart has added security to the location and is concerned about safety there, but it is not asking people to leave, spokeswoman LeMia Jenkins said.

Some, like Batres' family, arrived after running out of money for a hotel. Others couldn't find a room or weren't allowed to stay at shelters with their dogs, or in the case of Suzanne Kaksonen, her two cockatoos. Kaksonen said it already feels like forever since she's been there.

"I just want to go home," she said. "I don't even care if there's no home. I just want to go back to my dirt, you know, and put a trailer up and clean it up and get going. Sooner the better. I don't want to wait six months. That petrifies me."

Some evacuees helped sort immense piles of donations that have poured in. Racks of used clothes from sweaters to plaid flannel shirts and tables covered with neatly organized pairs of boots, sneakers and shoes competed for space with shopping carts full of clothes, garbage bags stuffed with other donations and boxes of books. Stuffed animals — yellow, purple and green teddy bears and a menagerie of other fuzzy critters — sat on the pavement.

Food trucks offered free meals and a cook flipped burgers on a grill. There were portable toilets, and some people used the Walmart restrooms.

Someone walking through the camp Thursday offered free medical marijuana.

Information for contacting the Federal Emergency Management Agency for assistance was posted on a board that allowed people to write the names of those they believed were missing. Several names had the word "Here" written next to them.

Melissa Contant, who drove from the San Francisco area to help out, advised people to register with FEMA as soon as possible, and to not reveal too much information about whether they own or rent homes or have sufficient food and water, because that could delay aid.

"You're living in a Walmart parking lot — you're not OK," she told Maggie and Michael Crowder.

Melley reported from Los Angeles. AP journalist Terence Chea in Chico contributed to this story.

Pelosi sees vocal opposition to her return as House speaker

By LISA MASCARO and MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — If it was up to most of the Democratic Party, Nancy Pelosi would be the obvious choice to become speaker of the House. But within the ranks of the chamber's Democratic majority, there's a small but persistent group pushing to topple her return as the first woman with the gavel.

Pelosi appears to be winning the outside game amassing endorsements from a who's who of the nation's Democrats, including former Vice President Al Gore and former Secretary of State John Kerry. Inside the Capitol she has support from influential lawmakers, Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., the civil rights leader, and Rep. Adam Schiff of California, who's in line to chair the Intelligence Committee, among others.

Most recently Pelosi got the nod from MoveOn.org as liberals sound the alarm against an overthrow being orchestrated by mostly centrist Democrats who want to prevent the San Franciscan from being the face of the party.

"We strongly support and call on all members of the Democratic caucus to support @NancyPelosi for Speaker," the group tweeted Thursday. It noted in particular her work passing the Affordable Care Act. "Were it not for her skilled and effective leadership, the ACA would not be law today. Dems must reject attempts to defeat her and move caucus to the right."

The show of strength is a reflection on Pelosi's 15-year tenure as party leader but also her place in history as the first woman to hold — and potentially return — to the speaker's office after an election that ushered in a record number of women candidates.

It's not lost on supporters that a group made up of mostly men is leading the effort to oust her. On the list of 17 names who've signed onto a letter against her, just three are women.

"Look, I'm supporting Pelosi," said Rep. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, the third-ranking Democrat and an influential leader of the Congressional Black Caucus. "But I would never tell anybody not to run."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 28 of 50

Pelosi's opponents started rallying Thursday behind a possible contender, Rep. Marcia Fudge of Ohio, a prominent member of the Black Caucus who has indicated a willingness to challenge her. Others may jump in, when lawmakers return after Thanksgiving for first-round voting.

Fudge, recently re-elected to a 7th term, is an ally of Ohio Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan, who mounted an unsuccessful campaign against Pelosi two years ago and is a leader of the current effort to topple her.

With Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., Rep. Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y., and others, the letter writers have yet to present their list publicly. They promise to do so soon, but Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., said they were hoping to add a few more signatures.

Schrader said it's a "lie" that Pelosi already has secured enough support, and that he would back Fudge. "She has experience in running caucuses, fits the profile, I think, really well. She's tough," he said.

Rep.-elect Jeff Van Drew, D-N.J., said he signed the letter and is sticking and with his campaign promise to not vote for Pelosi — "not in the caucus and not on the floor," he said.

"There's something to be said for new ideas and showing that it's a change and having a different face," he said.

Pelosi has fended off challenges before, but this one — fueled by newcomers calling for change and frustrated incumbents who feel shut out of leadership after her many years at the helm — poses perhaps the biggest threat yet.

With a narrow Democratic majority, now at about 230 seats, she does not have much cushion to secure the 218 votes needed on the floor if all Republicans vote against her, as expected. Some House races remain undecided and the Democratic majority could grow slightly.

There is a chance the math could shift in Pelosi's favor if lawmakers are absent or simply vote "present," meaning she would need fewer than 218 votes for an absolute majority. The full chamber will elect the next speaker Jan. 3.

Pelosi has remained steadfast in her pursuit of the gavel and welcomed all challengers. Her latest catchphrase: "Come on in, the water's warm."

The 78-year-old Californian said she has "overwhelming support" to become the next speaker.

Asked if sexism might block her return, she countered that's a question for the mostly male lawmakers signing a letter against her.

"If in fact there is any misogyny involved in it, it's their problem, not mine," Pelosi told reporters.

The list includes a dozen incumbents and five newcomers, including two Democrats whose races have not yet been decided. Confirmed by an aide to one of the organizers, the list was first published in the Huffington Post.

Allies of Pelosi have churned out endorsements daily, with support from incoming House committee chairmen; leaders of outside organizations, including women's groups and labor unions; and others who align with Democrats and provide resources for elections.

Many attest to Pelosi's skills at fundraising for the party, corraling the caucus and delivering votes. Her supporters say now is not the time for infighting when voters expect Democrats to stand up to President Donald Trump.

But Pelosi also acknowledges the discomfort some lawmakers face because she's the GOP's favorite election-year villain. Some 137,000 ads were run against her this election cycle, she said. "It makes it hard on the candidates," she conceded.

Pointing to Democrats' midterm success — they regained control of the House with their biggest midterm victories since Watergate — she added, "Obviously those ads didn't work."

"People don't even know who I am — an Italian-American grandmother with lots of energy, a mother of five, a grandmother of nine — who is here to do what's right for our future," said Pelosi.

Democrats seeking to block Pelosi argue it's time to give younger lawmakers a chance to rise to high-level posts. They also say Republicans have done such a good job demonizing Pelosi that it's hard for Democrats to be elected in closely contested, moderate districts.

Finding a consensus candidate could prove daunting, and lawmakers hold mixed views about the prospect of a floor fight as the opening act of the new Congress.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 29 of 50

Pelosi made history when she became the first female speaker of the House in 2007. She assumed the post after Democrats took control of the House in midterm elections during former President George W. Bush's second term.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Follow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/lisamascaro> and https://twitter.com/AP_Politics

North Korea deports American even as it boasts of new weapon

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Friday said it will deport an American citizen it detained for illegal entrance, an apparent concession to the United States that came even as it announced the test of a newly developed but unspecified "ultramodern" weapon that will be seen as a pressuring tactic by Washington.

The two whiplash announcements, which seemed aimed at both appeasing and annoying Washington, suggest North Korea wants to keep alive dialogue with the United States even as it struggles to express its frustration at stalled nuclear diplomacy.

North Korea in the past has held arrested American citizens for an extended period before high-profile U.S. figures travelled to Pyongyang to secure their freedom. Last year, American university student Otto Warmbier died days after he was released in a coma from North Korea after 17 months in captivity.

On Friday, the Korean Central News Agency said American national Bruce Byron Lowrance was detained on Oct. 16 for illegally entering the country from China. It said he told investigators that he was under the "manipulation" of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. It was not clear if the North's spelling of the man's name was correct, and past reports from Pyongyang have contained incorrect spellings.

A short KCNA dispatch said North Korea decided to deport him but did not say why and when.

The North's decision matches its general push for engagement and diplomacy with the United States this year after a string of weapons tests in 2017, and a furious U.S. response, had some fearing war on the Korean Peninsula.

In May, North Korea released three American detainees in a goodwill gesture weeks ahead of leader Kim Jong Un's June 12 summit with President Donald Trump in Singapore. The three Americans returned home on a flight with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Weeks after the summit, North Korea returned the remains of dozens of presumed U.S. soldiers killed during the 1950-53 Korean War.

The United States, South Korea and others have previously accused North Korea of using foreign detainees to wrest diplomatic concessions.

Some foreigners have said after their release that their declarations of guilt had been coerced while in North Korean custody. Warmbier and other previous American detainees in the North were imprisoned over a variety of alleged crimes, including subversion, anti-state activities and spying.

The latest detained American is likely a man that South Korea deported last year, according to South Korean police.

In November 2017, a 58-year-old man from Louisiana was caught in South Korea after spending two nights in the woods in a civilian-restricted area near the border with North Korea. The name written in his passport was Lowrance Bruce Byron, said police officers at Gyeonggi Bukbu Provincial Police Agency.

Before his deportation, the man told interrogators that he "knows lots of people in the Trump administration so that he wants to work as a bridge between the United States and North Korea to help improve their ties worsened by Warmbier's death," said one of the police officers who investigated the man. He requested anonymity citing department rules.

