

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 1 of 79

- 1- Groton Ford Ad
- 1- Recycling Trailer
- 2- Hunter Schaller Page
- 3- Upcoming GDILIVE.COM event
- 4- Help Wanted Ad
- 4- Middle/High School Christmas Concert
- 8- Deadwood officials leading effort to legalize sports betting in South Dakota
- 13- Second half comeback leads Northern State to second NSIC victory of 2018-19
- 14- Retire online with Social Security, quickly and easily
- 15- Obit: Marlys Rodman
- 16- Governor-elect Noem Announces Staff Hires
- 17- Gov.-Elect Noem's Weekly Column
- 18- Gov. Dugaard's Weekly Column
- 19- Today in Weather History
- 20- Today's Forecast
- 21- Yesterday's Weather
- 21- National Weather map
- 21- Today's Weather Almanac
- 22- Daily Devotional
- 22- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 23- News from the Associated Press



Christian Ehresmann wore his reindeer hat at the concert. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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



Put our experienced team to work for you!

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GROTONFORD.COM 605-397-2311

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Saturday, December 8, 2018

Ringneck LD and PF Debate at Aberdeen Central High School
Robotics at Rapid City Stevens High School
10:00am: Wrestling: Boys Varsity Tournament vs. LaMoure/Litchville-Marion @ LaMoure High School
2:00pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Double Header vs. Leola-Frederick @ Frederick High School (JV Girls game at 2pm JV Boys game at 3pm Varsity Girls game at 4:30pm Varsity Boys game at 6pm)

Sunday, December 9, 2018

(2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym, GHS Arena
Grades JK-8 2pm - 4pm; Grades 6-12 4pm - 6pm)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 2 of 79



ALL FOR HUNT

HUNTING FOR A BIGGER REASON

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13



This is a Fundraiser for Hunter Schaller and his family organized by Peyton Johnson and family. Designed by Peyton Johnson.

Orders are due by December 19th and will be ready the week of January 7th.

[Click here to place an order](#)



#allforHunt Fundraiser - Keychains \$10

All proceeds to go to the family. You can order at the Groton High School office, Professional Management Services, Lori's Pharmacy or BK Custom T's

A GoFundMe page has been established for the Schaller family, started by Peyton Johnson. Thus far, in nine days, \$11,880 has been raised of the \$15,000 goal. To donate, [click here](#).

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 3 of 79

It's Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



Leola/Frederick
Titans



VS

Groton Area Tigers

Saturday, Dec. 8, 2018

Varsity girls at 4:30, Varsity Boys at 6:00
at Frederick

This GDILIVE.COM event is sponsored by

Aberdeen
Chrysler Center

901 Auto Plaza Drive
Aberdeen, SD

800.874.9173

www.aberdeenchrysler.com

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 4 of 79

Middle/High School Christmas Concert



The sixth grade choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "Happy, Happy Holidays" and "Rudolph, Frosty and Suzy." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The junior high choir sang, "Born, Born in Bethlehem," "Jazzy Saint Nick" and "Rockin' Holidays!" They were accompanied by Desiree Yeigh and directed by Cody Swanson. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

Help Wanted

Looking for full-time and part-time labor in Hecla area. Pressure washing livestock trailers and hog barns. Also working in hog barns as needed, training is provided. Must be able to lift at least 50 lbs. Would require some evenings. Must have good work ethic and references. Full-time benefits of health insurance and 401K, part-time has 401K. Contact Cole at 994-2201.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 5 of 79



The sixth grade band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "Colors of Christmas," "Carol of the Kings" and "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The junior high band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "Bobsled Run," "Happy Christmas (War is Over)" and "Deck the Halls with Rock 'N Roll." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 6 of 79



The junior high choir, the high school choir and the brass/percussion ensemble teamed together to perform "Joy to the World." They were directed by Cody Swanson and the accompanist was Desiree Yeigh. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The high school choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "Holiday Road," "No Room, No Room" and "Jingle Bells." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The Chamber Choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "Ding! Dong! Merrily on High." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 7 of 79



The high school band, under the direction of Austin Fordham, performed, "Christmas at the Movies," "Silent Night," and "Stars and Stripes for Christmas." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The entire GHS music department led the audience in a sing-a-long, directed by Desiree Yeigh. Songs sung were, "Deck the Hall," "Jingle Bells," "O Christmas Tree," and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

Deadwood officials leading effort to legalize sports betting in South Dakota

By: Tom Griffith

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

Next month, the South Dakota Legislature will be asked to pave the way for legalized sports betting in the state.

Proponents pushing a constitutional amendment to allow the gaming in Deadwood casinos want lawmakers to place the question on the 2020 ballot.

Several states now offer sports betting and others are considering it following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in May.

The decision struck down a federal law which banned such betting outside of Nevada. The ruling allows individual states to determine if sports betting will be allowed.

Gaming industry professionals, sports bar owners, even those charged with overseeing South Dakota's current legalized wagering, acknowledge that illegal sports betting is already occurring in the state. Proponents of legal sports betting contend that South Dakota is missing out on potential revenues in the process.

"I was sitting at the bar at the Ramkota in Pierre and the guy next to me picked up his phone and made a bet on a football game," said Larry Eliason, executive secretary of the South Dakota Commission on Gaming, the state agency that oversees all legal gambling activities in the state. "Of course, he didn't know who I was.

"So, we know people in South Dakota bet on sports through bookies now," Eliason added.

"How much they bet and how many bookies there are, we don't know. It's difficult to accurately gauge the extent of any activity that's illegal."

South Dakota has had legal gaming since 1989 and 22 casinos are operating in Deadwood. Gaming is only legal in Deadwood and at tribal casinos, though the video lottery is legal across the state.

The proposed amendment would expand the definition of gaming allowed in Deadwood casinos. If approved, the constitutional change also would allow sports betting in tribal casinos.

As proposed, the measure also would return a bigger share of gambling tax revenue to the city of Deadwood. The city has received \$6.8 million in revenue each year since gambling was legalized in the state in 1989. The proposed amendment would allow the Deadwood allocation to grow with inflation.



Sports betting would be allowed in the 22 Deadwood casinos if the proposed amendment is approved. The city of Deadwood receives up to \$6.8 million in revenue from its gaming operations each year. Photo: Tom Griffith

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 9 of 79

Sports betting is big business in U.S.

An official with the American Gaming Association, which represents a \$261 billion casino gaming industry in the U.S., told a U.S. House subcommittee in September that a massive illegal sports betting market currently exceeds \$150 billion each year.

"This vast illegal market has fueled criminal activity and left American consumers outside of Nevada with no safe alternative to bet," AGA Senior Vice President Sara Slane told the House panel. "Nearly 60 percent of Americans were in favor of eliminating the failed federal ban, and nearly two-thirds of Americans believe legal, regulated sports betting would deliver benefits to their communities."

Since the Supreme Court's May ruling, 18 states have considered legislation to legalize sports betting and Delaware, New Jersey, Mississippi and West Virginia have joined Nevada in allowing single-game sports betting. Meanwhile, operations in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and New York are pending, Slane said.

Several other states, including Iowa, Nebraska and New Mexico, are currently exploring legislation to allow sports betting, according to recent news reports.

In view of what's happening across the country, South Dakota's gaming industry experts contend that sanctioning legal wagering on sporting contests will permit Deadwood and the state's tribal casinos to remain competitive with other gaming jurisdictions – the same argument used when craps, roulette and keno were added to the state's stable of games in summer 2015.

The Deadwood Gaming Association, which led past efforts to increase bet limits and add roulette, craps and keno to the existing slate of poker, blackjack and slot machines, has discussed what it needs to do to make legal sports betting come to South Dakota.

"For Deadwood, legal sports betting creates additional opportunities, particularly as it relates to high-visibility contests like the Super Bowl, Sweet 16, Major League Baseball World Series and the college football playoffs," said Mike Rodman, executive director of the DGA. "All of those could create excitement, additional marketing opportunities, and would bring people to town. We know the people in South Dakota like sports betting and would like to do it in a legal, safe and regulated manner."

In addition to giving prospective visitors another reason to come to Deadwood, Rodman noted that bringing legal sports wagering to Deadwood and the state's tribal casinos would result in additional tax revenues for the state.

"We believe for Deadwood, a \$100 million annual gaming market, that we would realize \$1 million to \$2 million in annual sports betting," he said.

At least one of South Dakota's tribes currently operating a casino supports the DGA plan.

"Sports betting is a multi-billion-dollar industry that, until recently, was illegal in most United States jurisdictions," said Seth Pearman, an attorney representing the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe. "We have been actively monitoring the legalization of wagering on sporting events."

Pearman said the tribe has had conversations with the Deadwood Gaming Association, industry experts and others regarding the possibility of legalizing in South Dakota and intends to work with these partners to further the legalization efforts.

"Sports wagering at the Royal River Casino would diversify the gaming opportunities for patrons, would positively impact their experience overall, and would keep them from leaving the area to legally place wagers," Pearman said.

"People in South Dakota right now can get on their computer and sports bet, and people have their local bookies, betting on weekly baseball and football. The state is starved for revenues. If the people want to accept it, let's go for it and make a few dollars off of it and get some revenues for education or the counties." - Rep. Tim Rounds

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 10 of 79

Deadwood gaming today

The state assesses a 9 percent tax on Deadwood gaming revenues. In addition, a \$2,000 per device/table fee is paid by the casinos. From those revenues, 1 percent goes directly to the state general fund, 40 percent to South Dakota Department of Tourism, 10 percent to Lawrence County, and the rest to the South Dakota Gaming Association until its expenses are met.

State law caps the city of Deadwood's "take" from legalized gambling at \$6.8 million annually. After that cap is met, any of the excess funds are distributed to Lawrence County cities and school districts.

Deadwood has spent the money on bond payments for city projects, historic preservation activities, building repair and maintenance, marketing and a variety of other projects.

Last year, after all financial obligations under the law were met, excess funds totaling nearly \$2 million were deposited in the general fund, \$279,000 was distributed to other municipalities, and \$279,000 went to the school districts, according to Gaming Commission reports.

With sports betting, Rodman said, the goal would be to massage the \$2,000 fee per device into a set fee that would cover each sports betting location, rather than each window.



Deadwood gaming officials estimate the city's casinos could generate \$1-\$2 million in sports betting if the practice is legalized in South Dakota.

Changing the Constitution

The process of changing the state's constitution to allow sports betting could take nearly three years.

The proposed language amending the state constitution, has been reviewed by the state Legislative Research Council and by the state Attorney General's office. It is expected to be presented to the state Legislature when it convenes in January, with the hope that it would approve placement of the constitutional amendment on the fall 2020 ballot.

If the Legislature declines to place the amendment on the ballot, proponents would be required to obtain as many as 35,000 signatures of registered South Dakota voters on petitions to put the measure before voters in November 2020.

"It's a long process," Rodman said. "If all of the hurdles are met, the earliest South Dakotans could make a legal sports wager in the state would be July 1, 2021."

Tim Rounds, a Republican legislator who has served 14 years in the State House representing Hughes, Hyde, Stanley and Sully counties, said he would likely favor a measure in the next legislative session to bring the issue to voters.

"People in South Dakota right now can get on their computer and sports bet, and people have their local bookies, betting on weekly baseball and football," he said. "The state is starved for revenues. If the people want to accept it, let's go for it and make a few dollars off of it and get some revenues for education or

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 11 of 79

the counties. I would like South Dakotans to be allowed to decide the issue.”

Rep. Tim Johns, who served 30 years as a magistrate and circuit court judge before being elected to represent Northern Black Hills residents in the state House, has previously championed legislation that authorized increases in bet limits and the addition of craps, roulette and keno. When asked if he would sponsor legislation tied to legalizing sports betting in the next legislative session, Johns was noncommittal.

“Frankly, I’m sure sports betting is already here and is probably in every bar in the small towns of South Dakota,” Johns said. “There is something to say about legalizing it and taxing it. We’re always looking for additional revenues and if it’s going to happen, it needs to be regulated.”

But, Johns also said that he is still studying the issue.

“I haven’t made up my mind and I haven’t taken a position,” he said. “I know there will be considerable opposition to it from certain segments – those who oppose any form of gambling. But, I’m willing to look at it.”

Although the Rapid City-based Family Heritage Alliance has not taken a formal stand on legalizing sports wagering, Executive Director Norman Woods said his organization would likely oppose any effort to expand gambling opportunities.

“In general, we’ve traditionally been opposed to expanded gambling in the state,” Woods said. “On sports betting in particular, we haven’t taken a stance yet. We usually wait until actual legislation is proposed before the Legislature.”

In the past, Woods noted that the Family Heritage Alliance had opposed increased bet limits and the addition of craps, roulette and keno due to the “secondary negative affects of gambling,” which include addiction, stress on families, and increased rates of embezzlement, crime and suicide.

If proponents of sports wagering are successful and South Dakota voters gamble on bringing the newest form of betting to the state, the Legislature and the South Dakota Commission on Gaming, “would need to convene and establish new rules and regulations and address all of the details and nuances,” said the Gaming Commission’s Eliason.

“They also would establish the tax rate and whether they could bet on collegiate contests and would that include whether they could bet on South Dakota teams,” Eliason said. For instance, in New Jersey gamblers may place wagers on college games, but not on New Jersey schools, while Mississippi has no such restriction, he said.

While Eliason plans to retire in early 2019, he said his agency would examine what rules other states have adopted in determining what’s right for South Dakota.

“Of course, we’d also look at Nevada due to its experience in this arena,” he said. The Legislature would be charged with determining where revenues derived from sports betting would be dedicated, he said.



Toby Keehn, owner of Mustang Sally's sports bar on Deadwood's Main Street, says legal sports betting would give customers another reason to come in the door. Photo: Tom

Griffith

Bar owners anticipate increased activity

Walk into Mustang Sally's sports bar on Deadwood's Main Street any evening or weekend and you'll find 25 flat-screen televisions airing virtually every sporting contest around the globe, from European soccer matches to NFL and MLB contests.

Owner Toby Keehn says anybody interested in placing an illegal sports bet today can do so with relative ease. While he said he's familiar with a few bookies primarily operating East River, Keehn said the South Dakota Commission on Gaming acts as a deterrent for those activities in the western portion of South Dakota.