Earlier Friday, KCNA said Kim observed the successful test of an unspecified "newly developed ultramodern tactical weapon," though it didn't describe what the weapon was.

It didn't appear to be a test of a nuclear device or a long-range missile with the potential to target the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 30 of 50

United States. A string of such tests last year pushed always uncomfortable ties on the peninsula to unusually high tension before the North turned to engagement and diplomacy.

Still, any mention of weapons testing could influence the direction of stalled diplomatic efforts spearheaded by Washington and aimed at ridding the North of its nuclear weapons.

Experts say the weapon test was likely an expression of anger by North Korea at U.S.-led international sanctions and ongoing small-scale military drills between South Korea and the United States. It's the first publicly known field inspection of a weapons test by Kim since he observed the testing of the Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile in November of last year, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

"It's North Korea-style coercive diplomacy. North Korea is saying 'If you don't listen to us, you will face political burdens,'" said analyst Shin Beomchul of Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

Earlier this month, North Korea's Foreign Ministry warned it could bring back its policy of bolstering its nuclear arsenal if it doesn't receive sanctions relief.

Shin said the weapon North Korea tested could be a missile, artillery, an anti-air gun, a drone or other high-tech conventional weapons systems. Yang Wook, a Seoul-based military expert, said a "tactical weapon" in North Korea refers to "a weapon aimed at striking South Korea including U.S. military bases" there, so the North may have tested a short-range missile or a multiple rocket launch system.

Diplomacy has stalled since the Singapore summit, with Washington pushing for more action on nuclear disarmament and the North insisting that the U.S. first approve a peace declaration formally ending the Korean War and lift sanctions.

But Friday's report from the North was noticeably less belligerent than past announcements of weapons tests, and didn't focus on North Korean claims of U.S. and South Korean hostility. Yang said the latest North Korean test won't completely break down nuclear diplomacy, though more questions would be raised about how sincere the North is about its commitment to denuclearization.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, attending a Southeast Asian summit in Singapore, cited the "great progress" made on North Korea but said more had to be done.

A year and a half ago, "nuclear tests were taking place, missiles were flying over Japan and there were threats and propagations against our nation and nations in the region," Pence said. "Today, no more missiles are flying, no more nuclear tests, our hostages have come home, and North Korea has begun anew to return fallen American heroes from the Korean War to our soil. We made great progress but there's more work to be done."

Pence stressed that U.N. sanctions had to remain enforced.

The North said the test took place at the Academy of National Defense Science and that Kim couldn't suppress his "passionate joy" at its success. He was described as "so excited to say that another great work was done by the defense scientists and munitions industrial workers to increase the defense capability of the country."

Last year's string of increasingly powerful weapons tests, many experts believe, put the North on the brink of a viable arsenal of nuclear-tipped missiles that can target anywhere in the mainland United States.

Associated Press writer Foster Klug in Seoul, Annabelle Liang in Singapore and Matthew Pennington in Washington contributed to this report.

Snowstorm slows evening commute in New York City

NEW YORK (AP) — The first snowstorm of the season to hit the New York City area brought several inches of snow, slowing Thursday's evening commute to a crawl, after contributing to at least seven deaths as it swept across the country.

From St. Louis to the South and into the Northeast, snow, freezing rain, and in some parts, sleet, made driving tricky and closed schools Thursday.

In New York City, the wet snowfall and wind gusts Thursday downed numerous tree branches. Police advised people to stay indoors and avoid the roads. Commuters also were advised to avoid the Port Au-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 31 of 50

thority Bus Terminal - which is also used by some to travel to New Jersey - due to overcrowding.

By 5:30 p.m., the terminal had become an immovable block of wall-to-wall commuters all gazing up at the schedule board. Lines of people waited to get into the terminal as officials urged them to take trains or ferries.

The poor weather made it difficult for buses to reach the terminal, officials said. And a multi-vehicle accident on the George Washington Bridge and the closure of the Bayonne Bridge connecting Staten Island to New Jersey added to the traffic nightmare.

A mayoral spokesman said the early storm meant that Metropolitan Transportation Authority didn't have snow chains on its buses. He said many of them had to pull over, "further clogging streets."

There were scattered delays on the Long Island Rail Road and New Jersey Transit reported 30-minute delays systemwide. Flight delays of up to an hour were reported at JFK, LaGuardia and Newark airports.

In New Jersey, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie tweeted that it took him five hours and 40 minutes to commute from Piscataway to Mendham, a roughly 26-mile (41-kilometer) journey that normally takes about 40 minutes.

Forecasters said the snow should change to rain overnight.

As much as 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow blanketed the St. Louis area, and forecasters predicted up to 6 inches (15 centimeters) in parts of southern New England as the storm made its way east. They also predicted northern New Jersey could see 4 to 8 inches of snow before the system exits the region early Friday, while parts of suburban Philadelphia had 5 inches (12 centimeters) of snow by Thursday afternoon.

Weather officials said the overnight trace in Alabama missed setting a record for earliest snow by about two weeks.

In neighboring Mississippi, a tour bus bound for a casino overturned, killing two people and injuring 44 others Wednesday afternoon. Witnesses said the driver lost control after crossing an icy overpass and the bus rolled over on its driver's side, coming to rest in an interstate median, Mississippi Highway Patrol spokesman Capt. Johnny Poulos said. The crash happened about 35 miles (55 kilometers) southeast of downtown Memphis, Tennessee.

"All of a sudden the bus started swerving then it spun around two times, hit the rail and then flipped over," bus passenger Veronica Love told news outlets as she left a hospital after the wreck. "The second spin, it started picking up speed. It was, I mean, what could you do?"

Later Wednesday night, near Little Rock, Arkansas, three people were killed in separate crashes on icy roads. The interstate was closed and reopened shortly before daybreak Thursday, but officials said traffic was slow-going because some drivers had fallen asleep.

Officials in Ohio reported at least one traffic death that was likely weather-related. Indiana State Police also reported a death early Thursday, which they said was caused by the 60-year-old woman driving too fast on a slick road.

In Philadelphia, a meteorologist told the Allentown Morning Call that this storm is "an overperformer." By 3 p.m. Thursday, parts of suburban Philadelphia had 5 inches of snow. The freezing rain turned to ice on roads around the state, leading to a number of crashes and reports of cars sliding off roads.

In North Carolina, the National Park Service closed a portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway to traffic Thursday because of dangerous road conditions stemming from snow, sleet and freezing rain, the Asheville Citizen Times reported.

Schools closed or sent students home early across the lower Great Lakes and the Northeast, including at the University of Connecticut where classes were canceled in the afternoon.

In Virginia, the planned launch early Thursday of an unmanned cargo rocket to the International Space Station had to be rescheduled by one day because of the weather, NASA said. The unmanned Cygnus cargo craft is now scheduled to lift off early Friday from Wallops Island on the Eastern Shore carrying supplies and research materials for the astronauts at the space station.

California fire has claimed 63 as missing list grows to 631

By PAUL ELIAS and KATHLEEN RONAYNE, Associated Press

MAGALIA, Calif. (AP) — At least 63 are now dead from a Northern California wildfire, and officials say they have a missing persons list with 631 names on it in an ever-evolving accounting of the missing after the nation's deadliest wildfire in a century.

Officials were scrambling to pinpoint everyone's whereabouts, and Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said Thursday that the high number of missing people probably included some who fled the blaze and didn't realize they had been reported missing.

Authorities were making the list public so people could see if they were on it and let authorities know they were safe, Honea said.

"The chaos that we were dealing with was extraordinary," he said of the early crisis hours last week. "Now we're trying to go back out and make sure that we're accounting for everyone."

Honea released the list as others questioned the chaotic evacuations of Nov. 8.

Ten years ago, as two wildfires advanced on Paradise, residents jumped into their vehicles to flee and got stuck in gridlock. That led authorities to devise a staggered evacuation plan — one that they used when fire came again last week.

But Paradise's carefully laid plans quickly devolved into a panicked exodus last week. Some survivors said that by the time they got warnings, the flames were already extremely close, and they barely escaped with their lives. Others said they received no warnings at all.

Now authorities are facing questions of whether they took the right approach.

It's also a lesson for other communities across the West that could be threatened as climate change and overgrown forests contribute to longer, more destructive fire seasons .

Reeny Victoria Breevaart, who lives in Magalia, a forested community of 11,000 people north of Paradise, said she couldn't receive warnings because cellphones weren't working. She also lost electrical power.

Just over an hour after the first evacuation order was issued at 8 a.m., she said, neighbors came to her door to say: "You have to get out of here."

Shari Bernacett, who with her husband managed a mobile home park in Paradise where they also lived, received a text ordering an evacuation. "Within minutes the flames were on top of us," she said.

Bernacett packed two duffel bags while her husband and another neighbor knocked on doors, yelling for people to get out. The couple grabbed their dog and drove through 12-foot (4-meter) flames to escape.

In the aftermath of the disaster, survivors said authorities need to devise a plan to reach residents who can't get a cellphone signal in the hilly terrain or don't have cellphones at all.

In his defense, Honea said evacuation orders were issued through 5,227 emails, 25,643 phone calls and 5,445 texts, in addition to social media and the use of loudspeakers. As cellphone service went down, authorities went into neighborhoods with bullhorns to tell people to leave, and that effort saved lives.

Honea said he was too busy with the emergency and the recovery of human remains to analyze how the evacuation went. But he said it was a big, chaotic, fast-moving situation, and there weren't enough law enforcement officers to go out and warn everyone.

"The fact that we have thousands and thousands of people in shelters would clearly indicate that we were able to notify a significant number of people," the sheriff said.

Some evacuees were staying in tents and cars at a Walmart parking lot and in a nearby field in Chico, though volunteers are planning to close the makeshift shelter by Sunday.

A Sunday closure "gives us enough time to maybe figure something out," said Mike Robertson, an evacuee who arrived there on Monday with his wife and two daughters.

On Thursday, firefighters reported progress in battling the nearly 220-square-mile (570-square-kilometer) blaze that displaced 52,000 people and destroyed more than 9,500 homes. It was 40 percent contained, fire officials said. Crews slowed the flames' advance on populated areas.

California Army National Guard members, wearing white jumpsuits, looked for human remains in the burned rubble, among more than 450 rescue workers assigned to the task.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 33 of 50

President Donald Trump plans to travel to California on Saturday to visit victims of the wildfires burning at both ends of the state. Trump is unpopular in much of Democratic-leaning California but not in Butte County, which he carried by 4 percentage points over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election.

The Paradise fire once again underscored shortcomings in warning systems.

Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill in September requiring the development of statewide guidelines for Amber Alert-like warnings. A few Northern California communities are moving to install sirens after wine country residents complained they didn't receive warnings to evacuate ahead of a deadly wildfire in October 2017 that destroyed 5,300 homes.

In 2008, the pair of wildfires that menaced Paradise destroyed 130 homes. No one was seriously hurt, but the chaos highlighted the need for a plan.

Paradise sits on a ridge between two higher hills, with only one main exit out of town. The best solution seemed to be to order evacuations in phases, so people didn't get trapped.

"Gridlock is always the biggest concern," said William Stewart, a forestry professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

Authorities developed an evacuation plan that split the town of 27,000 into zones and called for a staggered exodus. Paradise even conducted a mock evacuation during a morning commute, turning the main thoroughfare into a one-way street out of town.

Last week, when a wind-whipped fire bore down on the town, the sheriff's department attempted an orderly, phased evacuation, instead of blasting a cellphone alert over an entire area.

Phil John, chairman of the Paradise Ridge Fire Safe Council, defended the evacuation plan he helped develop. John said that the wildfire this time was exceptionally fast-moving and hot, and that no plan was going to work perfectly.

When the fire reached the eastern edge of Paradise, six zones were ordered to clear out about 8 a.m. But almost simultaneously, the gusting winds were carrying embers the size of dinner plates across town, and structures were catching fire throughout the city. Less than an hour later, the entire town was ordered evacuated.

"It didn't work perfectly," John said Thursday. "But no one could plan for a fire like that."

Likewise, Stewart, the forestry professor, said the wildfire that hit Paradise disrupted the orderly evacuation plan because it "was moving too fast. All hell broke loose."

Satellite images show half the town on fire less than two hours after the first evacuation order.

Stewart said experts continue to debate how best to issue evacuation orders, and no ideal solution has been found.

At the other end of the state, meanwhile, crews continued to gain ground against a blaze of more than 153 square miles (396 square kilometers) that destroyed over 500 structures in Malibu and other Southern California communities. At least three deaths were reported.

Associated Press writers Janie Har and Olga R. Rodriguez in San Francisco, Amy Taxin in Santa Ana, California and Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon, contributed to this report.

AP source: Whitaker told Graham that Mueller probe to go on

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and MIKE BALSAMO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Attorney General Matt Whitaker told Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham in a meeting on Thursday that special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation will proceed, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

The meeting with Graham and Whitaker comes as a bipartisan group of senators is pushing legislation to protect Mueller's job. The senators are concerned about Whitaker's past criticism of the Mueller probe, which is looking at Russian interference in the 2016 election and ties to President Donald Trump's campaign. Trump appointed Whitaker as acting attorney general last week.

Whitaker told Graham the investigation would be allowed to proceed, the person said. The person

wasn't authorized to speak publicly about the meeting and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and other Democrats have called for Whitaker to recuse himself from overseeing the Mueller investigation.

A Justice Department spokeswoman said earlier this week that Whitaker will follow Justice Department protocols and consult with senior ethics officials "on his oversight responsibilities and matters that may warrant recusal."

Democrats have also called for the special counsel bill to be added to a year-end spending bill that must pass in December to avoid a partial government shutdown. The bipartisan legislation, introduced more than a year ago, would give any special counsel a 10-day window to seek expedited judicial review of a firing and put into law existing Justice Department regulations that a special counsel can only be fired for good cause.

On Wednesday, Republican Sen. Jeff Flake said he would not vote to confirm judicial nominees unless GOP leaders hold a vote on the Mueller protection legislation.

Whitaker is now overseeing the Mueller probe, which had previously been overseen by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. Rosenstein told Congress that he saw no reason to fire Mueller.

Recently ousted Attorney General Jeff Sessions had recused himself from overseeing Mueller because he had worked on Trump's Republican campaign — a decision that infuriated Trump and led to Sessions resigning at the president's request.

Trump has repeatedly criticized Mueller and called the investigation a hoax.

He tweeted Thursday that the probe is "A TOTAL WITCH HUNT LIKE NO OTHER IN AMERICAN HISTORY!"

Smoke spreading from California fires sparks health concerns

By LINDSEY TANNER, AP Medical Writer

Smoke masks. Eye drops. No outdoor exercise. This is how Californians are trying to cope with wildfires choking the state, but experts say an increase in serious health problems may be almost inevitable for vulnerable residents as the disasters become more commonplace.

Research suggests children, the elderly and those with existing health problems are most at risk.

Short-term exposure to wildfire smoke can worsen existing asthma and lung disease, leading to emergency room treatment or hospitalization, studies have shown.

Increases in doctor visits or hospital treatment for respiratory infections, bronchitis and pneumonia in otherwise healthy people also have been found during and after wildfires.

Some studies also have found increases in ER visits for heart attacks and strokes in people with existing heart disease on heavy smoke days during previous California wildfires, echoing research on potential risks from urban air pollution.

For most healthy people, exposure to wildfire smoke is just an annoyance, causing burning eyes, scratchy throats or chest discomfort that all disappear when the smoke clears.

But doctors, scientists and public health officials are concerned that the changing face of wildfires will pose a much broader health hazard.

"Wildfire season used to be June to late September. Now it seems to be happening all year round. We need to be adapting to that," Dr. Wayne Cascio, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cardiologist, said this week.

In an overview published earlier this year, Cascio wrote that the increasing frequency of large wildland fires, urban expansion into wooded areas and an aging population are all increasing the number of people at risk for health problems from fires.

Wood smoke contains some of the same toxic chemicals as urban air pollution, along with tiny particles of vapor and soot 30 times thinner than a human hair. These can infiltrate the bloodstream, potentially causing inflammation and blood vessel damage even in healthy people, research on urban air pollution

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 35 of 50

has shown. Studies have linked heart attacks and cancer with long-term exposure to air pollution.

Whether exposure to wildfire smoke carries the same risks is uncertain, and determining harm from smog versus wildfire smoke can be tricky, especially with wind-swept California wildfires spreading thick smoke hundreds of miles away into smoggy big cities.

"That is the big question," said Dr. John Balmes, a University of California, San Francisco, professor of medicine who studies air pollution.

"Very little is known about the long-term effects of wildfire smoke because it's hard to study populations years after a wildfire," Balmes said.

Decreased lung function has been found in healthy firefighters during fire season. They tend to recover but federal legislation signed this year will establish a U.S. registry tracking firefighters and potential risks for various cancers, including lung cancer. Some previous studies suggested a risk.

Balmes noted that increased lung cancer rates have been found in women in developing countries who spend every day cooking over wood fires.

That kind of extreme exposure doesn't typically happen with wildfires, but experts worry about the kinds of health damage that may emerge for firefighters and residents with these blazes occurring so often.

Whether that includes more cancer is unknown. "We're concerned about that," Balmes said.

Regular folks breathing in all that smoke worry about the risks too.

Smoke from the fire that decimated the Northern California city of Paradise darkened skies this week in San Francisco, nearly 200 miles southwest, and the air smelled "like you were camping," said Michael Northover, a contractor.

He and his 14-year-old son have first-time sinus infections that Northover blames on the smoke.

"We're all kind of feeling it," Northover said.

The smoke was so thick in San Francisco, the skyline was barely visible from across the Bay. The city's iconic open-air cable cars that are popular with tourists were pulled off the streets Thursday because of the bad air.

An Environmental Protection Agency website said air quality in Sacramento was "hazardous" Thursday and San Francisco's was "very unhealthy." Many people walking around the cities wore face masks.

Most schools in San Francisco, Sacramento, Oakland and Folsom said they would be closed Friday. At least six universities in Northern California canceled classes Thursday.

At Chico State University, 11 miles (18 kilometers) from Paradise, ash fell this week and classes were canceled until after Thanksgiving.