"Anybody who wants to bet on a game can probably figure it out," he said. "You can place a bet now and have a better payback on your phone than in Las Vegas."

Regardless, depending on the level of taxes the state imposes on legal sports betting, Keehn believes it would provide another entertainment option for Deadwood visitors that might just bring a few more customers through the door.

"I think it would be a wonderful addition to our gaming options because it's truly entertainment," he said. "If it was legal, all of a sudden the consumer has protections and oversight and I don't think it would be hard to set up. It could be kiosks or an established sports book. With today's technology, I wouldn't be surprised if, when it's all said and done, somebody could walk up to a video lottery machine and make a bet."

Deadwood Mayor Dave Ruth agreed with Keehn's assessment, and stressed that his Northern Hills tourist town needs to compete on a par with its competitors across the nation.

"Recent reports on the handle in Deadwood indicate a stabilization of the gaming industry," Ruth said. "Without being able to offer the same betting opportunities as other venues, we will once again be behind our competitors in the industry. It's important that we be able to not only keep up, but potentially lead the industry because if you're going backwards, you're shrinking."

Ruth said he anticipated his community would be working with the Deadwood Gaming Association and its allies to get sports betting approved statewide.

"Gaming is an important part of our local economy and anything we can do to promote and grow our industry, we have a responsibility to pursue," the mayor said.

Second half comeback leads Northern State to second NSIC victory of 2018-19

Bemidji, Minn. – The Northern State University men’s basketball team put their rally caps on in an 84-73 victory over Bemidji State on the road. The Wolves trailed 39-34 at the half, and by as much as 17-points in the second, but battled back and remained unscathed in NSIC action. NSU improved to 6-2 on the year and 2-0 in the NSIC, handing the Beavers their first league loss of the season.

After trailing by 17 with just under 17 minutes to play in the second, the Wolves began to chip away at the Bemidji State lead. Northern went on a 19-4 run over the course of the next five minutes, and ended up taking their first lead of the second half with 5:29 left to play. The two team’s traded leads through the next two minutes, however the Wolves ran away with the game from there.

The Wolves shot 47.5 percent from the floor, 32.1 percent from the 3-point line, and 85.0 percent from the foul line in the win. They out-rebounded the Beavers 38-24, and tallied 14 assists, nine made 3-pointers, four blocks, and three steals. BSU out-shot the Wolves from the floor and the 3-point line, however 17 made free throws, 17 points off turnovers, and 13 second chance points made the difference in the game.

Seniors Ian Smith and Justin Decker led the team with 18 points apiece. Smith tallied a team high eight assists, and added five rebounds. Decker tallied four rebounds and one assist, and led the team going 6-of-6 from the foul line. Gabe King and Bo Fries were the final Wolves in double figures with 17 and 12 points respectively. King tallied three buckets made from beyond the arc, and added a team high two steals. Fries recorded his first double double of the season, adding a career high 12 rebounds and three blocks.

Andrew Kallman rounded out the starting five for the Wolves with nine points, with all three field goals coming from beyond the arc. Parker Fox and Cole Dahl led the team off the bench with five points each and a combined three rebounds. Fox added one steal and one block, while Mason Stark and Jordan Belka tallied one rebounds and one assist, and two rebounds respectively.

Northern returns to the court this evening at Minnesota Crookston. Tip-off is set for 5:30 p.m. versus the Golden Eagles.

Retire online with Social Security, quickly and easily



The idea of applying for Social Security retirement benefits might seem daunting, but it's not. There's no need to visit an office. You don't have to use the phone. We have an online retirement application that you can complete in as little as 15 minutes and from the comfort of your home or office. In most cases, once your application is submitted electronically, you're done. There are no forms to sign and usually no documentation is required. Social Security will process your application and contact you if any further information is needed.

It's as simple as that. You can start your application now at www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/retirement.

You can apply online for retirement benefits or [benefits as a spouse](#) if you:

- are at least 61 years and 9 months old;
- are not currently receiving benefits on your own Social Security record;
- have not already applied for retirement benefits; and
- want your benefits to start no more than 4 months in the future. (We cannot process your application if you apply for benefits more than 4 months in advance.)

You'll have to create or sign into your my Social Security account as part of your application. If you don't have an account yet, this is a perfect time to create one. Just as important, this is where you will be able to check your application for benefits. Like our other online services, my Social Security is available on your time and there's no waiting in line or on the phone. You can see your entire work history going back to your first job to make sure we have all of your wages correctly tallied. Create or sign into your account at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

Are you curious about how much your retirement benefits will be? You can get an idea of what your benefits will be using our Retirement Estimator at www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/retirement/estimator.html.

Social Security provides services for millions of people, but we also want to make your experience with us as simple and easy as possible. Our many online services, including retiring online, are part of that mission. You can access more at www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices.

The Life of Marlys Rodman

Marlys Faye Rodman was born April 20, 1934 to Louis and Ida (Passage) Karnopp in Webster, South Dakota. She grew up in East Hanson on a farm and attended Pride School through the 5th grade. Her family moved to Groton in 1945 where she continued her schooling, graduating in 1952. Marlys moved to California where she met Allen Soukup and they were married in 1955. Allen died in 1965. She later married Verlyn (Jack) Rodman and became a mother to his young son, Douglas. Marlys returned to South Dakota to be with her family after 45 years in California.

She was active in the United Methodist Church throughout her life, serving on many committees, teaching Sunday School, was church office secretary and held various church board positions.

Marlys enjoyed various vocations throughout her life. She was Assistant Art Director for Merle Norman Cosmetics, Managed a Senior Community Village and co-owned a nation wide moving company. Her interests were her family, church, friends, traveling, reading, music and nature.

Marlys passed away December 7, 2018 at Groton Care and Rehabilitation Center at the age of 84. She requested no services be held.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband, Allen, two brothers, Kenneth and Wallace and her sister, Arlene (Walter) Boehmer.

She is survived by her son, Douglas of California, three nephews, Rodney Boehmer of Groton, Robert (Shelley) Boehmer of Pierre, Louis Karnopp of Antioch, California, her niece Barbara Ann (Hector) Orana of Texas, grand-nieces Crystal (Tyson) Lindekugel of Pierre, Lacey (Nicholas) Hogan of Sioux Falls, Bethany Karnopp of California and grand-nephews, Ben Karnopp of California, Jordan Nolan of Arizona and Jason Cook of San Diego, California.

Governor-elect Noem Announces Staff Hires

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor-elect Kristi Noem today announced a key round of governor’s office staff hires. The following people will begin serving on January 5, 2019.

Senior Advisor

Beth Hollatz will serve the Noem administration as senior advisor. Hollatz, a Watertown resident, previously served as state director for Governor-elect Noem’s congressional office. Additionally, Hollatz functioned as a key advisor on the Kristi for Congress campaign in 2010 and the Kristi for Governor campaign this year. She now serves as the transition team’s inauguration coordinator.

Senior Policy Advisor

Aaron Scheibe will serve the Noem administration as senior policy advisor. Scheibe, a Pierre resident, was previously the deputy commissioner of the Governor’s Office of Economic Development where he now serves as interim commissioner. Prior to joining GOED in 2014, Scheibe served for 12 years as a diplomat for the U.S. Department of State.

Director of Scheduling

Megan Goltz will serve the Noem administration as director of scheduling. Goltz, an Estelline native, previously managed scheduling for the Kristi for Governor campaign. She now serves as the transition team’s scheduler.

General Counsel

Tom Hart will serve the Noem administration as general counsel. Hart, a resident of Pierre, currently serves as deputy secretary of the Department of Labor and Regulation. Prior to joining the department in 2014, Hart practiced law in the private sector in Sioux Falls and Pierre.

Press Secretary

Kristin Wileman will serve the Noem administration as press secretary. Wileman, an Aberdeen native, was previously Governor-elect Noem’s press secretary in Washington, D.C. She now serves as the transition team’s spokesperson.

Policy Analyst

Kennedy Noem will serve the Noem administration as a policy analyst. Noem, a Castlewood resident, previously operated as the Watertown field office director for the Kristi for Governor campaign. She currently serves on the transition team.

“Ronald Reagan once said to surround yourself with the best people you can find. These are some of the best,” said Noem. “These folks will bring a wide variety of perspectives to the table, they’re results-focused, and I know they’ll do everything they can to serve the people of our state. I’m grateful to have them on my team, and I look forward to the way we’ll work together to strengthen South Dakota.”

Building a Stronger Economy **By Governor-elect Kristi Noem**

A couple years ago, I was at the grocery store when a young mom stopped me in the aisle. Her cart was full of generic groceries. Her pocket was full of coupons. She looked at me and said: "Kristi, when are things going to get better?"

We talked about how costs had gone up – healthcare, groceries, electricity, childcare – yet she hadn't seen a pay raise in years.

That scenario became the foundation of what I fought for while I helped negotiate once-in-a-generation tax cuts that began to answer that question.

Those historic tax cuts were signed into law about a year ago, and things have gotten better.

The average South Dakota family of four will now receive a \$2,400 tax cut. How? I fought for lower rates, a doubling of the Child Tax Credit, and reforms that have made America's economy boom. Millions have received pay raises, bonuses, or increased benefits. Job creation is up. And despite leaving more money in people's pockets, the resulting economic growth is expected to increase federal revenues \$1 trillion over the long term, helping stabilize the budget.

I will apply these same low-tax, pro-growth principles as governor and veto efforts to increase taxes. You've worked hard for your money; our state government must respect that.

And our work to kickstart the economy has just begun.

In early December, I announced that Steve Westra will join my administration as Commissioner of the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED). Steve brings a background of business experience and innovation to the table. Currently the Chief Operating Officer of Hegg Companies Inc., a Sioux Falls-based company, Steve has shown a unique ability to develop strategies and creative approaches that bring job-creating projects to South Dakota. He's also served on the Tourism Advisory Board, the Sioux Falls Board of Health, and in the State House of Representatives. Most importantly, I know Steve will run a service-oriented agency. He'll lead by example in serving the businesses GOED is working to grow. He'll respect and serve South Dakota taxpayers.

I have big plans for the future of South Dakota's economy, and Steve is just the partner I need to make those plans a reality. Together, we'll transform GOED into an agency that centers around keeping South Dakota's taxes and red tape at a minimum while making the right investments. We'll make it easier to start and grow a business.

I also see GOED playing a bigger role in coordinating workforce development. I want to bring the department together with area employers, the South Dakota Department of Education, the Board of Regents, and tech schools to make sure young people are getting the skills needed to prepare them for key jobs.

What's more, I believe South Dakota is ready for a new growth industry. The financial services industry flourished in our state during the 80's and 90's because Governor Janklow made it a priority to provide low regulatory burdens and an advantageous tax environment. Between these, skills training, and the research available at South Dakota's universities and tech schools, I believe we have all the necessary ingredients to recruit a new industry - we just have to pursue it, and I see a targeted role for GOED in that effort.

And while we recruit new business, we'll also invest in the businesses putting South Dakotans to work today, helping them grow from five employees to 10, 50, or more.

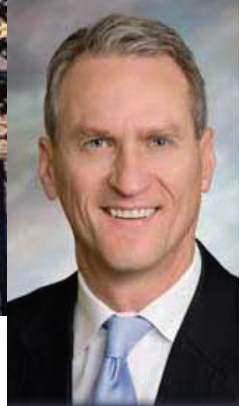
I hope someday I have the opportunity to run into that mom in the grocery store again. Things have gotten better, families have gotten stronger, and the best days are still to come.

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 18 of 79



South Dakota Governor
Dennis Daugaard



We Don't Spend Money We Don't Have

Every December, the state legislature meets to receive a budget proposal from the governor. This proposal is the starting point for the legislative budget process, which ends with the passage of a budget bill at the end of session in March.

This week, I presented my last budget proposal to the legislature. This year was a little different, because Governor-elect Kristi Noem will be taking office in early January. Eight years ago, after I took office, I presented my own budget proposal, and I know the Governor-elect plans to do the same thing. The purpose of my budget was to provide updated information about revenue and expenses, and to create a starting point for Governor-elect Noem and the new legislature as they begin their work next year.

Over the years, I have applied several core principles to state budgeting:

We don't spend money we don't have.

We use one-time revenues only for one-time expenses, and we fund annually recurring expenses with only recurring revenues.

We maintain ten percent budget reserves, and we use those reserves only for emergencies, not to perpetuate overspending.

We conservatively project revenue and expenses. We don't use accounting gimmicks. We don't balance by accelerating next year's income into this year, or by pushing expenses into next year.

We use one-time windfalls to repay debt, build or secure a new asset, or endow an ongoing expense.

And we structurally balance our budget, every year. We balance our budget, not only because our state constitution requires it, but because it is the right thing to do.

Some of those rules might seem like common sense, but there are many states which have departed from these responsible budgeting practices, and they have paid the price for it. Meanwhile, in South Dakota, we have taken several tangible steps to strengthen our financial practices.

In 2012, South Dakota voters passed a constitutional amendment that explicitly required a balanced budget – it passed with 65% of the vote.

In 2014, I proposed and the legislature approved legislation to require more frequent state revenue estimates, to identify any potential revenue shortfalls earlier in the budgeting process.

That same year, I issued an executive order to require the posting of budget metrics on the state website at open.sd.gov to detail monthly expenditures, revenue collections, and cash balances.

In 2014, our state used one-time windfalls to repay, early, \$56.4 million in long-term bonds. In 2016, we early repaid another \$42.3 million in bonds.

In 2015, the state presented its first long-term financial plan, a five-year capital expenditure plan, and a debt limitation policy. These were initially required by executive order, and then placed into state law. We also placed new limits on the amount of debt that can be issued through the South Dakota Building Authority. We have also accelerated the time it takes each year to complete the state's audited financial statements.

Last, but certainly not least, South Dakota has fully funded and proactively managed our strong retirement system. Many states have enormous unfunded pension liabilities. South Dakota is a shining star in this area. Our retirement system is 100% funded. Wisconsin and Washington are the only other states that can make this claim. While other states use unrealistic assumptions such as higher rates of return, the South Dakota Retirement system uses realistic assumptions and has made many adjustments over the past several years to assure it stays fully funded over the long term.

As I leave office, South Dakota's finances are the envy of the nation, and I am pleased to be turning over my office to Governor-elect Noem, who also believes in sound financial management. South Dakota is fortunate that generations of governors and legislators, of both parties, have worked together to keep us on a strong financial footing. I hope we never take that for granted.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 19 of 79

Today in Weather History

December 8, 1995: A powerful Arctic front moved across west central Minnesota and central, north central, and northeast South Dakota throughout the day with winds of 30 to 60 mph. With temperatures falling and one to four inches of snowfall in the morning and afternoon, the high winds produced blizzard conditions with blowing snow and extreme wind chills of 40 to 70 below zero. Many schools, college classes, and activities were canceled for the day. Travel was also significantly affected.

December 8, 1935: From the Monthly Weather Review for December 1935, "The outstanding flood of December 1935 was the record-breaking overflow of Buffalo and White Oak Bayous at Houston, Texas on the 8 and 9th. This destructive flood was caused by excessive rainfall over Harris County, Texas during a 42 hour period on the 6th, 7th, 8th, with amounts ranging from 5.50 inches at Houston" to 16.49 inches at the Humble Oil Company in the northwestern part of Harris County.

1892 - A tremendous ice fall occurred at Gay Hill, TX. Ice averaged four to six inches in diameter. (David Ludlum)

1938 - The temperature at La Mesa, CA, soared to 108 degrees to set a U.S. record for the month of December. (The Weather Channel)

1963 - Lightning caused the crash of a jet airliner killing 81 persons at Elkton, MD. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - A cold front crossing the northwestern U.S. continued to produce high winds along the coast, and heavy snow blanketed parts of the western U.S. Snowfall totals in the mountains of western Nevada ranged up to 18 inches at Heavenly Valley, and near the Boreal Ski Resort, and winds at Reno NV gusted to 56 mph. Thunderstorms over southern Florida deluged the Florida Keys with up to five inches of rain. Strong winds, gusting to 48 mph at Gage OK, ushered wintry weather into the Central High Plains. Goodland KS, which one day earlier was 63 degrees, was blanketed with two inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Santa Ana winds buffeted southern California, with gusts to 92 mph reported at Laguna Peak. The high winds unroofed buildings, and downed trees and power lines, igniting five major fires, and numerous smaller ones. Damage was estimated at 15 to 20 million dollars. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A winter storm spread snow and freezing rain across much of the Atlantic Coast Region, from Georgia to New Jersey. Snowfall totals ranged up to seven inches, at Stanton VA and Tobacco MD. Up to six inches of snow blanketed the mountains of northern Georgia. More than one hundred auto accidents were reported in Gwinnett County GA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 20 of 79

Today

Tonight

Sunday

Sunday
Night

Monday



Mostly Sunny



Mostly Cloudy



Mostly Sunny



Mostly Clear



Sunny

High: 27 °F

Low: 13 °F

High: 27 °F

Low: 4 °F

High: 33 °F

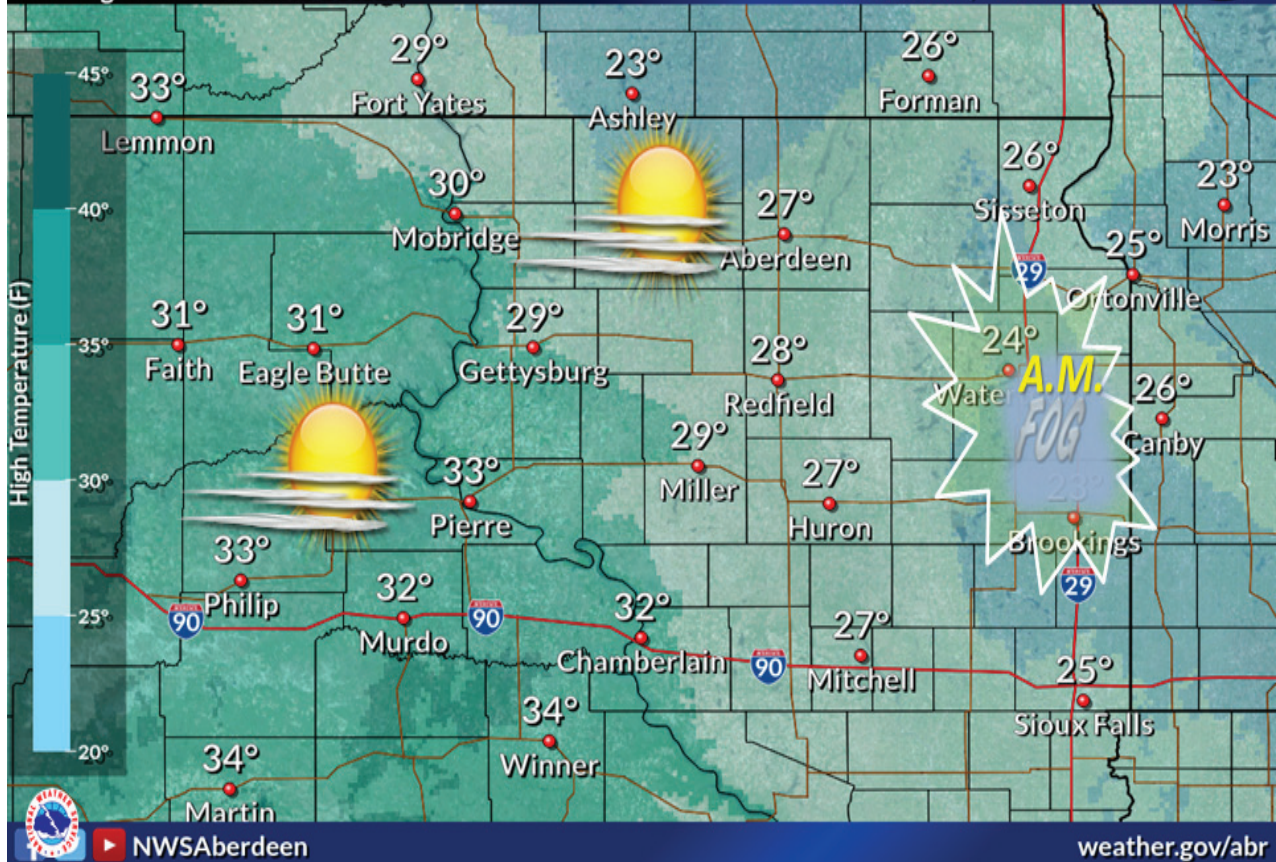
High Temperatures Today

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD



A.M. Fog Over The Prairie Coteau

Issued Dec 08, 2018 5:13 AM CST



NWSAberdeen

weather.gov/abr

Published on: 12/08/2018 at 5:42AM

After some morning fog over the Prairie Coteau burns off, partial sunshine on light southerly winds will be the order of the day.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 21 of 79

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 27 °F at 4:23 PM

Low Outside Temp: 6 °F at 8:02 AM

High Gust: 11 mph at 12:18 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 57° in 1894

Record Low: -27° in 1927

Average High: 28°F

Average Low: 8°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.13

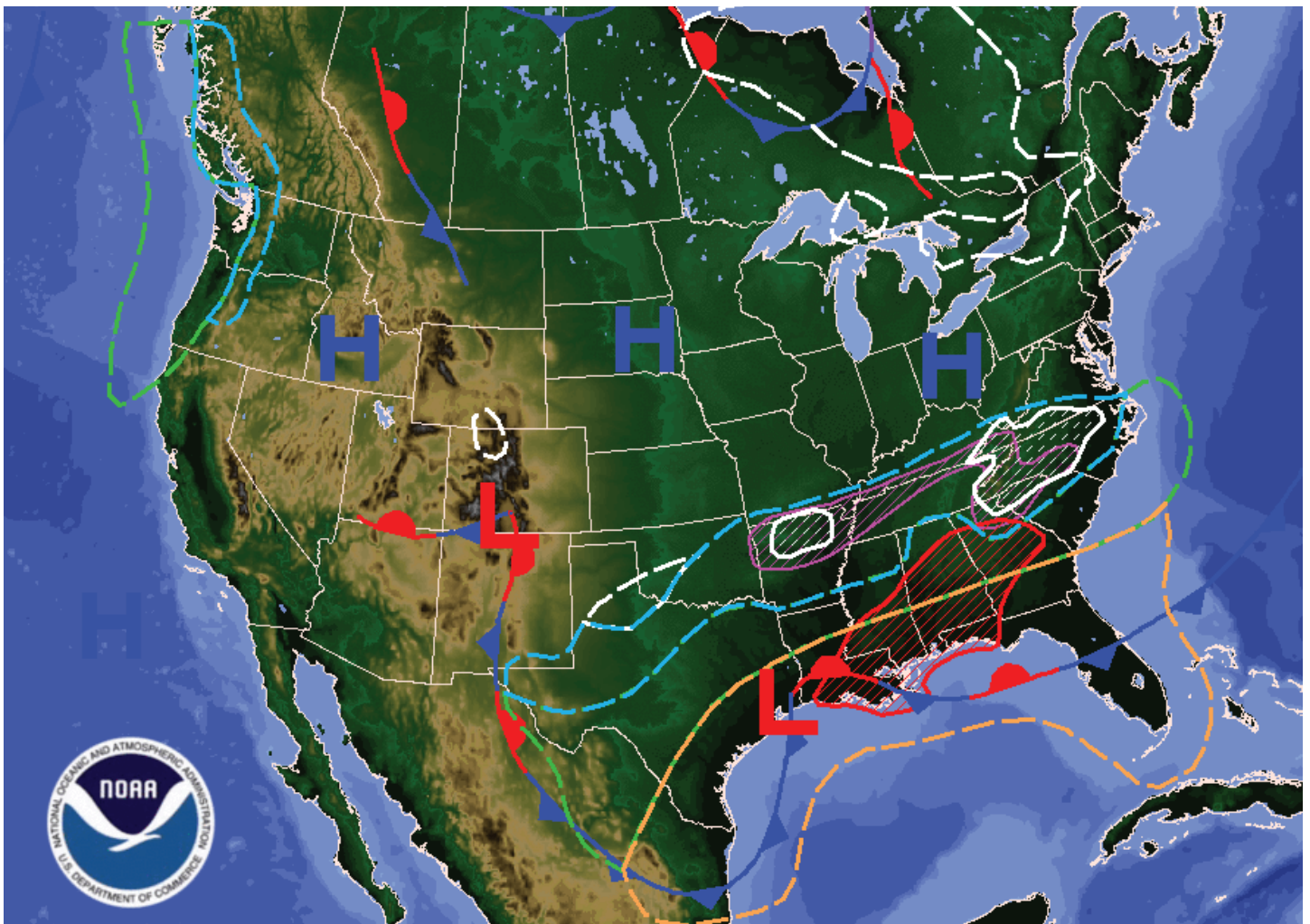
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.33

Precip Year to Date: 15.81

Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:02 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Dec 08, 2018, issued 4:42 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)



CAN YOU SEE HIM NOW?

It was the very first Christmas that Jo Anns church had a Nativity scene on the front lawn. Working anxiously, she kept arranging, then rearranging, the figures to make certain they could all be seen.

Finally she sent her friend, Alice, to the edge of the lawn and asked, How do they look?

Fine, they are all O.K., came the answer.

Suddenly Jo Ann began to rearrange them once again. What are you doing? I said they were fine, said Alice grumpily.

Yes, I heard what you said, responded Jo Ann. But I just want to make sure that Jesus is visible so all of the people can see Him!

Often Santa gets more attention than our Savior does during these Holy Days. Children anxiously stand in line waiting their turn to ask for gifts and have their picture taken with him. Rarely, however, do children pose at the manger to have a picture taken with the Baby Jesus. Could it be that He is not visible to most people at Christmas? Do we make any effort at all to make Him visible?

Matthew wrote about a group of shepherds who said, Lets go to Bethlehem...and see this wonderful thing that has happened which the Lord has told us about.

This wonderful thing, Jesus, is what the world needs to see. Lets be certain He is always visible especially in our lives!

Prayer: Lord, may we not allow Your Son to be hidden or to be placed behind the false idols that so many worship at Christmas. Let us make Him visible! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Luke 2:15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 23 of 79

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 24 of 79

News from the Associated Press

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 59, Warner 39
Alcester-Hudson 60, Freeman Academy/Marion 56
Baltic 55, Beresford 48
Belle Fourche 61, Hill City 44
Brookings 55, Aberdeen Central 51
Burke 64, Scotland 44
Canistota 66, Centerville 32
Castlewood 58, Deuel 46
Custer 44, Newcastle, Wyo. 40
DeSmet 69, Estelline/Hendricks 30
Dell Rapids St. Mary 70, Colman-Egan 56
Deubrook 48, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 39
Edgemont 50, New Underwood 37
Elk Point-Jefferson 67, Canton 46
Elkton-Lake Benton 66, Lake Preston 64
Flandreau 71, Chester 48
Flandreau Indian 54, Crow Creek 49
Hamlin 70, Florence/Henry 34
Hanson 71, Ethan 47
Harrisburg 66, Western Christian, Iowa 55
Kimball/White Lake 68, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 41
Lower Brule 77, Marty Indian 64
Oelrichs 67, Lead-Deadwood 59
Rapid City Stevens 63, Brandon Valley 57
Sioux Falls Christian 57, Lennox 45
Sioux Falls Lincoln 68, Watertown 32
Sioux Falls Washington 69, Huron 64
Stanley County 67, Bennett County 44
Sturgis Brown 58, Douglas 45
Timber Lake 72, Lemmon 50
Tiospa Zina 63, Standing Rock, N.D. 54
Todd County 71, Valentine, Neb. 53
Tri-State, N.D. 57, Waubay/Summit 32
Tri-Valley 77, Garretson 53
Vermillion 54, Bon Homme 47
Viborg-Hurley 82, Freeman 37
Waverly-South Shore 65, Wilmot 61
West Central 54, Dell Rapids 50
White River 71, Jones County 47
Winner 69, Wagner 43
Yankton 79, Spearfish 32
Energy Classic(equals)
Cheyenne Central, Wyo. 50, Rapid City Central 41