"It's kind of freaky to see your whole town wearing air masks and trying to get out of smoke," said freshman Mason West, 18. "You can see the particles. Obviously, it's probably not good to be breathing that stuff in."

West returned home this week to Santa Rosa, hard hit by last year's wine country fires, only to find it shrouded in smoke from the Paradise fire 100 miles (160 kilometers) away. West's family had to evacuate last year for a week, but their home was spared.

"It's as bad here as it was in Chico," West said. "It almost feels like you just can't get away from it."

Smoke has been so thick in Santa Rosa that researchers postponed a door-to-door survey there for a study of health effects of last year's fire.

"We didn't feel we could justify our volunteer interns going knocking on doors when all the air quality alerts were saying stay indoors," said Irva Hertz-Picciotto, a public health researcher at the University of California, Davis. The study includes an online survey of households affected by last year's fire, with responses from about 6,000 people so far.

Preliminary data show widespread respiratory problems, eye irritations, anxiety, depression and sleep problems around the time of the fire and months later.

"Conventional thinking is that these effects related to fires are transient. It's not entirely clear that's the case," Hertz-Picciotto said.

Researchers also will be analyzing cord blood and placentas collected from a few dozen women who were pregnant during the fire, seeking evidence of stress markers or exposure to smoke chemicals.

They hope to continue the study for years, seeking evidence of long-term physical and emotional harms to fire evacuees and their children.

Other studies have linked emotional stress in pregnant women to developmental problems in their children and "this was quite a stress," Hertz-Picciotto said.

It's a kind of stress that many people need to prepare for as the climate warms and wildfires proliferate, she said.

"Any of us could wake up tomorrow and lose everything we own," she said. "It's pretty scary."

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at <https://twitter.com/LindseyTanner>. Her work can be found here.

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

Bangladesh scraps Rohingya return, says no one wants to go

By JULHAS ALAM and EMILY SCHMALL, Associated Press

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh (AP) — Bangladesh's plans to begin repatriating Rohingya Muslims to Myanmar on Thursday were scrapped because officials were unable to find anyone who wanted to return to the country that has been accused of driving out hundreds of thousands in a campaign of ethnic cleansing.

The refugees "are not willing to go back now," Refugee Commissioner Abul Kalam told The Associated Press. He said officials "can't force them to go" but will continue to try to "motivate them so it happens."

Some people on the government's repatriation list disappeared into the sprawling refugee camps to avoid being sent home, while others joined a large demonstration against the plan.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh from western Myanmar's Rakhine state since August 2017 to escape killings and destruction of their villages by the military and Buddhist vigilantes that have drawn widespread condemnation of Myanmar.

The United Nations, whose human rights officials had urged Bangladesh to halt the repatriation process even as its refugee agency workers helped to facilitate it, welcomed Thursday's development.

Firas Al-Khateeb, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Cox's Bazar, said it was unclear when the process might begin again. "We want their repatriation, but it has to be voluntary, safe and smooth," he said.

Bangladesh officials declined to say whether another attempt at repatriation would be made Friday.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.H. Mahmood Ali told reporters in Dhaka late Thursday that "there is no question of forcible repatriation. We gave them shelter, so why should we send them back forcibly?"

At the Unchiprang refugee camp, a Bangladeshi refugee official implored the Rohingya on Thursday to return to their country over a loudspeaker.

"We have arranged everything for you, we have six buses here, we have trucks, we have food. We want to offer everything to you. If you agree to go, we'll take you to the border, to the transit camp," he said.

"We won't go!" hundreds of voices, including children's, chanted in reply.

Some refugees on the repatriation lists — which authorities say were drawn up with assistance from the UNHCR — said they don't want to go back.

At the Jamtoli refugee camp, one of the sprawling refugee settlements near the city of Cox's Bazar, 25-year-old Setara said she and her two children, age 4 and 7, were on a repatriation list, but her parents were not. She said she had never asked to return to Myanmar, and that she had sent her children to a school run by aid workers Thursday morning as usual.

"They killed my husband; now I live here with my parents," said Setara, who only gave one name. "I don't want to go back."

She said that other refugees on the repatriation list had fled to other camps, hoping to disappear amid the crowded lanes of refugees, aid workers and Bangladeshi soldiers, which on Thursday were bustling

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 37 of 50

with commerce and other activity.

Bangladesh had planned to send an initial group of 2,251 back from mid-November at a rate of 150 per day.

Myanmar officials, speaking late Thursday in the capital, Naypyitaw, said they were ready to receive the refugees. Despite those assurances, human rights activists said conditions were not yet safe for the Rohingya to go back.

The exodus began after Myanmar security forces launched a brutal crackdown following attacks by an insurgent group on guard posts. The scale, organization and ferocity of the crackdown led the U.N. and several governments to accuse Myanmar of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Most people in Buddhist-majority Myanmar do not accept that the Rohingya Muslims are a native ethnic group, viewing them as "Bengalis" who entered illegally from Bangladesh, even though generations of Rohingya have lived in Myanmar. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982, as well as access to education and hospitals.

The refugees survived the ransacking of villages, rapes and killings in Myanmar, but for many, life in Bangladesh's squalid refugee camps has been bleak.

The refugees who've arrived in the last year joined a wave of 250,000 Rohingya Muslims who escaped forced labor, religious persecution and violent attacks from Buddhist mobs in Myanmar during the early 1990s.

Access to education and employment has been far from assured.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who hopes to retain power in December elections, has repeatedly complained that hosting more than a million Rohingya is taxing local resources.

Negotiations for repatriation have been in the works for months, but plans last January to begin sending refugees back were called off amid concerns among aid workers and Rohingya that their return would be met with violence.

Foreign leaders, including U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, criticized Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi this week on the sidelines of a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Singapore for her handling of the Rohingya crisis.

But on Thursday, Pence said that U.S. officials were "encouraged to hear that" the repatriation process would begin.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his country would continue working with international partners including the U.N. "to ensure that the Rohingya themselves are part of any decisions on their future."

Schmall reported from New Delhi. Associated Press journalists Annabelle Liang and Samuel McNeil in Singapore contributed to this report.

Forest Service chief vows to rid agency of sexual harassment

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid scrutiny stemming from fresh revelations of rampant discrimination, bullying, retaliation and sexual misconduct at the U.S. Forest Service, the agency's new chief pledged Thursday that she will "do everything in my power to put us on a path to no harassment."

Vicki Christiansen acknowledged to a congressional panel that the Forest Service is in need of a culture change. She pledged to enact new systems and overhaul existing processes to ensure a safe and functional work environment.

"I know our actions past and present are not enough, we must do more," said Christiansen, who was named interim chief in March and took over the position permanently just a month ago. She was appearing before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

The Forest Service is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The agency's struggles date to at least the 1970s, when a class-action lawsuit was filed alleging discrimination against women in hiring and promotions. In December 2016, the oversight panel held a hearing to

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 38 of 50

address reports of systemic discrimination, bullying and harassment within the Forest Service.

The matter has gained renewed attention as female Forest Service employees recently stepped forward with tales of harassment, retaliation and even rape. In March, the USDA Office of Inspector General released a report that showed widespread mistrust in the complaint reporting process, prompting the agency to change the way it handles sexual harassment and misconduct allegations.

Earlier this month, Oversight Chairman Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., sent a letter to Christiansen and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue requesting information and documents related to recent misconduct claims.

"Despite taking some steps to address the problem, "alarming reports of misconduct and retaliation at the USFS persist," Gowdy wrote.

Prior to becoming Forest Service chief, Christiansen spent more than three decades as a forester and wildland firefighter.

"I know what it means to encounter harassment and discrimination in my workplace," she said. "I know the deep anguish it causes. I know how it feels to fear retaliation."

Those experiences, she said, "fuel my commitment to the Forest Service."

Christiansen on Thursday discussed progress made, and laid out her plans to further reform the agency. She said the agency has updated its anti-harassment policy and hired outside contractors to investigate allegations of sexual harassment. Additionally, Christiansen said the agency has created a Work Environment and Performance Office and plans to establish a victim advocacy and support structure.

It also launched a call center to handle harassment and abuse allegations, formed a new employee advisory group, hired case managers and is requiring all 25,000 permanent Forest Service employees to attend "listen-and-learn sessions" to discuss workplace conduct.

Shannon Reed, who said she was harassed and assaulted, then fired after she reported the abuse, shared her story at Thursday's hearing. She said Christiansen's plan to reform the agency doesn't go nearly far enough.

"Chief Christiansen's action plan is merely a check-the-box process to make the agency appear as if it is addressing sexual harassment, gender harassment, bullying and retaliation," Reed said. She told the panel that she was forced to attend a listening session with her harassers.

"The agency is telling us to stand up and report harassment, but when we do, we are retaliated against. Chief Christiansen has not made it a safe environment for us to report harassment," she said.

Gowdy asked USDA Inspector General Phyllis K. Fong, who also testified at the hearing, why victims and abusers would ever be in the same session.

"How in the hell can you have the perpetrator in the room with the victim?" Gowdy said. "I can't think of anything that has a more chilling effect on someone being able to tell their story."

"I understand your concern," Fong said. "We want to send a very clear message in our office that if people have concerns or issues they would like to bring forward, we have multiple ways and avenues where we can help people."