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 25 of 79

Gettysburg Tournament(equals)
Gettysburg 67, Shippensburg, Pa. 52
Lutheran Tip-Off Tournament(equals)
Northland Lutheran, Wis. 66, Great Plains Lutheran 37
GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL(equals)
Aberdeen Roncalli 64, Northwestern 25
Alcester-Hudson 62, Freeman Academy/Marion 32
Belle Fourche 43, Hill City 40
Beresford 68, Baltic 13
Brandon Valley 59, Rapid City Stevens 30
Brookings 41, Aberdeen Central 29
Chamberlain 57, Lyman 51
Colman-Egan 55, Dell Rapids St. Mary 44
Custer 41, Newcastle, Wyo. 28
DeSmet 64, Estelline/Hendricks 27
Deubrook 55, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 11
Elk Point-Jefferson 53, Canton 48
Flandreau 66, Chester 28
Freeman 46, Viborg-Hurley 18
Garretson 45, Tri-Valley 44
Hamlin 59, Florence/Henry 32
Harrisburg 64, Western Christian, Iowa 54
Kimball/White Lake 56, Burke 44
Lake Preston 57, Elkton-Lake Benton 19
Langford 54, Leola/Frederick 20
Lennox 55, Sioux Falls Christian 44
Lower Brule 65, Marty Indian 57
Mitchell Christian 45, Iroquois 18
New Underwood 58, Edgemont 17
Parkston 84, Tea Area 80, OT
Sioux Falls Lincoln 53, Watertown 44
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 53, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 40
Sioux Falls Washington 67, Huron 34
Sturgis Brown 56, Douglas 43
Sully Buttes 59, Eureka/Bowdle 13
Timber Lake 64, Lemmon 46
Todd County 78, Valentine, Neb. 38
Vermillion 42, Bon Homme 31
Warner 39, Aberdeen Christian 19
Waubay/Summit 59, Tri-State, N.D. 41
Waverly-South Shore 65, Wilmot 27
Winner 71, Wagner 27
Yankton 48, Spearfish 44
Energy Classic(equals)
Rapid City Central 60, Campbell County, Wyo. 56
Lutheran Tip-Off Tournament(equals)
Northland Lutheran, Wis. 48, Great Plains Lutheran 37

Sioux Falls nurse helped Avera Health abandon using pagers

By PATRICK ANDERSON, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Pagers might still beep at the hips of TV show doctors, but they have no place at Avera Health.

The way doctors and nurses communicate at Avera is different.

It's more comprehensive. More connected to Avera's other communication networks. And it's far more appropriate given the capabilities of modern technology and the life-and-death scenarios that play out daily in clinics and hospitals.

Avera's evolution beyond beepers might not seem like a major step, but it's a departure from an industry that still by and large relies on the 1960s technology.

For Candice Friestad, it was more about helping the nurses. They were being overwhelmed by pagers and giant wireless phones. She wanted an alternative that wouldn't make them feel like "Tim 'The Tool Man' Taylor," Friestad said.

"The nurses came up to us and said, 'stop this,'" said Friestad, who worked as a nurse in Avera's critical care units for 17 years.

Friestad led the charge when Avera first made the switch in 2014 from Motorola alphanumeric pagers to smartphones and agreed to sign a contract with Voalte, a growing medical technology company out of Sarasota, Florida.

She dumped the beepers into boxes and orchestrated a technological evolution across the hospital system, departing from an industry norm with a gusto that only comes with a clear sense of purpose.

Friestad knew it would be better for patients.

Her vision for the future earned her a special nod from Voalte. The company named her "Innovator of the Year" in October at its 2018 user conference in Sarasota.

"Our entire customer base has benefited from her hard work," Oscar Callejas, co-founder and vice president of services for Voalte. "Anybody that's around her is just totally captivated by her and they immediately get the vision."

Nearly 8 in 10 clinicians in the United States still use pagers for patient care-related communication, according to a 2017 report in the Journal of Hospital Medicine.

Hospitals resist change because it comes with the upfront costs of installing a new telecommunications network, throwing away already paid-for pagers and buying enough smartphones to equip the entire staff of providers, Friestad told the Argus Leader.

When she first started looking for an alternative, Voalte was one of a few tech firms creating software for using smartphones in patient care-related communication.

Voalte offered three things she was looking for: encrypted security, a variety of alarms and something that would work on any device — iPhones or Android, Friestad said.

Voalte founder and CEO Trey Lauderdale was working in health care tech for Emergin when he first



In this Nov. 29, 2018, photo, Candice Friestad, Avera Health's director of clinical informatics, holds up her phone with the app Voalte displayed in Sioux Falls, S.D. (Loren Townsley/

The Argus Leader via AP)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 27 of 79

realized the potential benefits smartphones to patient care-related communication.

"He saw the frustration from the nurses first hand," Callejas said. "They were saying 'why is it we've got all this sophisticated equipment that can save lives and do all of these really advanced things but at the end the day, the output is the pager.'"

Instead of relying on one-way beeper and the availability of a phone on both ends, doctors can communicate instantly with a team of providers by using text messages and file sharing. Friestad heard of one instance where providers shared a photo of a patient's heart monitor reading and then immediately took action to save the person's life.

"All I have to do is go for the patient, pull them up by name or by room number and then I see, oh here's the nurse who's caring for this person or the pharmacist," Friestad said.

Friestad digs through her desk, looking for an old Avera beeper.

"At one point I had saved them as a relic," she said. "As in, 'oh, this used to be a pager.'"

Friestad speaks with a no-frills authenticity, softened by a dry sense of humor.

She jokes about the floral-pattern couch across from her desk — a secondhand piece of furniture she inherited from a retired physician and now feels obligated to keep. She tells a story about bringing the Voalte award through airport security, how its pointy top drew extra attention from TSA.

Behind it all is a deep sense of purpose for the task she is carrying out from her office on Avera's main campus in central Sioux Falls. She came up in the system working as a nurse in critical care.

A lot of people in informatics have a background in critical care, Friestad said. Working in a unit like that impresses upon one the value of time.

Friestad grew up in Long Beach, California, and moved to South Dakota with her parents when they opened a laundromat in Colton.

She almost went to The Julliard School to study piano and music, but stayed in Sioux Falls and studied nursing at Augustana University. Already carrying an offer from A&M Records in Los Angeles, she thought working as a nurse at night would give her a chance to work on a career in music during the day.

Her plans to move away and make music professionally were sidelined when her father died. Friestad stayed in Sioux Falls to take care of her mother.

Her first day as a nurse was in Avera's critical care unit.

"It was more like trial by fire," Friestad said. "We were a burn unit, we did open hearts."

Nurses came to her in 2013 expressing concerns about all the hardware they needed to carry. Supervising nurses at the time were lugging around three pagers and a Cisco mobile phone.

It only took a year before Avera was piloting the Voalte system on iPhones in a single unit on Avera's main Sioux Falls campus. Avera went live with smartphones in October, 2015, and Friestad hasn't looked back.

She continues to manage Avera's adoption of the technology across a five-state network of hospitals and clinics.

In addition to Sioux Falls, smartphones programmed with Voalte have replaced pagers at Avera locations in Yankton, Mitchell, Platte, Parkston, De Smet and Wessington Springs. Avera has also introduced the technology at its hospital in Creighton, Nebraska, and plans to go live in January at its location in Marshall, Minnesota.

More than just an advocate of the technology, Friestad now serves on the board at Voalte. She has collaborated with other hospitals and Voalte leadership to improve the system so Avera can improve its ability to serve patients.

"They are the poster child for Voalte and for a communication system like this," Callejas said. "It's really difficult to connect all of those providers across such a wide distance."

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

Modular buildings create problems for Rapid City schools

By CHRISTOPHER VONDRACEK, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — When Canyon Lake Elementary on the city's west side opened in September 1949, a short item in the newspaper noted what would turn out to be an ongoing trend.

"With first day registration completed at Canyon Lake elementary school, nearly 300 more pupils in lower grades are enrolled this fall than in 1948."

"Right away, they had to build an addition," Canyon Lake Elementary Principal David Swank said recently, standing in the concrete yard in front of two annexes. "They were overcrowded."

A crowded school has remained a theme in the school's nearly 70-year existence. An addition came in 1953 and 20 years later — school officials aren't sure on the exact date — came the first of ultimately four annexes built on Canyon Lake School comprising both the "west" campus building and the old Kibben-Kuster school building, called "East Canyon Lake" by school officials.

Between the 1980s and the early 2000s, in fact, Rapid City's school district constructed 20 such annexes — modular buildings retrofitted with bulletin boards, desks and other classroom amenities — as a semi-permanent fix to a growing problem.

It's not a new problem either. The headline of that 1949 article — "New School Site Big Problem for Education Board."

And in 2018, as an ad hoc group formed by the school board continues to talk about school facilities, annexes are back in the conversation. Some annexes — or modulares — lack water for bathrooms. Others are not ADA compliant. Some have noisy heating or cooling systems, and they're almost all too small.

On any given day, students in roughly 40 classrooms across the district spend at least part of their day in the temporary permanent classrooms, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"They're more like a building you can put on a skid trailer and haul away," Rapid City Area Schools Facilities Manager Kumar Veluswamy said. "They weren't designed to be classrooms for 40 years to come, but that's what's happened."

On a recent Thursday at Canyon Lake, elementary teacher Carrie Baker had students assembling dinosaur skeletons with toilet paper rolls in a classroom inside annex 122A. Blue linens filtered a harsh neon light panel. An inert window air conditioning unit sat in the wall. Other than two thin window slits, the only daylight slipped in from a view of nearby Canyon Lake Road. Coats hung from the back wall, and all around the classroom of 18 students and a teacher were the wood panels more befitting a 1970s supper club than a classroom.

"It's hot in here," said Baker, waving herself down as she welcomed in visitors.

The annex holds two classrooms in approximately 500 square feet. At one time, teachers only needed desks facing the chalkboard and maybe a globe. But officials say modern classrooms — with, for example,



In this Thursday, Nov. 29, 2018, photo, students work on projects in Carrie Baker's classroom at Canyon Lake Elementary School in Rapid City, S.D. (Ryan Hermens/Rapid City Journal via AP)

via AP)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 29 of 79

power supply for laptops and SmartBoards — need nearly twice that space. Moreover, teachers can't as easily collaborate with other teachers on their grade level when they're split between buildings. Some teachers, Swank said, have even requested to remain out of the annex, citing the learning environment.

Baker is not one of them.

"I actually like the quiet out here," she said. "At recess, the kids running out to the playground can distract us. But I actually don't mind these buildings. It is a lot of brown with these walls."

A classroom in another annex, though, suffered from a high water table and sewer problems.

"Those stink," said Baker. "We'd empty the bucket of water from the dehumidifier daily."

School officials are quick to say the annexes do not prevent high-quality learning and teaching. Generations of students have come and gone from Canyon Lake's annexes. But the structures are far from ideal. And just walking to music class that is in another annex requires putting on and taking off winter coats — a cumbersome process for anyone, but especially for elementary students. Moreover, the coats eat up a line of wall that could be used for learning materials or bookshelves. Mud gets tracked in on carpets and means maintenance visits more frequently. The makeshift wooden ramps could create a trip hazard thanks to concrete settling.

"We've been fortunate that nothing has happened," Swank said. "But it's required a really strong maintenance team who is going to drop another project that is going to come and fix a more threatening issue."

This fall, a facilities task force has been assembled to provide recommendations later this school year to the board. They've met privately to discuss, among other issues, plans to alleviate crowded schools. A new elementary school could be on the docket when they make public their recommendations. Population bubbles in the southwest and north of Interstate-90 led to overcrowding at some schools this September, forcing the transfer of 111 students.

"We have enough capacity across the district," said Veluswamy. "But it's not in the right location."

The 435 students at the Canyon Lake campus technically fit within the classes, but Swank had to move the library to an old gymnasium in the East Canyon Lake building to vacate space for another classroom. Now, kindergarten through first grade are what the school terms "at capacity." They're not the only one. Six schools are over functional capacity. Another five are nearing it. A new building north of the interstate could alleviate crowding in the elementary schools and, potentially if placed correctly, draw down from the 180 students from Canyon Lake who live north of Interstate-90. That could, Swank said, free up the annexes to be used as overflow for other schools or something different.

"We'd have the opportunity to use them as dedicated spaces," said Swank, standing in the doorway to Mindy Nelson's fourth-grade classroom. "Mindy's room could double as a student interest lab. We'd have opportunities to set up projects and experiments and let them sit."

On a recent Thursday afternoon, children ran up the cinder block steps of the annexes and hung their coats up on the wall of Nelson's room. The school's STEAM-squared initiative — called "Student Interest Groups" at Canyon Lake — flip the script on classroom learning. Students work in groups spread out over the classroom working on everything from yoga to coding to survival techniques. But the confines of the annex at Canyon Lake make this a little more difficult.

"Tight?" asked Nelson. "Yeah. You can say that."

A musty air hangs in the classroom (officials say the ventilation meets industry standards), the diffused blue light washes over the students' faces as they concentrate on iPads, and Nelson takes a few steps to bound the classroom on the other side of the room.

"No one wants to complain," Swank said. "But we won't be heartbroken if these classrooms go."

Finding the political will to build any new school is daunting, though. The last time the school looked to opt-out of a state limit on property tax collection, the proposal was soundly defeated by a public vote.

So, for the time being, the school board continues to treat these temporary structures like the permanent replacements they've become. In 2014, the board put new roofs on many annexes, and at a recent school board meeting, Veluswamy and Assistant Superintendent Dave Janak presented a slew of needed capital improvements, including heating and cooling units for the annexes.

Veluswamy said he'd argue against any new modularity, but with a tight budget, one might just look to

the past to understand how this might be resolved. Among the plans reported on by the Journal in 1949 to alleviate overcrowding in the schools was this novel idea: the construction of a "temporary building until the school population changes."

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

Bismarck church volunteers bring food to South Dakota church **By MIKE MCCLEARY, Bismarck Tribune**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — In the small town of McLaughlin, South Dakota, many of the residents didn't celebrate Thanksgiving Day as most Americans do.