Ranking Member Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Maryland, criticized the Forest Service for failing to fully comply with the committee's requests for documents, citing extensive redactions and missing information.

"From the information we do have, it appears that the Forest Service still has much work to do to ensure that the victims of harassment and bullying—particularly those working in remote areas—receive the support they need when they report assault or harassment," Cummings said. "The Committee must ensure that once investigations are completed, real reforms are made."

Cummings also said he anticipates "developing long overdue legislation" to strengthen standards for investigating sexual misconduct allegations and "to expand transparency as much as possible while protecting privacy."

Christiansen admitted there is still "big work to do."

"I'd like to say I could change it in six months. But to be absolutely honest, I don't think you change the culture of an organization that's existed for 113 years and has 40,000 people overnight," she said.

Prior to working for the Forest Service, Reed worked for the National Park Service, where she said she also experienced bullying, harassment and assault.

"Little did I know that transferring from the Park Service to the Forest Service was jumping from the frying pan to the fire," she said.

At the same time in a separate hearing room on Capitol Hill, President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the park service — also under fire for its handling of sexual harassment and assault claims — faced demands from senators to confront what park employees have told lawmakers is rampant abuse at national parks.

"This is really a dark cloud over our National Park Service," Sen. Lisa Murkowski, an Alaska Republican and chairwoman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, told David Vela at a committee hearing on his nomination to lead the agency. Murkowski cited a "long-term pattern of sexual harassment and hostile work environment" at the park service.

Vela, currently park chief at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, said he would hold "people and processes accountable" in dealing with widespread allegations of male colleagues and bosses preying upon and bullying female co-workers, including complaints at iconic national parks such as Grand Canyon and Yosemite.

"The scourge of sexual and workplace harassment ... at the National Park Service must stop," Vela told lawmakers.

A Park Service preliminary report in 2016 concluded "the environment is indeed toxic, hostile, repressive and harassing."

Ellen Knickmeyer contributed from Washington.

More caravan migrants arrive in Tijuana, brace for long stay

By ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — More buses of exhausted people in a caravan of Central American asylum seekers reached the U.S. border Thursday as the city of Tijuana converted a municipal gymnasium into a temporary shelter and the migrants came to grips with the reality that they will be on the Mexican side of the frontier for an extended stay.

With U.S. border inspectors at the main crossing into San Diego processing only about 100 asylum claims a day, it could take weeks if not months to process the thousands in the caravan that departed from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, more than a month ago.

Tijuana's robust network of shelters was already stretched to the limit, having squeezed in double their capacity or more as families slept on the floor on mats, forcing the city to open the gymnasium for up to 360 people Wednesday. A gated outdoor courtyard can accommodate hundreds more.

The city's thriving factories are always looking for workers, and several thousand Haitian migrants who were turned away at the U.S. border have found jobs and settled here in the last two years, but the prospect of thousands more destitute Central Americans has posed new challenges.

Delia Avila, director of Tijuana's family services department, who is helping spearhead the city's response, said migrants who can arrange legal status in Mexico are welcome to stay.

"Tijuana is a land of migrants. Tijuana is a land that has known what it is to embrace thousands of co-nationals and also people from other countries," Avila said.

Mexican law enforcement was out in force in a city that is suffering an all-time-high homicide rate. A group of about 50 migrants, mostly women and children, walked through downtown streets Thursday from the city shelter to a breakfast hall under police escort.

As buses from western and central Mexico trickled in overnight and into the morning, families camped inside the bus terminal and waited for word on where they could find a safe place to sleep. One shelter designed for 45 women and children was housing 100; another designed for 100 had nearly 200.

Many endured the evening chill to sleep at an oceanfront park with a view of San Diego office towers and heavily armed U.S. Border Patrol agents on the other side of a steel-bollard fence.

Oscar Zapata, 31, reached the Tijuana bus station at 2 a.m. from Guadalajara with his wife and their three children, ages 4, 5 and 12, and headed to the breakfast hall, where migrants were served free beef

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 40 of 50

and potatoes.

Back home in La Ceiba, Honduras, he was selling pirated CDs and DVDs in the street when two gangs demanded "protection" money. He had already seen a colleague gunned down on a street corner because he couldn't pay. He said gangs called him and his wife on their cellphones and showed up at their house, threatening to kidnap his daughter and force her into prostitution if he didn't pay.

When he heard about the caravan on the TV news last month, he didn't think twice.

"It was the opportunity to get out," Zapata said.

Zapata said he hopes to join a brother in Los Angeles but has not yet decided on his next move. Like many others, he planned to wait in Tijuana for others in the caravan to arrive and gather more information before seeking asylum in the United States.

Byron Jose Blandino, a 27-year-old bricklayer from Nicaragua who slept in the converted gymnasium, said he wanted to request asylum but not until he could speak with someone well-versed in U.S. law and asylum procedures.

"The first thing is to wait," Blandino said. "I do not want to break the laws of any country. If I could enter in a peaceful manner, that would be good.

To claim asylum in San Diego, migrants enter their names in a tattered notebook held together by duct tape and managed by the migrants in a plaza outside the entry to the main border crossing.

On Thursday, migrants who registered six weeks ago were getting their names called. The waiting list has grown to more than 3,000 names and stands to become much longer with the caravans.

Francisco Rueda, the top deputy to Baja California state Gov. Francisco Vega de la Madrid, said that if all migrants from the caravan currently in Tijuana were to register to seek asylum in the U.S., they would likely have to wait four months in Mexico at current processing rates. For that reason, the state has asked Mexican federal authorities to encourage others in caravans to go to other border cities.

Rueda reported that about 1,750 migrants from the caravan had now reached Tijuana. Private shelters can house about 700, and the city-owned gym and sports complex has a capacity of 1,000 with the potential to expand to 3,000.

"This is not a crisis," he told reporters, while allowing that "this is an extraordinary situation."

There are 7,000 jobs available in the state for those who can obtain legal status in Mexico, Rueda said. He touted Tijuana's integration of Haitian migrants over the last two years and the state's relatively low unemployment rate.

The migrants have met some resistance from local residents, about 100 of whom confronted a similar-size group of Central Americans who were camped out by the U.S. border fence Wednesday night.

"You're not welcome" and "Get out!" the locals said, marching up to the group.

Police kept the two sides apart.

Vladimir Cruz, a migrant from El Salvador, shook his head and said: "These people are the racists, because 95 percent of people here support us."

"It is just this little group. ... They are uncomfortable because we're here," Cruz said.

Playas de Tijuana, as the area is known, is an upper-middle-class enclave, and residents appeared worried about crime and sanitation. One protester shouted, "This isn't about discrimination, it is about safety!"

There are real questions about how the city of more than 1.6 million will manage to handle the migrant caravans working their way through Mexico, which may total 10,000 people in all.

"No city in the world is prepared to receive this number of migrants," said Tijuana social development director Mario Osuna, adding that the city hopes Mexico's federal government "will start legalizing these people immediately" so they can get jobs and earn a living.

Dozens of gay and transgender migrants in the caravan were already lining up Thursday to submit asylum claims, though it was unclear how soon they would be able to do so.

The caravan has fragmented somewhat in recent days in a final push to the border, with some migrants moving rapidly in buses and others falling behind.

On Thursday, hundreds were stranded for most of the day at a gas station in Navojoa, some 750 miles

(1,200 kilometers) from Tijuana.

"We were dropped here at midnight ... in the middle of nowhere, where supposedly some buses were going to come pick us up, but nothing," Alejandra Grisel Rodriguez of Honduras told The Associated Press by phone. "We are without water, without food."

After about 12 hours seven buses began arriving to collect the migrants, Rodriguez said, but they quickly filled up.

"We would need at least 40 or 50," she said.

Jesus Edmundo Valdez, coordinator of firefighters and civil defense in Navojoa, said Wednesday that authorities were providing food, water and medical attention to migrants there. His phone rang unanswered Thursday.

Associated Press writer Maria Verza in Culiacan, Mexico, contributed to this report.

Meditation helps vets with post-traumatic stress disorder

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, AP Medical Writer

Meditation worked as well as traditional therapy for military veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder in a small experiment sponsored by the Department of Defense.

One method preferred by the Department of Veterans Affairs is exposure therapy, but it doesn't work for everyone and many can't handle what it requires: purposely recalling traumatic events and confronting emotions.

Meditation could be a better choice for some, the researchers said.

The experiment tested meditation against exposure therapy, which involves working with a therapist and gradually letting go of fears triggered by painful memories.

Many vets won't try exposure therapy or drop out because it's too difficult, said Thomas Rutledge, the study's senior author and a Veterans Affairs psychologist in San Diego.

Evidence for meditation "allows us to put more options on the table" with confidence they work, Rutledge said.

The study was published Thursday in the journal *Lancet Psychiatry*.

About 400,000 veterans had a PTSD diagnosis in 2013, according to the VA health system. The VA already is using meditation, yoga and similar approaches to supplement traditional therapy with PTSD, said Paula Schnurr, executive director of the VA's National Center for PTSD.

While the three-month study adds to evidence supporting these lifestyle practices, Schnurr said, more research is needed to learn how long meditation's benefits last.

"There's no follow-up in this study," Schnurr noted, and one therapist did 80 percent of the exposure therapy so the findings hinge largely on one therapist's skills.

Researchers measured symptoms in about 200 San Diego area veterans randomly assigned to one of three groups. Some learned to meditate. Others got exposure therapy. The third group attended classes where they learned about nutrition and exercise.

All sessions were once a week for 90 minutes.

After three months, 61 percent of the meditation group improved on a standard PTSD assessment, compared to 42 percent of those who got exposure therapy and 32 percent of those who went to classes. When researchers accounted for other factors, meditation was better than the classes and equally effective as exposure therapy.

The researchers defined success as at least a 10-point improvement in scores on a standard symptoms test, given to participants by people who did not know which kind of treatment they'd received. The test measures symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares and insomnia.

PTSD also can be treated with medications or other types of talk therapy. Many of the participants were taking prescribed medicine for PTSD.

Most of the vets were men with combat-related trauma, so it's not clear whether meditation would be

equally effective in women or with other types of trauma.

There's growing interest in meditation in the United States. A government survey last year found 14 percent of adults said they had recently meditated, up from 4 percent from a similar survey five years earlier.

There are many styles of meditation. The type taught to vets in the study was transcendental meditation, or TM, which involves thinking of a mantra or sound to settle the mind.

TM was developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a guru to the Beatles in the late 1960s. Some of the study authors are affiliated with a university in Fairfield, Iowa, founded by Maharishi. Their role was to oversee the meditation training.

Rutledge, who was the principal researcher, said he does not practice meditation himself.

Meditation could be more acceptable to veterans who might associate mental health treatment with weakness, Rutledge said.

"It's probably less threatening," he said. "It may be easier to talk to veterans about participating in something like meditation."

Follow AP Medical Writer Carla K. Johnson on Twitter: @CarlaKJohnson

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

Women elected in record numbers in state legislative races

By GEOFF MULVIHILL, Associated Press

Women's winning streak in this year's elections has extended to statehouses across the country.

More than 2,000 women will serve in state legislatures when those chambers convene for their upcoming sessions, representing roughly a quarter of all state lawmakers across the country. That mark will eclipse the record of 1,875 who served this year, according to reports Thursday from the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

The number could rise as ballot-counting concludes in close contests across the country. The Associated Press has not yet called 216 state legislative elections, races that include about 185 female candidates, according to the center.

In another first, women could end up holding the majority in two state legislative chambers at the same time — the Colorado House and Nevada Assembly, according to tallies by the center and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

"It's about time," said Lisa Cutter, a Democrat who won a Colorado House seat in her first time seeking office.

Her victory came in a state with a long history of electing women. In 1894, Colorado became the first state to have women in its state legislature, when three were elected to the House.

The only previous time women comprised the majority in a state legislative chamber was in 2009 and 2010 in New Hampshire's state Senate.

The state lawmakers are part of a wave of women who ran and won this year for state and federal offices, most of them Democrats motivated by the election of President Donald Trump. They campaigned amid a spotlight on sexual harassment cast by the #MeToo movement, although polls showed that gender was only a minor concern for most voters.

Improving access to health care, expanding early childhood development and boosting funding for K-12 education were cited as top priorities by many female candidates during this year's campaigns.

Doreen Gallegos, a Democrat who was easily elected to a fourth term representing a Las Cruces-area district in the New Mexico House, said she believes those topics will get increased attention by having more women in state legislatures.

"There are certain issues that are closer to our hearts and our minds maybe more than our male counterparts," Gallegos said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 43 of 50

Nationally, women led the Democrats' return to control of the U.S. House of Representatives as the number of GOP women serving will be down from the current 23 to as few as 13. Overall, there will be at least 102 women in the House next year, an increase of at least 18 over the current mark. The peak number of women in the House at one time was 85 for a brief period in 2016.

The U.S. Senate will have at least 23 women, tying the current total and record. That number would rise by one if Republican Cindy Hyde-Smith wins a runoff election in Mississippi next month.

At the state level, at least nine women will be governors, tying the record set in 2004 and 2007. Ballots are still being counted in Georgia, where Democrat Stacey Abrams is hoping to push the governor's race to a runoff.

Despite this year's gains, American politics remain dominated by men, who will account for more than three-fourths of the seats in Congress and hold the governor's offices in four-fifths of the states.

It's at the state legislatures where women will hold a slightly larger proportion of the 7,383 seats — at least 27 percent.

"We are very encouraged by these results. This is the largest increase in women's representation in state legislatures we've seen in some time, after more than a decade of relative stagnation," Debbie Walsh, direct of the Rutgers center, said in a statement. "The only question that remains is whether 2018 was a one-off or a new norm."

In Colorado, Cutter found an easier path than expected to winning a suburban Denver district previously held by Republicans when incumbent Timothy Leonard dropped out of the race over the summer.

An organizer of the 2017 Women's March in Denver, Cutter said she anticipates a different course in the Colorado Legislature if one chamber is dominated by women. She expects issues such as health care and the environment to be more prominent and a better spirit of cooperation to prevail.

"When more women are in power or at the table, you get better results," she said.

Follow Mulvihill at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill>

This story has been corrected to show the name of the organization is the National Conference of State Legislatures, not National Council of State Legislatures.

Roy Clark, country guitar virtuoso, 'Hee Haw' star, has died

By KRISTIN M. HALL, Associated Press

Country star Roy Clark, the guitar virtuoso and singer who headlined the cornpone TV show "Hee Haw" for nearly a quarter century and was known for such hits as "Yesterday When I was Young" and "Honey-moon Feeling," has died. He was 85.

Publicist Jeremy Westby said Clark died Thursday due to complications from pneumonia at home in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Clark was "Hee Haw" host or co-host for its entire 24-year run, with Buck Owens his best known co-host. Started in 1969, the show featured the top stars in country music, including Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Charley Pride, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Dolly Parton, as well as other musical greats including Ray Charles, Chet Atkins and Boots Randolph. The country music and comedy show's last episode aired in 1993, though reruns continued for a few years thereafter.

"Hee Haw' won't go away. It brings a smile to too many faces," he said in 2004, when the show was distributed on VHS and DVD for the first time.

"I've known him for 60 years and he was a fine musician and entertainer," Charlie Daniels tweeted on Thursday. "Rest In peace Buddy, you will be remembered."

Keith Urban, who won entertainer of the year Wednesday night from the Country Music Association, also honored Clark on Thursday. "My first CMA memory is sitting on my living room floor watching Roy Clark tear it up," Urban tweeted. "Sending all my love and respect to him and his family for all he did."

Clark played the guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin, harmonica and other instruments. His skills brought him

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 44 of 50

gigs as guest performer with many top orchestras, including the Boston Pops. In 1976 he headlined a tour of the Soviet Union, breaking boundaries that were usually closed to Americans.

And of course, he also was a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

His hits included "The Tips of My Fingers" (1963), "Yesterday When I Was Young" (1969), "Come Live With Me" (1973) and "Honeymoon Feeling" (1974). He was also known for his instrumental versions of "Malaguena," on 12-string guitar, and "Ghost Riders in the Sky."

He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2009, and emotionally told the crowd how moving it was "just to be associated yourself with the members of the Country Music Hall of Fame and imagine that your name will be said right along with all the list."

Clark won a Grammy Award for best country instrumental performance for the song "Alabama Jubilee" and earned seven Country Music Association awards including entertainer of the year and comedian of the year.

In his 1994 autobiography, "My Life in Spite of Myself," he said "Yesterday, When I Was Young" had "opened a lot of people's eyes not only to what I could do but to the whole fertile and still largely untapped field of country music, from the Glen Campbells and the Kenny Rogerses, right on through to the Garth Brooks and Vince Gills."

Clark was guest host on "The Tonight Show" several times in the 1960s and 1970s when it was rare for a country performer to land such a role. His fans included not just musicians, but baseball great Mickey Mantle. The Yankees outfielder was moved to tears by "Yesterday When I Was Young" and for years made Clark promise to sing it at his memorial — a request granted after Mantle died in 1995.

Beginning in 1983, Clark operated the Roy Clark Celebrity Theatre in Branson, Missouri, and was one of the first country entertainers to open a theater there. Dozens followed him.

He was a touring artist as late as the 2000s. Over the years, he played at venues around the world: Carnegie Hall in New York, the Sporting Club in Monte Carlo, the Grand Palace in Brussels and the Rossiya Theatre in Moscow.

Clark was born in Meherrin, Virginia, and received his first guitar on his 14th Christmas. He was playing in his father's square dance band at age 15.

In the 1950s, Clark played in bands in the Washington, D.C., area. In 1960, he got the chance to front the band of country singer Wanda Jackson. He also performed regularly in Las Vegas. He got his first recording contract, with Capitol Records, in 1962.

He appeared on Jimmy Dean's TV show "Town and Country Time" and took over the show when Dean left.

Clark and Owens worked together for years, but they had very different feelings about "Hee Haw." Owens, who left the show in 1986, later referred to it as a "cartoon donkey," one he endured for "that big paycheck." Clark told The Associated Press in 2004 that "Hee Haw" was like a family reunion.

"We became a part of the family. The viewers were sort of part owners of the show. They identified with these clowns, and we had good music."