Located 9 miles south of the North Dakota state line on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation at the junction of state Highway 63 and U.S. Highway 12, the Rev. Harvey Schmeichel and his wife, Patti, have seen over the years children and families go hungry for days.

There are no large holiday meals in those homes.

For nearly 19 years at the non-denominational Freedom Fellowship Church, located downtown on Main Street, the couple has ministered in the community by opening their home and the doors of the church to a large segment of the area's population in need of shelter, clothing, transportation, food, a place to worship and a warm meal every weekend. The Schmeichels also send small take-home bags of food with the children as they leave school at the end of the week.

"The church has to be in the community to care for your neighbors," Patti Schmeichel told the Bismarck Tribune. "It's what the Lord has called us to do. The kids know if they need anything they can come to our house. It's a lifeline."

On Nov. 25, a 15-year relationship with Charity Lutheran Church in Bismarck continued as volunteers in a church bus drove to the community loaded with food for a traditional Thanksgiving feast. The holiday meal was a special occasion, but the gesture was nothing new. It's one of the church's missionary efforts that, on the last Sunday of every month, volunteers provide a meal for the community at the church.

Bismarck Community Church volunteers provide a meal for the McLaughlin community once a month as well. For the other two Sundays at the Freedom Fellow Church, donated food is provided between the two churches.

Charity Lutheran Church volunteers Leon Dietrich, Jeff Brown, Della Rae Granrud, Don Nordquist, Duane Bentz and longtime organizer Liz Landis recently departed Bismarck before sunrise. With a last minute stop at a Mandan grocery store to buy dinner rolls, the group made it to McLaughlin with plenty of time to set up the food before the church service.



In this Nov. 25, 2018, photo, Leon Dietrich, one of the Charity Lutheran Church missionary outreach volunteers, is thanked by Linda Ault, left, and Patti Schmeichel before Dietrich and the other volunteers board the church back to Bismarck, N.D., after serving a post Thanksgiving Day meal at the Freedom Fellowship Church in McLaughlin, S.D. (Mike McCleary/The Bismarck Tribune via AP)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 31 of 79

The large coolers and boxes filled with four turkeys, two hams, 30 pounds of mashed potatoes, pickles, stuffing, gravy and the makings for a Jell-O salad were unloaded and carried into the aluminum-sided church.

Patti Schmeichel said: "There will be no hunger today."

"(The missionary work) makes me feel great and seeing how much they enjoy us coming down once a month and how much Patti and Harvey appreciate us," said Dietrich, who has been involved with the Sunday meals since the beginning.

In his sermon, Schmeichel thanked the group of volunteers for their generous charity: "Thank you for being a part of building God's kingdom."

After the church service, more than 50 adults and children stood in line as the volunteers, wearing T-shirts saying "Live Generously," began to serve the meal on paper plates. Community members also brought a number of salads and desserts to complete the spread.

The gesture of the once-a-month meal may be small, but its meaning has a bigger impact.

As Sara Hollow sat in the fellowship room eating with her three young children, the foster parent expressed her appreciation for Charity Lutheran's generosity.

"I am very grateful they take the time out of their lives to do this. It's good exposure for my children and other children to experience the different outlook of others coming and showing their affection," she said.

"The food's good and the people are nice," Rufus Reed Sr. said. "That's what I like."

As the people finish eating and are given rides back to their homes by Schmeichel, the leftovers are divided and placed in about a dozen aluminum containers to go to homes in need.

"We are God's heart, hands and mind," Landis said. "It's an honor and privilege to serve God and the connections and relationships we forged with the church and the community. I hope we always serve them with loving hearts."

"God has a plan for all of us," Patti Schmeichel said. "We are a 24-7 ministry so it's nice to have support from outside (the community). You can see the beauty in all of these people."

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

04-10-20-33-57, Mega Ball: 13, Megaplier: 3

(four, ten, twenty, thirty-three, fifty-seven; Mega Ball: thirteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$226 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$217 million

Mike Daum scores 42, South Dakota State wins at home again

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 42 points and South Dakota State defeated Southern University 101-92 on Friday night to extend the nation's longest active home-winning streak to 25 games.

Daum, who averages 23.5 points and 10.5 rebounds per game, made 13 of 18 shots from the field and 14 of 15 free throws. David Jenkins added 22 points and Tevin King scored 14 for the Jackrabbits (8-3).

Three players scored more than 20 points for the Jaguars (1-8). Backup forward Sidney Umude scored 26 points, Richard Lee added 24 points, all on 3-pointers, and Eddie Reese had 21 to go with nine assists.

Southern made 16 of 32 3-pointers and South Dakota State made 32 of 36 free throws.

A 3-pointer by Daum started the Jackrabbits on a 16-7 run that gave them a 16-point lead midway

through the second half. Southern got no closer than eight points the rest of the game.

3 South Dakota colleges collaborate to ease transferring

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Black Hills State University and Western Dakota Tech are teaming up to help make it easier for students to transfer between the three schools.

The institutions are coming together over shared concerns as western South Dakota faces stagnant post-secondary enrollment and limited resources allocated by the state, the Rapid City Journal reported. Both BHSU in Spearfish and Mines in Rapid City lost about 5 percent of their full-time students over the past year, while enrollment at Western Dakota in Rapid City is flat.

"It's somewhat rare to have three sitting presidents come together," said BHSU President Thomas Jackson. "But we're working collaboratively on getting students to the same goal from three different starting points."

The schools share the same target demographic and already have many articulation agreements that allow course credits to transfer among the campuses. But the college presidents envision more opportunities to share resources and programming.

They're looking into dual admission to Western Dakota and BHSU, coordinated service trips, joint fundraisers and developing a major together.

An arrangement between Western Dakota and Mines to develop a major for mechanics could make students more marketable to employers. The mining industry wants employees to have a theoretical foundation in mining sciences and technical skills to operate and repair equipment, according to Ann Bolman, Western Dakota's president.

Mines' president Jim Rankin said a similar partnership could be made for engineering students to obtain business acumen at BHSU.

"They have that expertise," Rankin said. "And we have ours."

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

Student evacuated from Rapid City school back in class

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Students at a Rapid City elementary school are back in class after briefly evacuating the building because of a possible gas leak.

The Rapid City Fire Department cleared Robbinsdale Elementary School Friday morning, which allowed the students to return. School district spokeswoman Katy Urban says no gas leak or sewer backup was found.

School officials sent parents a text at about 9:15 a.m. that said the students were being moved to South Middle School "due to a strong odor of natural gas or sewer backup."

Texas man killed in South Dakota truck crash identified

IONA, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a Texas man who died in a vehicle crash in south central South Dakota's Lyman County.

The Highway Patrol says 34-year-old Michelet Joseph of Houston failed to negotiate a curve on state Highway 47 south of Iona early Monday and lost control of the commercial truck he was driving.

It went in the ditch and rolled on its top. Joseph was pronounced dead at the scene.

No contest plea in assault on state trooper

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of injuring a South Dakota trooper after stealing his squad car while handcuffed during a traffic stop has pleaded no contest to charges in a deal with prosecutors.

Joshua Two Bulls entered the plea to aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer Thursday in

Pennington County. The 41-year-old Two Bulls says he was too intoxicated to remember what transpired. The Rapid City Journal reports that as part of the plea deal, the state will drop a second aggravated assault charge and charges of simple assault, first-degree escape and grand theft.

Trooper Jake Dowling was injured as he tried to stop Two Bulls from taking his squad car along Highway 79 in May 2017. Dowling tried using a stun gun on Two Bulls and shot out the car's tires in an effort to stop him.

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

Smithfield Foods is investing \$45 million in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Smithfield Foods is investing \$45 million in its Sioux Falls operations.

The company says the hog barn will be updated, there will be additional room for a seasoned ground pork department and renovations will be made to increase the speed of bacon production. The expansion is expected to add 70 jobs. The updates are scheduled to be finished in 2019, with work on the hog barn set to wrap in the fall.

The Argus Leader reports the company has already invested \$73 million in the former John Morrell site during the last five years.

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

Rap concert stampede in Italy leaves 6 dead, over 50 hurt

By DIANA MALTAGLIATI and FRANCES D'EMILIO, Associated Press

CORINALDO, Italy (AP) — A stampede at a rap concert in an overcrowded Italian disco killed five teenagers early Saturday along with a woman who had brought her young daughter to the event, authorities said. Fifty-three people were reported injured, including 13 in very serious condition.

Video broadcast on Italian state TV RaiNews24 showed scores of teenagers rushing out of a door and surging toward a low wall near an exit of the Blue Lantern disco in the central Italian town of Corinaldo, near Ancona on the Adriatic coast. The barrier then appeared to give way and a cascade of teenagers tumbled over it, falling on top of each other.

The bodies of the trampled victims were all found near a low wall, Ancona Firefighters Cmdr. Dino Poggiali told Sky TG24 News.

The dead teenagers' ages ranged from 14 to 16 and the mother who was killed was 39, said Col. Cristian Carrozza, commander of the Ancona province Carabinieri paramilitary police.

The dead woman had accompanied



Rescuers assist injured people outside a nightclub in Corinaldo, central Italy, early Saturday, Dec. 8, 2018. At least six people, all but one of them minors, were killed and about 35 others injured in a stampede of panicked concertgoers early Saturday at a disco in a small town on Italy's central Adriatic coast. (Stefano Pagliarini/Ancona Today via AP)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 34 of 79

her eight-year-old daughter to the concert and was the mother of four children, Italian daily *Il Messaggero* reported.

The stampede left 53 people injured, with 13 of them in very serious condition, an Ancona interior ministry official said.

Italian rapper Sfera Ebbasta, who is popular with young teenagers, was to perform at the venue. Authorities said the organizers had sold far too many tickets for the space utilized.

Ancona Chief Prosecutor Monica Garulli told reporters at the scene that about 1,400 tickets were sold but the disco has the capacity to hold only about 870 people.

Later, Premier Giuseppe Conte, who visited the scene of the tragedy, said the disco had three rooms but inexplicably only used one of them, with a capacity of 469 people, for the concert.

While prosecutors investigate, "the government must ask itself what to do so that such tragedies must never happen again," Conte told reporters.

The stampede occurred shortly after 1 a.m., less than 30 minutes before the concert was to start.

Italian media quoted concertgoers as saying that someone had sprayed an irritant, which triggered the panic. Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said there apparently was a "stink" of some irritating substance.

Ancona Police Chief Oreste Capocasa said the dead teenagers were three girls and two boys, the Italian news agency ANSA said. State radio said most of the dead had their skulls crushed in the melee.

Doctors at Ancona's main hospital said the most critically injured, all between 14 and 20 years old, had suffered cranial and chest traumas, while others had injuries on their arms or legs.

Sfera Ebbasta wrote on Twitter that he was "deeply pained" by the tragedy, thanked rescuers and offered his "affection and support" to the families of the dead and the injured. Out of respect to them, he said he was cancelling some upcoming promotional appearances.

The rapper said he didn't want to "express judgment" on those responsible but added he wanted everyone to "stop and think how dangerous and stupid it is to use pepper spray in a discotheque."

Fire commander Poggiali said it was too early in the investigation to know if any safety violations might have played a role in the tragedy. He said when rescue workers arrived, all the doors to the disco were open.

Firefighters concentrated at first on helping survivors, who were stretched out on the road outside the club, before starting their investigation, he said.

Salvini vowed that responsibility would be determined for the "six broken lives — whoever out of nastiness, stupidity or greed transformed an evening of partying into tragedy."

Italy's head of state, President Sergio Mattarella, demanded that a "full light be shone on what happened, ascertaining any responsibility and negligence."

"Citizens have the right to safety wherever they are, in workplaces as well as places of entertainment," Mattarella said.

At the Vatican, Pope Francis bowed his head in silent prayer after he told some 30,000 pilgrims and tourists in St. Peter's Square that he was praying "for the young people and the mamma" as well as for the many injured at the concert.

Italian high schools, which are usually open on Saturdays, were closed this weekend for the Dec. 8 national holiday of the Immaculate Conception. That could have made it more likely that young teenagers were out at such a late concert.

D'Emilio reported from Rome.

Follow Frances D'Emilio on <http://www.twitter.com/fdemilio>

In White House shake-up, Kelly's departure now seems certain

By ZEKE MILLER and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is inching closer to his long-teased major White House shake-up, gearing up for the twin challenges of battling for re-election and dealing with the Democrats' investigations once they take control of the House.

The biggest piece of the shifting picture: Chief of Staff John Kelly's departure now appears certain.

Trump announced Friday he was picking a new U.S. attorney general and a new ambassador to the U.N., and at the same time two senior aides departed the White House to beef up his 2020 campaign. But the largest changes were still to come. Kelly's replacement in the coming weeks is expected to have a ripple effect throughout the administration.

According to nearly a dozen current and former administration officials and outside confidants, Trump is nearly ready to replace Kelly and has likely successor.

"Give Nick a call," Trump has instructed people, referring to Vice President Mike Pence's chief of staff, Nick Ayers, according to one person familiar with the discussions.

Like all of those interviewed, the person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive personnel matters.

Trump has hardly been shy about his dissatisfaction with the team he had chosen and has been weighing all sorts of changes over the past several months. He delayed some of the biggest shifts until after the November elections at the urging of aides who worried that adding to his already-record turnover just before the voting would harm his party's electoral chances.

Now, nearly a month after those midterms, in which his party surrendered control of the House to Democrats but expanded its slim majority in the Senate, Trump is starting to make moves.

He announced Friday that he'll nominate William Barr, who served as attorney general under President George H.W. Bush, to the same role in his administration. If confirmed, Barr will fill the slot vacated by Jeff Sessions, who was unceremoniously jettisoned by Trump last month over lingering resentment for recusing himself from overseeing special counsel Robert Mueller's Trump-Russia investigation.

Sessions was exiled less than 24 hours after polls closed. But Trump's broader efforts to reshape his inner circle have been on hold, leading to a sense of near-paralysis in the building, with people unsure of what to do.

Trump also announced that State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert is his pick to replace Nikki Haley as the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and he said he'd have another announcement Saturday about the military's top brass.