Clark said the hour-long program of country music and corny jokes capped off his career.

"This was the icing on the cake. This put my face and name together."

Former AP writer Joe Edwards contributed to this report.

Beloved toy store FAO Schwarz makes its comeback

By VERENA DOBNIK, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Three years after it closed its beloved toy store on Fifth Avenue, FAO Schwarz is making a return to New York.

A new FAO opens Friday in Manhattan's Rockefeller Center, about 10 blocks from its former home near Central Park.

For more than 150 years, FAO Schwarz was known in New York City for its classy and sometimes extravagantly expensive toys. The fantasyland store it opened on Fifth Avenue in 1986 was a tourist attrac-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 45 of 50

tion, replete with its own theme song, doormen who looked like palace guards and a musical clock tower. Financial problems at the parent company and rising rents closed that store in 2015, but FAO is now pulling back from the worst financial precipice since it was founded in 1862.

In recent weeks at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, workers drilled, hammered and sawed 24 hours a day to get the new store ready. Employees filled shelves with hundreds of plush animals that have long defined the brand — bears, bunnies, elephants, chicks and more. The big entrance clock tower has returned. And on the second level of the 20,000-square-foot space is a giant piano keyboard mat like the one on which Tom Hanks danced to “Heart and Soul” in the 1988 film “Big.”

The 20-foot-long instrument with 60 keys is reflected on the ceiling for people in the plaza below to see. Replicas for sale cost \$128.

There is also a toy grocery store where children can shop among artificial produce, complete with small carts, a checkout counter and kitchen supplies. For \$75, another interactive station allows kids to adopt baby dolls, while a “nurse” gives lessons on how to care for them. Live magic shows will be staged nearby, next to a spot for assembling custom remote-control cars. A 27-foot-tall rocket ship teems with stuffed bear astronauts.

“We are about experiences. That’s what’s different from other toy stores,” said David Niggli, FAO’s chief merchandising officer.

In a global marketing push, pop-up FAO shops are also opening for the holidays in England, Spain and Australia. A March rollout is planned for a permanent store at a mall in Beijing in addition to smaller retail locations in airports and elsewhere across the U.S. and Canada.

FAO Schwarz has gone through multiple corporate takeovers in recent years as retailers struggled to adapt to online sales. It was purchased in 2002 by Right Start Inc., which filed for bankruptcy twice. Toys “R” Us was the next owner. It sold the FAO name to the California-based ThreeSixty Brands in 2016 before recently declaring bankruptcy itself.

FAO was founded in 1862 by German immigrant Frederick August Otto Schwarz, specializing in high-end toys, some imported from Europe. By the 20th century, in stores across the country, fancy items included a \$1,500 jeweled Etch-A-Sketch and a Barbie-themed, hot pink foosball table for \$25,000.

There are a few extravagant items to be had in the new store but plenty of modestly priced items, too. “We have beautiful artisan pieces here, like rocking horses, but we also have items that are \$10,” Niggli said. “There’s always going to be some of those over-the-top items. I think that’s part of what you come to FAO to see. It’s part of the magic.”

The most luxurious item on sale could be a child-size, drivable Mercedes Benz encrusted with 44,000 Swarovski crystals. Base price: \$25,000.

“That’s the core of FAO. It’s the classics plus the ‘Oh, wow’ things you’ve never seen before,” Niggli said.

Utility asked last month to hike bills over California fires

By JONATHAN J. COOPER, CATHY BUSSEWITZ and GARANCE BURKE, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A utility facing severe financial pressure amid speculation its equipment may have sparked a deadly Northern California wildfire asked U.S. energy regulators last month for permission to raise its customers’ monthly bills to harden its system against wildfires and deliver a sizable increase in profits to shareholders.

In an October filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Pacific Gas & Electric Co. laid out a variety of dangers confronting its transmission lines running through Northern California, saying its system faced a higher risk of wildfires than any other utility.

“The implications of PG&E’s exposure to potential liabilities associated with wildfires are dramatically magnified,” the filing said. “Overcoming the negative financial impact of any significant damages that might ultimately be attributed to PG&E will require an ongoing commitment of capital from investors.”

San Francisco-based PG&E — one of the nation’s largest electric utilities serving most of Northern and central California — made the request a month before the Camp Fire broke out Nov. 8 and quickly bal-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 46 of 50

looned into the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century. No cause has been determined, but speculation has centered on PG&E, which reported an outage around when and where the fire ignited.

The company has lost \$15 billion in market value, its shares plummeting 60 percent in a week.

PG&E already faced financial pressure from its suspected role in a series of deadly fires in California wine country last year. The company's filing last month said it needed to boost revenue to keep investors from fleeing, noting that its credit rating was downgraded and its shares had plummeted since the 2017 fires.

Wildfires threaten PG&E's ability to attract and maintain the investment necessary to support its system and meet California's clean energy goals, company spokeswoman Lynsey Paulo said.

"PG&E's electrical system is not immune from the impact of increases in the frequency and severity of extreme weather," Paulo said.

California Public Utilities Commission President Michael Picker sought to calm financial markets late Thursday with a statement noting "an essential component of providing safe electrical service is the financial wherewithal to carry out safety measures." But he added that he's expanding an investigation of PG&E's safety culture to look at the company's "corporate governance, structure and operation."

PG&E shares rebounded in after-hours trading, regaining Thursday's losses but remaining far below their value when the fire broke out.

The company said in its rate-hike request that the extreme wildfire risk justified a higher profit than an average utility is allowed to earn. It cites a California legal standard holding utilities entirely liable for damage caused by their equipment regardless of whether the company was negligent.

A state law approved this year makes it easier for the company to raise rates to pay off lawsuits, but the company says it still faces high risk and got no relief for fires that started this year.

The precipitous drop in the stock price shows investors are taking into account not just the fires but also the risk of future wildfires for which the utility could be responsible, analysts said.

"It's going to be very difficult for PG&E to finance its needs in the short run, so we think at this point, regulators need to step in and give the market some reassurance," said Travis Miller, a strategist at Morningstar.

PG&E is asking for a 9.5 percent increase in transmission charges — the cost of high-voltage lines that move power across large distances. That amounts to about \$1.50 more per month for the average residential customer, Paulo said.

Advocates for utility customers have balked at PG&E's contention that it needs to raise rates because of wildfires. They say its problems are the result of poor management decisions.

"We don't pay electric bills in order to keep bailing PG&E out from its own negligence and incompetence, and we can't afford it," said Mindy Spatt, communications director for The Utility Reform Network.

PG&E reported to the Securities and Exchange Commission this week that it had renewed its insurance coverage for wildfires to about \$1.4 billion for the year covering this fire season. But an analyst at Citi Investment Research estimated damages could exceed \$15 billion. And the company's potential liability for last year's fires has been pegged at upward of \$10 billion.

Some analysts believe PG&E will be able to survive financially as long as there isn't another major catastrophe. But wildfires are getting bigger, deadlier and more destructive as housing pushes into rural areas and drought and high temperatures tied to climate change become the norm.

"The business doesn't earn enough money to pay for that in any kind of regular way," said Michael Wara, director of the Climate and Energy Policy Program at Stanford University. "These have to be extreme, once-in-a-generation events."

PG&E's ability to raise capital will be constrained, so it will probably be forced to cut back on expenses such as replacing aging equipment, analysts said. California utilities also need to invest in the type of upgrades that will allow the state to meet its aggressive renewable energy and carbon reduction goals.

Fire investigators have blamed PG&E equipment for 12 of last year's wildfires, including two that killed 15 people combined. In eight of those fires, investigators said they found evidence of violations of state law and forwarded the findings to prosecutors.

The company is facing dozens of lawsuits from insurers and people who lost their homes in last year. And a lawsuit this week blames PG&E for the latest fire, accusing the company failing to effectively maintain power lines.

California regulators generally allow utilities to pass on the costs of those lawsuits to their customers, but only if the company can show it prudently managed its equipment. The new state law makes it easier for utilities to bill customers if they can show a fire got worse from things outside their control, like severe weather. But lawmakers didn't drop the standard that puts all the liability on the utility, which is unique to two states.

"Very large damage payments of the size faced by California utilities are very unusual in other states," said Hugh Wynne of Sector and Sovereign Research, an investment research firm.

___ Bussewitz reported from New York.

California recommends restrictions for popular pesticide

By BRIAN MELLEY, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California regulators recommended new restrictions Thursday on a widely used pesticide blamed for harming the brains of babies.

The Department of Pesticide Regulation issued temporary guidelines for chlorpyrifos that include banning it from crop dusting, discontinuing its use on most crops and increasing perimeters around where it's applied.

The DowDuPont pesticide currently used on about 60 different crops — including grapes, almonds and oranges — has increasingly come under fire from regulators, lawmakers and courts.

A federal appeals court in August ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to remove the pesticide from sale in the United States after it ruled the Trump administration endangered public health by reversing an Obama-era effort to ban the chemical. The EPA is appealing that 2-1 ruling to a full panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Hawaii passed legislation in June that will ban the use of the pesticide in January.

An environmental group blasted the new recommendations as toothless and said California should be taking the pesticide off the market after scientists for three state agencies found it was toxic and couldn't be safely used at any levels.