All this came the same day that Trump's re-election campaign announced that two veterans of the



President Donald Trump announces that he is nominating William Barr, attorney general under President George H.W. Bush, as his Attorney General, on the South Lawn of the White House, Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

president's 2016 campaign, White House political director Bill Stepien and Justin Clark, the director of the office of public liaison, were leaving the administration to work on Trump's re-election campaign.

"Now is the best opportunity to be laser-focused on further building out the political infrastructure that will support victory for President Trump and the GOP in 2020," campaign manager Brad Parscale said in a statement.

The moves had long been planned, and will give Kelly's eventual successor room to build a new White House political team.

Kelly was not at the White House on Friday, but was expected to attend an East Room dinner with the president and senior staff.

Ayers, who is a seasoned campaign veteran despite his relative youth — he's just 36 — has the backing of Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, the president's daughter and son-in-law and senior advisers, for the new role, according to White House officials. But Ayers has also faced some resistance. During Trump's flight home from a recent trip to Paris, some aides aboard Air Force One tried to convince the president that Ayers was the wrong person for the job, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Trump and Kelly's relationship has been strained for months — with Kelly on the verge of resignation and Trump nearly firing him several times. But each time the two have decided to make amends, even as Kelly's influence has waned.

Kelly, a retired Marine Corps four-star general, was tapped by Trump in August 2017 to try to normalize a White House that had been riven by infighting. And he had early successes, including ending an open-door Oval Office policy that had been compared to New York's Grand Central Station and instituting a more rigorous policy process to try to prevent staffers from going directly to Trump.

But those efforts also miffed the president and some of his most influential outside allies, who had grown accustomed to unimpeded access. And his handling of domestic violence accusations against the former White House staff secretary also caused consternation, especially among lower-level White House staffers, who believed Kelly had lied to them about when he found out about the allegations.

Kelly, too, has made no secret of the trials of his job and has often joked about how working for Trump was harder than anything he'd done before, including on the battlefield.

Associated Press writer Catherine Lucey contributed to this report.

On Twitter follow Miller at <https://twitter.com/ZekeJMiller> and Colvin at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

French police fire tear gas in Paris to halt angry protests

By **ANGELA CHARLTON** and **JOHN LEICESTER**, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French riot police fired tear gas and water cannon in Paris on Saturday, trying to stop thousands of yellow-vested protesters from converging on the presidential palace to express their anger at high taxes and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Security officials imposed a lockdown on parts of central Paris, determined to prevent a repeat of the rioting a week ago that damaged a major monument, injured 130 people and tarnished the country's global image.

Blue armored vehicles rumbled across cobblestone streets from the Arc de Triomphe across toward eastern Paris as scattered demonstrations spread around the city. Police were mounted on horses and surrounded protesters with trained dogs. A ring of steel surrounded the Elysee Palace itself, as police stationed trucks and reinforced steel barriers in streets throughout the entire neighborhood.

Associated Press reporters witnessed multiple protesters hurt in Saturday's clashes with police. Paris police said 30 people were injured, including three police officers. An AP video journalist was wounded in the leg as police fired tear gas and rubber bullets on the Champs-Elysees.

Some stores along the Champs-Elysee had boarded up their windows with plywood, making the neighborhood appear like it was bracing for a hurricane. Angry protesters on Saturday tried to rip the boards off.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 37 of 79

Protesters threw flares and other projectiles and set fires but were repeatedly pushed back by tear gas and water cannon. By mid-afternoon, more than 700 people had been stopped and questioned, and more than 400 were being held in custody, according to a Paris police spokeswoman.

Despite the repeated skirmishes, Saturday's anti-government protests appeared less chaotic and violent than a week ago, when crowds defaced the Arc de Triomphe, set vehicles ablaze and looted high-end stores in the city's worst rioting since 1968.

Prized Paris monuments and normally bustling shopping meccas were locked down Saturday at the height of the holiday shopping season. The Eiffel Tower and Louvre Museum were among the many tourist attractions that closed for the day, fearing damages amid a new round of protests. Subway stations in the center of town were shut down.

The yellow vest movement — named after the fluorescent outerwear French drivers must keep in their vehicles — started as a protest against higher taxes for diesel and gas, but quickly expanded to encompass wide frustration at stagnant incomes, the rising cost of living and other grievances.

Macron on Wednesday agreed to abandon the fuel tax hike, which aimed to wean France off fossil fuels and uphold the Paris climate agreement, but that hasn't defused the anger.

After two weekends of violence in Paris that made the authorities look powerless, police went into overdrive Saturday to keep a lid on unrest. Police frisked people or searched bags throughout central Paris, and confiscated gas masks and protective goggles from AP journalists.

Protesters who came to Paris from Normandy described seeing officers block yellow-vested passengers from boarding public transportation at stops along their route. The national gendarme service posted a video on Twitter of police tackling a protester and confiscating his dangerous material, which appeared to be primarily a tennis racket.

Macron's government had warned that the yellow vest protests had created a "monster" and that Saturday's protests would be hijacked by radicalized and rebellious crowds.

Demonstrators waving French flags, shouting the French anthem and wearing the movement's signature neon vests gathered before dawn Saturday near the Arc de Triomphe, then tried to march down the Champs-Élysées Avenue toward the presidential palace.

Rows of helmeted, thickly protected riot police blocked their passage down the Champs-Élysées toward the heart of presidential power. So the protesters tried other routes, marching through the prime shopping district that includes the high-end stores of Galeries Lafayette and Printemps and the Palais Garnier opera house.

National police estimated the number of protesters in Paris on Saturday at 8,000, among 31,000 protesters nationwide. They appeared to be outnumbered by police, with 8,000 officers deployed in the capital



Riot police officer walk past a burning barricade Saturday, Dec. 8, 2018 in Paris. Crowds of yellow-vested protesters angry at President Emmanuel Macron and France's high taxes tried to converge on the presidential palace Saturday, some scuffling with police firing tear gas, amid exceptional security measures aimed at preventing a repeat of last week's rioting. (AP Photo/Bertrand Combaldieu)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 38 of 79

alone and 89,000 fanned out around the country.

The yellow vests include people with views that range from the far right to the far left. The group has no leaders but is united in its feeling that Macron and his government are out of touch with the concerns of ordinary French families.

"We are here to tell (Macron) our discontent. Me, I'm not here to break things because I have four children so I am going to try to be safe for them, because they are afraid," protester Myriam Diaz told the AP. "But I still want to be here to say 'Stop, that's enough, this has to stop.'"

Cyril, a garbage truck driver in Normandy who earns 1,430 euros (\$1,625) a month, said Macron's mistake was trying to reform France too quickly.

"I don't want to have kids because I have trouble feeding myself, let alone another mouth," the 25-year-old told the AP, saying he came to Paris to demonstrate and "defend myself."

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner urged calm.

"I ask the yellow vests that want to bring about a peaceful message to not go with the violent people. We know that the violent people are only strong because they hide themselves within the yellow vests, which hampers the security forces," he said Saturday.

Four people have been killed in accidents since the unrest began Nov. 17. Christmas markets, national soccer matches and countless other events have been canceled due to the protests.

Protesters also blocked roads, roundabouts and tollbooths elsewhere in France. Offshoot movements have emerged elsewhere, and yellow-vest protests were held Saturday in Belgium and the Netherlands.

U.S. President Donald Trump sought to fuel the anger in France, seizing the moment to criticize the Paris climate accord, which he is abandoning.

"People do not want to pay large sums of money ... in order to maybe protect the environment," he tweeted.

Many economists and scientists, however, say higher fuel taxes are essential to saving the planet from worsening climate change.

Srdjan Nedeljkovic, Philippe Marion and Milos Krivokapic contributed.

GM plant closing not expected to stall Detroit's rebound

By COREY WILLIAMS, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors' planned shutdown of its Detroit-Hamtramck plant would leave only one auto assembly factory in the city known for "putting America on wheels," but the closure and job losses are not expected to stall-out Detroit's comeback since its 2014 bankruptcy exit.

Experts say a more tech-driven and medical industry economy is moving Detroit further from a reliance on manufacturing and that GM's downsizing in the name of cost-cutting and investment in autonomous and electric vehicles won't hurt as much as past mass layoffs and plant closings.

Detroit once was home to about a dozen massive assembly plants. A Fiat-Chrysler facility on the east side would be the last if GM closes its Detroit-Hamtramck plant. About 1,500 people work at the GM plant while Fiat-Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue plant employs about 5,000. Fiat-Chrysler reportedly plans to reopen a former engine plant on the city's east side to make Jeep Grand Cherokee SUVs with three rows of seats starting with the 2021 model year.

"Manufacturing is now a tech industry — you don't have to hire as many people to make as much stuff," said Ned Staebler, president and chief executive of the small business incubator TechTown Detroit. "It's not just General Motors. Every major OEM (original equipment manufacturer), major manufacturer is going through similar processes. It's a trend that is going to continue."

GM wants to close four facilities in the United States and one in Canada. Nearly all of the 8,000 white-collar jobs GM expects to cut company-wide would be at the automaker's technical center just north of Detroit in Macomb County's Warren.

Some of the 3,300 global blue-collar job losses would come from the Detroit-Hamtramck plant and a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 39 of 79

transmission facility in Warren.

The jobs account for only .2 percent of local county employment "muting the immediate effect of the plant closures," Moody's Investors Service said in a report.

That means there is less reliance on those jobs and plants to supply tax dollars needed to help pay for city services and fill out Detroit's operating budget.

But, Moody's wrote, the impact could grow "as GM reduces salaried employees, if reduced production hurts ancillary suppliers or if there is a broader slowdown in the industry."

Detroit will experience some loss of tax revenue from the plant and people working there, said law professor Anthony Sabino of the Tobin College of Business at St. Johns University in New York.

Owners of shops and restaurants that catered to those workers will be impacted, too.

"This will not derail the (city's) 21st century renaissance. They are working from a solid foundation. If this had happened prior to the city's reorganization it could have been far more harmful," Sabino said.

Detroit was about \$12 billion in debt before filing for bankruptcy in 2013. Much of that was erased or restructured allowing the city to improve services, like police and fire, and invest in neighborhoods.

Detroit's general fund balance was about \$595 million at the end of the 2017 fiscal year, compared to a deficit of about \$73 million that the city faced at the end of the 2013 fiscal year following years of a plummeting population and tax base.

A \$36 million operating surplus was expected for the fiscal year 2018.

A 30-year jobs forecast by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments forecasts manufacturing jobs in Detroit falling from 23,000 three years ago to 16,000 by 2045. Over that same time, professional and technical services, corporate headquarters, administrative, support, waste services and health care jobs are expected to rise.

Preliminary figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics pegged unemployment in Detroit in September at 7.9 percent. While this is still well above the U.S. rate of 3.7 percent, Detroit's unemployment has been dropping since January 2014 when it was nearly 18 percent. Detroit's unemployment rate was 28.9 percent in June 2009.

Preparing Detroit's workforce for non-manufacturing jobs is one of the next hurdles.

Mayor Mike Duggan has said more residents are enrolling in Detroit At Work free training programs. The programs offer training and certifications for jobs that include information technology, truck driving, health careers, computer networking and culinary arts.

But many people in the city are not prepared for tech-related jobs that are in Detroit or on the way, said



In a Dec. 7, 2009 file photo, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm drives a pre-production Chevrolet Volt at the Hamtramck Assembly plant in Hamtramck, Mich. GMs' planned shutdown of its Detroit-Hamtramck plant would leave only one auto assembly factory in the city known for "putting America on wheels," but the closure and job losses are not expected to stall-out Detroit's remarkable comeback following its 2014 bankruptcy exit. GM wants to close four facilities in the United States and one in Canada. (AP Photo/

Carlos Osorio)

Ida Byrd-Hill, president of Detroit-based Uplift Inc. which provides computer programming language training. "A lot of the training programs have not really reached out to women or people of color," said Byrd-Hill, who added that funding has been limited for local tech-training providers.

Companies are looking for more educated and tech savvy workers, especially those with critical thinking, communications, collaborating and team building skills — someone who is "able to think critically about when to use the appropriate piece of technology," said TechTown's Staebler.

With Ford also considering thousands of white-collar cuts, Detroit-area auto industry workers may find it difficult to find new jobs or match their salaries if they go to other industries, said David Kudla, CEO of Mainstay Capital Management in Grand Blanc, Michigan, which advises many auto industry employees. "You're going to be going out in a marketplace where everybody is cutting back," he said.

Those with skills in developing autonomous or electric vehicles will have an easier time finding work, Kudla said.

He suggests that workers cut expenses and build savings to be ready in case of layoff.

Still, there's a human element to a possible Detroit-Hamtramck closure, assembly line worker Dnitra Landon told the Detroit Free Press.

"I know you're a big business, but what about the people who make you a big business?" Landon, 55, said of GM. "Everybody in here is a survivor and we're going to survive no matter what happens."

Associated Press writers Jeff Karoub and Tom Krisher, both in Detroit, contributed to this report.

For first time, prosecutors connect Trump to a federal crime

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department says that President Donald Trump directed illegal payments to buy the silence of two women whose claims of extramarital affairs threatened his presidential campaign, the first time prosecutors have connected Trump to a federal crime.

In a court filing, prosecutors said former Trump lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen arranged the secret payments at the height of the 2016 campaign "in coordination with and at the direction of" Trump. Cohen has previously said Trump was involved in the hush-money scheme, but court documents filed ahead of Cohen's sentencing made clear prosecutors believe Cohen's claim.

The filing stopped short of accusing the president of committing a crime. Whether a president can be prosecuted while in office remains a matter of legal dispute.

But there's no ambiguity in Friday's filing that prosecutors believe Cohen's act was criminal and Trump was directly involved, a remarkable disclosure with potential political and legal ramifications for a president dogged by investigations. The payments are likely to become a target for House Democrats gearing up to



Michael Cohen, former lawyer to President Donald Trump, leaves his apartment building on New York's Park Avenue, Friday, Dec. 7, 2018. In the latest filings Friday, prosecutors will weigh in on whether Cohen deserves prison time and, if so, how much. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 41 of 79

investigate the president next year. It's unclear whether Trump faces legal jeopardy over his role.

Federal law requires that any payments made "for the purposes of influencing" an election must be reported in campaign finance disclosures. The court filing Friday makes clear that the payments were made to benefit Trump politically.