"Unfortunately, these are voluntary recommendations for local officials that have no weight of law behind them," said Paul Towers of the Pesticide Action Network. "Instead of taking this brain-harming pesticide off the market, California officials are again passing the buck."

The California action comes as the state considers long-term regulations to restrict the use of chlorpyrifos and designate it as a "toxic air contaminant" that poses a risk of serious illness or death.

Farmworkers in the nation's leading agricultural state have been sickened several times in recent years when the pesticide drifted.

More than three dozen workers harvesting cabbage in Kern County last year were affected when the pesticide drifted from neighboring farms, causing some to become nauseous and vomit and sending some for medical treatment, the department said.

At least 13 people were affected in four incidents this year, including 10 workers in Solano County where the pesticide was applied to an almond orchard in July.

The pesticide is in a class of organophosphates chemically similar to a nerve gas developed by Nazi Germany before World War II. Its heavy use has often left traces in drinking water sources. A University of California at Berkeley study in 2012 found that 87 percent of umbilical-cord blood samples tested from newborn babies contained detectable levels of the pesticide.

Under pressure from federal regulators, the company voluntarily withdrew chlorpyrifos for use as a home insecticide in 2000. EPA also placed "no-spray" buffer zones around sensitive sites, such as schools, in 2012.

DowDuPont disagreed with the recommendations and said it would hurt growers who rely on the pesticide, spokesman Gregg Schmidt said.

The Almond Board of California said in a statement that its growers would follow state and federal

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 48 of 50

regulations.

The action by California comes as the state proposes designating chlorpyrifos as a "toxic air contaminant" that poses a risk of serious illness or death.

In the meantime, the department is recommending county agriculture commissioners, who issue pesticide application permits, adopt the restrictions in January so they can protect health.

"This is like our short-term fix," department spokeswoman Charlotte Fadipe said. "We've already started down a longer road to a permanent fix."

Other recommendations include creating a 150-foot setback from homes, businesses and schools where the pesticide is applied. During applications, there would have to be a quarter-mile buffer zone for 24 hours around any field where the pesticide is applied and the only people allowed inside the area would be authorized applicators.

The department also recommended limiting use of chlorpyrifos to certain crops to combat specific pests, such as weevils and certain types of aphids on alfalfa, stink bugs on almonds and maggots on leafy vegetables and onions..

Asia shares mixed on uncertainty over trade tensions

SINGAPORE (AP) — Shares were mixed in early trading in Asia on Friday on revived concerns over the prospects for a breakthrough in trade tensions between the U.S. and China.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.4 percent to 21,717.57 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong gave up 0.5 percent to 25,967.01. South Korea's Kospi rose 0.2 percent to 2,091.63 while Australia's S&P ASX 200 was flat at 5,737.50. The Shanghai Composite index edged 0.1 percent lower to 2,664.81. Shares in Southeast Asia were mostly higher.

WALL STREET REBOUND: Gains for technology companies and banks helped reverse an early slide for U.S. stocks Thursday, breaking a five-day losing streak for the market. The S&P 500 index rose 1.1 percent to 2,730.20. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.8 percent to 25,289.27. The Nasdaq composite climbed 1.7 percent to 7,259.03 and the Russell 2000 index of smaller companies picked up 1.4 percent to 1,524.12.

CHINA-U.S. TRADE: Thursday's U.S. market rebound coincided with a Financial Times report citing unnamed sources that said the United States' trade representative, Robert Lighthizer, has told some executives that a planned escalation in January of U.S. tariffs on imported goods from China are now on hold. The Trump administration has imposed a 10 percent tariff on \$200 billion of Chinese goods over complaints Beijing steals or pressures foreign companies to hand over technology as the price of market access. That tariff had been due to rise to 25 percent in January. Another \$50 billion of Chinese goods already is subject to 25 percent duties. Beijing has responded with penalty duties on \$110 billion of American goods. Washington and Beijing resumed talks over their spiraling trade dispute this week ahead of a meeting between Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump, China's Commerce Ministry said Thursday.

BREXIT: Major European stock indexes closed mostly lower on Thursday following a flare-up in discord over British Prime Minister Theresa May's plan for Britain's departure from the European Union next year. She persuaded a majority in her Cabinet to back an agreement that would allow Britain to stay in a customs union while a trade treaty is negotiated, but the deal faces an uncertain fate in Parliament and two of her Cabinet ministers, including the Brexit minister, resigned in protest. The disarray surrounding the process sent the pound lower and hit British bank stocks. Barclay's slid 5.1 percent to \$8.54 and Royal Bank of Scotland slumped 8.9 percent to \$5.93.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude oil rose 20 cents to \$56.66 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It added 0.4 percent to settle at \$56.46 a barrel on Thursday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained \$24 cents to \$66.86 a barrel. Despite the latest uptick, U.S. crude oil is still down about 13.5 percent for the month.

CURRENCIES: The dollar slipped to 113.40 yen from 113.64 yen on Thursday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1341 from \$1.1326. The pound steadied at \$1.2790, up from \$1.2771.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 49 of 50

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Nov. 16, the 320th day of 2018. There are 45 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 16, 1933, the United States and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations.

On this date:

In 1776, British troops captured Fort Washington in New York during the American Revolution.

In 1907, Oklahoma became the 46th state of the union.

In 1914, the newly created Federal Reserve Banks opened in 12 cities.

In 1939, mob boss Al Capone, ill with syphilis, was released from prison after serving 7 1/2 years for tax evasion and failure to file tax returns.

In 1959, the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The Sound of Music" opened on Broadway.

In 1961, House Speaker Samuel T. Rayburn died in Bonham, Texas, having served as speaker since 1940 except for two terms.

In 1966, Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard was acquitted in Cleveland at his second trial of murdering his pregnant wife, Marilyn, in 1954.

In 1973, Skylab 4, carrying a crew of three astronauts, was launched from Cape Canaveral on an 84-day mission.

In 1981, actor William Holden was found dead in his apartment in Santa Monica, California; he was 63.

In 1982, an agreement was announced in the 57th day of a strike by National Football League players.

In 1997, China's most prominent pro-democracy campaigner, Wei Jingsheng (way jeeng-shuhng), arrived in the United States after being released following nearly 18 years of imprisonment in his country.

In 2006, Democrats embraced Nancy Pelosi as the first woman House speaker in history, but then selected Steny Hoyer as majority leader against her wishes.

Ten years ago: Iraq's Cabinet overwhelmingly approved a security pact with the United States calling for American forces to remain in the country until 2012. Space shuttle Endeavour linked up with the international space station. The Pittsburgh Steelers rallied to beat the San Diego Chargers 11-10, the first such final score in NFL history.

Five years ago: In his weekly Saturday radio and Internet address, President Barack Obama said improved energy efficiency and higher energy production in the United States were yielding environmental and economic benefits that were helping ensure cleaner air and a more competitive business landscape.

One year ago: Minnesota Democratic Sen. Al Franken became the first member of Congress to be caught up in a wave of allegations of sexual abuse and inappropriate behavior, after a Los Angeles radio anchor accused him of forcibly kissing her and groping her during a 2006 USO tour. The federal bribery trial of Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey ended with the jury hopelessly deadlocked on all charges. (Federal prosecutors decided in January not to retry him.) Jose Altuve of the World Champion Houston Astros won the American League Most Valuable Player award; Giancarlo Stanton of the Marlins was the winner in the National League. At the Latin Grammy Awards in Las Vegas, several artists dedicated their performances and awards to Puerto Rico as the island struggled to recover from Hurricane Maria.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Clu Gulager is 90. Journalist Elizabeth Drew is 83. Blues musician W.C. Clark is 79. Actress Joanna Pettet is 76. Actor Steve Railsback is 73. Actor David Leisure is 68. Actor Miguel Sandoval is 67. Actress Marg Helgenberger is 60. Rock musician Mani is 56. Country singer-musician Keith Burns (Trick Pony) is 55. Former pro tennis player Zina Garrison is 55. Former MLB All-Star pitcher Dwight Gooden is 54. Jazz singer Diana Krall is 54. Actor Harry Lennix is 54. Rock musician Dave Kushner (Velvet Revolver) is 52. Actress Lisa Bonet (boh-NAY') is 51. Actress Tammy Lauren is 50. Rhythm-and-blues singer Bryan Abrams (Color Me Badd) is 49. Actress Martha Plimpton is 48. Actor Michael Irby is 46. Actress Missi Pyle is 46. Rock musician Corey McCormick (Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real) is 42. Olympic gold medal figure skater Oksana Baiul (ahk-SAH'-nah by-OOL') is 41. Actress Maggie Gyllenhaal (JIHL'-ehn-hahl) is 41.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Nov. 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 130 ~ 50 of 50

Pop singer Trevor Penick is 39. Former NBA player Amare Stoudemire is 36. Actress Kimberly J. Brown is 34. Rock singer Siva Kaneswaran (The Wanted) is 30. Actor-comedian Pete Davidson (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 25. Actor Casey Moss is 25. Actor Noah Gray-Cabey is 23.

Thought for Today: "History is a gallery of pictures in which there are few originals and many copies."
— Alexis de Tocqueville, French historian (1805-1859).