In August, Cohen pleaded guilty to eight criminal charges, including campaign finance violations, and detailed an illegal operation to stifle sex stories and distribute hush money to buy the silence of porn actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal, who had both claimed they had affairs with Trump. Trump has denied having an affair.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, was paid \$130,000 as part of a nondisclosure agreement signed days before the 2016 election and is currently suing to dissolve that contract.

Trump denied in April that he knew anything about Cohen's payments to Daniels, though the explanations from the president and his attorney, Rudy Giuliani, have shifted multiple times since then.

Another attorney for the president, Jay Sekulow, did not immediately return a call for comment.

Trump, in a Saturday morning tweet, said: "AFTER TWO YEARS AND MILLIONS OF PAGES OF DOCUMENTS (and a cost of over \$30,000,000), NO COLLUSION!"

In August 2016, the National Enquirer's parent company reached a \$150,000 deal to pay McDougal for her story of a 2006 affair, which it never published, a tabloid practice known as catch and kill. In 2015, the company's chairman met with Cohen and Trump and "offered help with negative stories" about Trump's relationships with women by buying the rights to the stories, prosecutors said.

After McDougal contacted the Enquirer, the chairman of its parent company, American Media Inc., contacted Cohen about the story. After Cohen promised the company would be reimbursed, the Enquirer paid McDougal \$150,000, according to court documents.

An audio recording released by Cohen in July appeared to capture Trump and Cohen discussing buying the rights to McDougal's story from the Enquirer's parent company. Trump's lawyers have said the payments were never made.

Legal experts have said the issue of whether Trump violated the law would come down to whether Trump tried to influence the election and whether he knew it was legally improper.

Former Sen. John Edwards, who sought the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008, was indicted in 2011 in connection with payments made on his behalf by a wealthy campaign donor to keep Edwards' mistress quiet, which prosecutors argued amounted to illegal campaign contributions.

Edwards argued the payments were meant to keep his wife from learning about the affair — not to protect his campaign — and were therefore not political donations.

A jury acquitted the North Carolina Democrat of one charge and deadlocked on the rest in 2012. The Justice Department did not retry the case.

Ex-Trump fixer Michael Cohen portrayed as greedy opportunist

By JIM MUSTIAN and LARRY NEUMEISTER, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For weeks, Michael Cohen sought to portray himself as a man who'd found his "true north" after years of shady business dealings and pit-bull loyalty to President Donald Trump.

Prosecutors offered a vastly different assessment Friday of the president's former fixer, dismissing him as a duplicitous figure who badly misplayed his hand.

In a court filing ahead of Cohen's sentencing next week, they assailed him as a greedy opportunist who rode Trump's coattails to wealth and is now exaggerating his level of cooperation with investigators.

They said the "pattern of deception that permeated his professional life" was hidden from three dozen friends and relatives who wrote letters to the court hailing Cohen as "the true meaning of a 'mensch,'" a "consummate patriarch" and a selfless servant "whose manner and bearing is reminiscent of a more gracious era."

"After cheating the IRS for years, lying to banks and to Congress, and seeking to criminally influence the Presidential election, Cohen's decision to plead guilty - rather than seek a pardon for his manifold

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 42 of 79

crimes - does not make him a hero," they wrote.

Cohen, 52, is facing the possibility of roughly four years in prison at a sentencing Dec. 12 for crimes that include tax evasion and helping to coordinate hush money payments to two women who claimed to have had affairs with Trump.

His lawyers said Cohen decided to plead guilty, cooperate with the special inquiry into Russian meddling in the 2016 elections and get sentenced quickly so he can put the case behind him and return to being a breadwinner for his wife of 24 years and their two college-age children.

Their campaign to portray him as a good person included collecting letters from longtime acquaintances telling how a teenage Cohen happened upon a misplaced wallet stuffed with over \$1,000 and spent an hour searching for its rightful owner. Or the day Cohen chauffeured a church choir to a cemetery. And when he paid for the surgery of a housekeeper's child who couldn't afford it.

"This is the true Michael," wrote Randall D. Satin, a friend of Cohen's for four decades.

Prosecutors told the judge they aren't buying it.

"Now he seeks extraordinary leniency — a sentence of no jail time — based principally on his rose-colored view of the seriousness of the crimes; his claims to a sympathetic personal history; and his provision of certain information to law enforcement," they wrote.

Cohen was a workaday attorney specializing in negligence and malpractice with a \$75,000 salary in 2007 who caught Trump's eye when he successfully fought the board of directors at a building where he lived when they sought to remove Trump's name from it, prosecutors said.

Soon afterward, he was hired at the Trump Organization as a special counsel to Trump, earning \$500,000 annually.

Reporters came to know him as an arm-twisting advocate for Trump.

"If somebody does something Mr. Trump doesn't like, I do everything in my power to resolve it to Mr. Trump's benefit," Cohen once told ABC News. "If you do something wrong, I'm going to come at you, grab you by the neck and I'm not going to let you go until I'm finished."

Prosecutors, in their sentencing papers, cited one snarling exchange with a Daily Beast reporter.

"I will make sure that you and I meet one day while we're in the courthouse. And I will take you for every penny you still don't have. And I will come after your (employer) and everybody else that you possibly know," Cohen said.

On the side, Cohen invested in New York City's taxi industry and in real estate and made high-interest loans to people in the cab business.

He has pleaded guilty to failing to report \$4 million in income to the IRS from those businesses.

During the presidential campaign, Cohen worked with executives at the company that owns the National Enquirer to pay the former Playboy model, Karen McDougal, and the adult film actress Stormy Daniels not to talk to reporters about alleged sexual encounters with Trump, who says the affairs never happened.



Michael Cohen, former lawyer to President Donald Trump, leaves his apartment building on New York's Park Avenue, Friday, Dec. 7, 2018. In the latest filings Friday, prosecutors will weigh in on whether Cohen deserves prison time and, if so, how much. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 43 of 79

Cohen told prosecutors Trump directed him to make the payments.

After Trump's election, Cohen left the Trump Organization and tried to cash in on his connections.

Big companies hired him to offer "insight and access" to the administration. Those companies included AT&T, which paid Cohen \$50,000 a month and the pharmaceutical giant Novartis, which paid Cohen \$1.2 million.

Prosecutors haven't charged Cohen with doing anything criminal in connection with those deals, but they singled out the work as "hollow," saying he did minimal work.

After federal authorities raided his office earlier this year, Cohen's loyalty to Trump faded. He told ABC News that his family and country came first.

In a court filing last week, Cohen's lawyers said he had decided to "re-point his internal compass true north toward a productive, ethical and thoroughly law abiding life."

"He could have fought the government and continued to hold to the party line, positioning himself perhaps for a pardon or clemency, but, instead - for himself, his family, and his country - he took personal responsibility for his own wrongdoing and contributed, and is prepared to continue to contribute, to an investigation that he views as thoroughly legitimate and vital," they wrote.

In their filing Friday, prosecutors said Cohen acted out of self-interest.

"Any suggestion by Cohen that his meetings with law enforcement reflect a selfless and unprompted about-face are overstated," the wrote.

In a separate court filing, special counsel Robert Mueller's office had a more kind view of Cohen's cooperation, saying he had provided useful information about attempts by Russian intermediaries to influence Trump, as well as other matters.

New York prosecutors said that while Cohen was helpful, he had declined to sign a formal cooperation agreement, which would have required him to confess any other crimes he might have committed. Cohen, they wrote, wasn't willing to do so. They suggested only a slight reduction in his sentence for his cooperation.

David S. Weinstein, a former federal prosecutor, said Cohen appears to have overplayed his hand, leading prosecutors to attack the "bastion of humanity" portrait offered by the defense.

"It does create a sort of Jekyll-and-Hyde portrayal," Weinstein said.

Closer legal peril for Trump in probes; he sees no collusion

By ERIC TUCKER, CHAD DAY and JIM MUSTIAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen, was in touch as far back as 2015 with a Russian who offered "political synergy" with the Trump election campaign and proposed a meeting between the candidate and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the federal special counsel said.

Court filings from prosecutors in New York and special counsel Robert Mueller's office Friday laid out previously undisclosed contacts between Trump associates and Russian intermediaries and suggested the Kremlin aimed early on to influence Trump and his campaign by playing to both his political aspirations and his personal business interests.

The filings, in cases involving Cohen and former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, capped a dramatic week of revelations in Mueller's probe into possible coordination between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin. They bring the legal peril from multiple investigations closer than ever to Trump, tying him to an illegal hush money payment scheme and contradicting his claims that he had nothing to do with Russia.

Trump was undeterred, tweeting early Saturday: "AFTER TWO YEARS AND MILLIONS OF PAGES OF DOCUMENTS (and a cost of over \$30,000,000), NO COLLUSION!"

The court documents make clear how witnesses previously close to Trump — Cohen once declared he'd "take a bullet" for the president — have since provided damaging information about him in efforts to come clean to the government and in some cases get lighter prison sentences.

One defendant, former national security adviser Michael Flynn, provided so much information to pros-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 44 of 79

ecutors that Mueller this week said he shouldn't serve any prison time.

In hours of interviews with prosecutors, witnesses have offered up information about pivotal episodes under examination, including possible collusion with Russia and payments during the campaign to silence a porn star and Playboy model who said they had sex with Trump a decade earlier.

In one of the filings, Mueller details how Cohen spoke to a Russian who "claimed to be a 'trusted person' in the Russian Federation who could offer the campaign 'political synergy' and 'synergy on a government level.'"

The person repeatedly dangled a meeting between Trump and Putin, saying such a meeting could have a "phenomenal" impact "not only in political but in a business dimension as well."

That was a reference to a proposed Moscow real estate deal that prosecutors say could have netted Trump's business hundreds of millions of dollars. Cohen admitted last week to lying to Congress by saying discussions about a Trump Tower in Moscow ended in January 2016 when in fact they stretched into that June, well into the U.S. campaign.

Cohen told prosecutors he never followed up on the Putin invitation, though the offer bore echoes of a March 2016 proposal presented by Trump campaign aide George Papadopoulos, who broached to other advisers the idea of a Putin encounter.

Prosecutors said probation officials recommended a sentence for Cohen of three-and-a-half years in prison. His lawyers want the 52-year-old attorney to avoid prison time altogether.

In an additional filing Friday evening, prosecutors said Manafort lied about his contacts with a Russian associate and Trump administration officials, including in 2018.

The court papers say Manafort initially told prosecutors he didn't have contact with any people while they were in the Trump administration. But prosecutors say they recovered "electronic documents" showing contacts with multiple administration officials not identified in the filings.

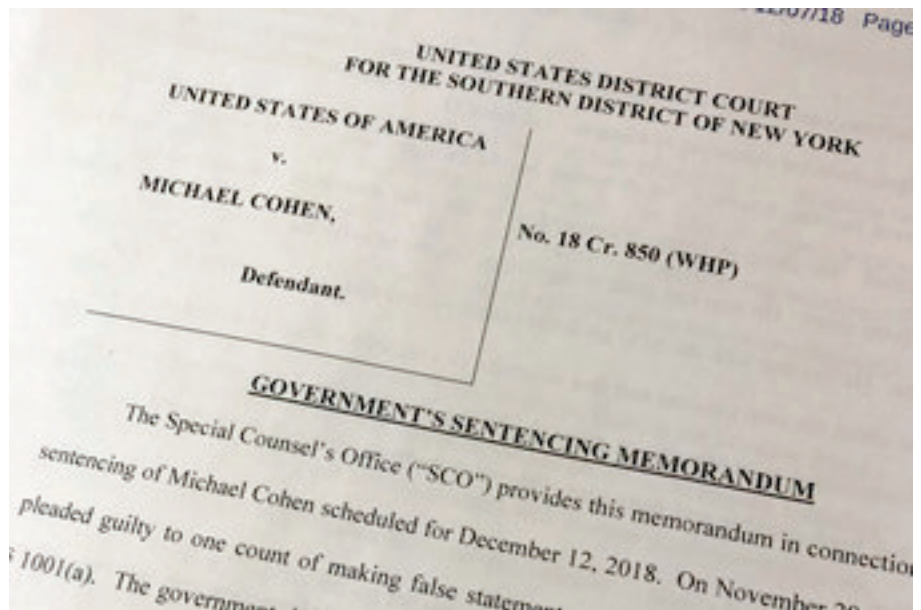
Manafort, who has pleaded guilty to several counts, violated his plea agreement by telling "multiple discernible lies" to prosecutors, they said.

Manafort resigned from his job on the Trump campaign as questions swirled about his lobbying work for a pro-Russia political party in Ukraine.

Prosecutors in Cohen's case said that even though he cooperated in their investigation into potential campaign finance violations, he nonetheless deserved prison time. Though he has portrayed himself as cooperative, "his description of those efforts is overstated in some respects and incomplete in others," prosecutors said.

"After cheating the IRS for years, lying to banks and to Congress, and seeking to criminally influence the Presidential election, Cohen's decision to plead guilty - rather than seek a pardon for his manifold crimes - does not make him a hero," they wrote.

Cohen, dubbed Trump's "legal fixer" in the past, also described his work in conjunction with Trump in orchestrating hush money payments to two women — adult actress Stormy Daniels and Playboy model



A portion of a court filing by prosecutors from the special counsel's office released Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, laid out for the first time details of Cohen's cooperation with investigators and took positions on the punishment he should face. (AP Photo/Wayne Partlow)

Karen McDougal — who said they had sex with Trump.

Prosecutors in New York, where Cohen pleaded guilty in August to campaign finance crimes in connection with those payments, said the lawyer “acted in coordination and at the direction” of Trump. Though Cohen had previously implicated Trump in the payments, the prosecutors now are linking Trump to the scheme and backing up Cohen’s allegations.

Federal law requires that any payments made “for the purposes of influencing” an election must be reported in campaign finance disclosures. The court filing Friday makes clear that the payments were made to benefit Trump politically.

A court filing also reveals that Cohen told prosecutors he and Trump discussed a potential meeting with Putin on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in 2015, shortly after Trump announced his candidacy for president. In a footnote Mueller’s team writes that Cohen conferred with Trump “about contacting the Russia government before reaching out to gauge Russia’s interest in such a meeting.” It never took place.

Associated Press writers Larry Neumeister in New York and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report

Early Russian outreach to Trump campaign detailed by Mueller

By CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Key pieces of special counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation appear to be falling into place.

In three court filings Friday, prosecutors for the first time connected President Donald Trump to a crime involving hush money payments to a porn actress. They revealed new details about outreach from Russia early in Trump’s presidential campaign. They detailed how they say two central figures, lawyer Michael Cohen and onetime campaign chairman Paul Manafort, were continually tripped up by lies.

Some takeaways from the latest round of court documents from Mueller’s investigation:

EARLY RUSSIAN OUTREACH

Trump announced his presidential candidacy in June 2015. By that November, the Russians were reaching out about “political synergy.”

The court papers provide new details about one of the earliest known contacts between Russia and a Trump campaign associate. In fall 2015, Cohen was months into his work on a proposed Trump Tower in Moscow when an unidentified Russian national proposed a meeting between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. This person, prosecutors say, claimed to be a “trusted person” in Russia who could offer the Trump campaign “political synergy” and “synergy on a government level.”

This person sought to connect the Trump business project with the campaign, saying the meeting could have a “phenomenal” impact on the proposed tower in Moscow. There is “no bigger warranty in any project



President Donald Trump exits the Marine One helicopter as he returns to the White House, Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, in Washington, after speaking at the 2018 Project Safe Neighborhoods National Conference. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 46 of 79

than the consent of" Putin, the person told Cohen.

Prosecutors say Cohen didn't follow up and that the meeting never occurred.

The outreach is more evidence that Russia was eager to build relationships with the campaign and tried to use Trump's business as an opening.

TRUMP DIRECTED COHEN'S CRIME

Prosecutors didn't mince words: The campaign finance violations Cohen committed came "in coordination with and at the direction of" Trump, according to the new filings.

Those violations stemmed from payments Cohen made to buy the silence of porn actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal. Both women alleged they had affairs with Trump, which the White House denies. Daniels was paid \$130,000 as part of a nondisclosure agreement signed days before the 2016 election.

Trump has denied knowing anything about the Daniels payment. But the filing directly contradicts that claim. It also, for the first time, directly ties Trump to a federal crime. Campaign finance law requires candidates to report any payments made to influence the election. The Trump campaign failed to report the payment at the time.

Prosecutors don't say Trump broke the law and the Justice Department has maintained that a sitting president cannot be indicted.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS MATTER TO MUELLER

At least such statements did matter to Mueller when Cohen lied to Congress, and that could have implications for other episodes under investigation in the Russia investigation.

Cohen has admitted lying to Congress about how long he worked on the Trump Tower Moscow project and repeating the falsehoods to the media. But Mueller's team doesn't just consider this self-protection. It was a "deliberate effort" to publicly present a "false narrative" in the hopes of limiting the scope of the various Russia investigations, prosecutors say in the court papers.

Mueller's focus on public assertions and their impact on witnesses, lawmakers and ongoing investigations could serve as a warning to Trump.

The president also has spread falsehoods about his campaign's ties to Russia. The special counsel has questioned witnesses about a statement Trump dictated on Air Force One last year that omitted several details about a June 2016 Trump Tower meeting with a Russian attorney.

The filing suggests Mueller intends to hold witnesses accountable for the statements made privately and publicly. If the lies are meant to influence the investigation, they may factor into Mueller's investigation into whether Trump has tried to obstruct the probe.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION CONTACTS

Despite their criminal cases, the Trump administration just can't leave Manafort or Cohen behind, according to prosecutors.

In Cohen's case, Mueller's team said he has provided "relevant and useful" information about his contacts with people connected to the Trump White House in 2017 and 2018. With Manafort, prosecutors say he also had several recent administration contacts and lied about them.

After Manafort pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate with the government, prosecutors say he told them he had "no direct or indirect" contact with people in the administration. But that was a lie, they say.

Instead, they found evidence, including electronic documents, showing contacts with multiple administration officials. That included communication with a "senior administration official" through February 2018. Manafort also directed a person to speak with an administration official on his "behalf" on May 26.

Neither Cohen's nor Manafort's filings detail the content of the conversations or identify the officials. Manafort has contended he was truthful with Mueller's team.

NOT JUST COHEN'S WORD

Since his guilty plea, Trump has attacked Cohen as a liar who is telling "stories" to get a reduced prison sentence. But prosecutors revealed Friday that they're not just taking Cohen's word for it.

The information Cohen told prosecutors in seven separate interviews "has been credible and consistent with other evidence obtained" in Mueller's investigation, they note in the sentencing recommendation.

Some of that information from Cohen, prosecutors say, concerns "certain discrete Russia-related matters" at the "core" of Mueller's investigation, particularly those involving his contact with Trump Organization executives.

'LUCRATIVE' MOSCOW DEAL

Trump and his lawyers have played down the Trump Tower Moscow proposal. The president has said he never put any money into it and ultimately decided not to do it. But Mueller's team reveals that if he did, they believe they know the windfall.

According to Cohen's filing, the deal could have yielded "hundreds of millions of dollars from Russian sources in licensing fees and other revenues."

They also note that the project's success likely hinged on Russian government approval, which Cohen sought.

Associated Press writer Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

Virginia city hopes to heal after man's murder conviction

By DENISE LAVOIE, AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — A man who drove his car into counterprotesters at a 2017 white nationalist rally in Virginia was convicted Friday of first-degree murder, a verdict that local civil rights activists hope will help heal a community still scarred by the violence and the racial tensions it inflamed nationwide.

A state jury rejected defense arguments that James Alex Fields Jr. acted in self-defense during a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville on Aug. 12, 2017. Jurors also convicted Fields of eight other charges, including aggravated malicious wounding and hit and run.

Fields, 21, drove to Virginia from his home in Maumee, Ohio, to support the white nationalists. As a large group of counterprotesters marched through Charlottesville singing and laughing, he stopped his car, backed up, then sped into the crowd, according to testimony from witnesses and video surveillance shown to jurors.

Prosecutors told the jury that Fields was angry after witnessing violent clashes between the two sides earlier in the day. The violence prompted police to shut down the



Susan Bro, left, mother of Heather Heyer is hugged by a supporter on the steps of the courthouse after a guilty verdict was reached in the trial of James Alex Fields Jr., Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, at Charlottesville General district court in Charlottesville, Va. Fields was convicted of first degree murder in the death of Heather Heyer as well as nine other counts during a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville . (AP Photo/Steve Helber)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 48 of 79

rally before it even officially began.

Heather Heyer, a 32-year-old paralegal and civil rights activist, was killed, and nearly three dozen others were injured. The trial featured emotional testimony from survivors who described devastating injuries and long, complicated recoveries.

After the verdict was read in court, some of those who were injured embraced Heyer's mother, Susan Bro. She left the courthouse without commenting. Fields' mother, Samantha Bloom, who is disabled, left the courthouse in a wheelchair without commenting.

A group of about a dozen local civil rights activists stood in front of the courthouse after the verdict with their right arms raised in the air.

"They will not replace us! They will not replace us!" they yelled, in a response to the chants heard during the 2017 rally, when some white nationalists shouted: "You will not replace us! and "Jews will not replace us."

Charlottesville City Councilor Wes Bellamy said he hopes the verdict "allows our community to take another step toward healing and moving forward."

Charlottesville civil rights activist Tanesha Hudson said she sees the guilty verdict as the city's way of saying, "We will not tolerate this in our city."

"We don't stand for this type of hate. We just don't," she said.

White nationalist Richard Spencer, who had been scheduled to speak at the Unite the Right rally, described the verdict as a "miscarriage of justice."

"I am sadly not shocked, but I am appalled by this," he told The Associated Press. "He was treated as a terrorist from the get-go."

Spencer had questioned whether Fields could get a fair trial since the case was "so emotional."

"There does not seem to be any reasonable evidence put forward that he engaged in murderous intent," Spencer said.

Spencer popularized the term "alt-right" to describe a fringe movement loosely mixing white nationalism, anti-Semitism and other far-right extremist views. He said he doesn't feel any personal responsibility for the violence that erupted in Charlottesville.

"Absolutely not," he said. "As a citizen, I have a right to protest. I have a right to speak. That is what I came to Charlottesville to do."

The far-right rally in August 2017 had been organized in part to protest the planned removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. Hundreds of Ku Klux Klan members, neo-Nazis and other white nationalists — emboldened by the election of President Donald Trump — streamed into the college town for one of the largest gatherings of white supremacists in a decade. Some dressed in battle gear.

Afterward, Trump inflamed tensions even further when he said "both sides" were to blame, a comment some saw as a refusal to condemn racism.

According to one of his former teachers, Fields was known in high school for being fascinated with Nazism and idolizing Adolf Hitler. Jurors were shown a text message he sent to his mother days before the rally that included an image of the notorious German dictator. When his mother pleaded with him to be careful, he replied: "we're not the one (sic) who need to be careful."

During one of two recorded phone calls Fields made to his mother from jail in the months after he was arrested, he told her he had been mobbed "by a violent group of terrorists" at the rally. In another, Fields referred to the mother of the woman who was killed as a "communist" and "one of those anti-white supremacists."

Prosecutors also showed jurors a meme Fields posted on Instagram three months before the rally in which bodies are shown being thrown into the air after a car hits a crowd of people identified as protesters. He posted the meme publicly to his Instagram page and sent a similar image as a private message to a friend in May 2017.

But Fields' lawyers told the jury that he drove into the crowd on the day of the rally because he feared for his life and was "scared to death" by earlier violence he had witnessed. A video of Fields being interrogated after the crash showed him sobbing and hyperventilating after he was told a woman had died and others were seriously injured.

Wednesday Bowie, who was struck by Fields' car and suffered a broken pelvis and other injuries, said she felt gratified by the guilty verdict.

"This is the best I've been in a year and a half," Bowie said.

The jury will reconvene Monday to recommend a sentence. Under Virginia law, jurors can recommend from 20 years to life in prison on the first-degree murder charge.

Fields is eligible for the death penalty if convicted of separate federal hate crime charges. No trial has been scheduled yet.

IS fights to hang on a year after defeat in Iraq

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — A year after it was routed from Iraq in a devastating war that left entire neighborhoods and towns in ruins, the Islamic State group is fighting to hang on to its last enclave in eastern Syria, engaging in deadly battles with U.S.-backed forces.

Cornered in the desert near the Iraqi border with nowhere to run, the militants are putting up a fierce fight, inflicting hundreds of casualties among their opponents and releasing a stream of beheading videos reminiscent of the extremist group's terrifying propaganda at the height of its power.

The battle for Hajin has dragged on for three months, highlighting the difficulty of eradicating an extremist group determined to survive. In Iraq, there is rising concern that the group may stage a comeback. IS sleeper cells have recently launched deadly attacks against security forces and kidnapped and killed civilians, mostly in four northern and central provinces that were once part of the group's self-declared caliphate.

"There is still major danger for Iraq and Syria especially in areas close to the border when it comes to Daesh," a senior Iraqi intelligence official said, using an Arabic acronym to refer to the extremists. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media about security matters.

He said IS lost most of the income it once made from oil and taxes imposed in areas it controlled. The group now relies on selling gold and other reserves that they had accumulated after declaring their caliphate in June 2014. He said the money is being used to buy weapons and finance attacks in Iraq and Syria.

Another Iraqi intelligence official said IS has begun restructuring its command, relying more on non-Iraqi commanders after most of its leaders were killed in coalition strikes.

The Islamic State group once held an area the size of Britain across vast territories straddling parts of



FILE - In this July 17, 2017 file photo, U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighters use their video camera through a hole as they film a street controlled by Islamic State militants, on the front line on the western side of Raqqa, northeast Syria. A year after it was routed from Iraq following a three-year devastating war that left Iraqi cities in ruin, the Islamic State group is fighting to hang on to its last enclave in Syria, engaging in deadly battles with U.S.-backed forces in the country's east near the Iraqi border. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla, File)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 50 of 79

Iraq and Syria, running a so-called caliphate and planning international attacks from its headquarters in the Syrian city of Raqqa. Tens of thousands were killed in both countries as an array of local forces, some backed by a U.S.-led coalition, eventually drove the extremists out of virtually all the lands they once held.

Iraq's then-Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared final victory over the group on Dec. 9, 2017. Two months earlier, the coalition, working with Kurdish-dominated fighters known as the Syrian Democratic Forces, liberated Raqqa after a bombing campaign that decimated much of the city.

The area that IS still holds in Syria represents less than 1 percent of the territory it controlled at its height. The pocket is home to some 15,000 people, including IS fighters and their families. The U.S. military estimates there are about 2,000 remaining IS fighters there.

The SDF launched their offensive to retake Hajin on Sept. 10. It has been a grueling campaign, with sand storms and fog at times grounding coalition aircraft, allowing the militants to launch counteroffensives that have killed hundreds of SDF fighters. IS has also taken scores of prisoners and hundreds of civilians hostage.

"It is very difficult because we are in the last stages, where almost every ISIS fighter is a suicide belt," Brett McGurk, the White House envoy for the war against IS, said at a security conference held recently in the Gulf nation of Bahrain.

The extremists, besieged near the border, have no place to go. They are surrounded from the east and north by SDF fighters while from the south and west, Syrian government forces and their allies have closed roads to the surrounding desert.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says since the fighting began nearly three months ago, 1,616 people have been killed, mostly fighters from both sides. It said the dead include 827 IS gunmen, 481 SDF fighters and 308 civilians.

The fighting is now believed to be in its final stages, with SDF fighters said to have broken IS defenses and taken the fight inside the town.

The fall of Hajin will end the group's hold over any significant territory in Iraq or Syria, but sleeper cells in both countries will continue to stage attacks amid attempts to regroup. IS affiliates in Libya, Afghanistan and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula continue to stage regular attacks.

The group's savage legacy, meanwhile, will stay for years to come.

Huge parts of Iraq and Syria are still in ruins, with little cash and — in Syria's case — little international political will to rebuild.

Emerging from the more than three years of war, Iraq estimates that \$88.2 billion is needed to rebuild the country. An international donors' summit held early this year in Kuwait gathered pledges of \$30 billion that mainly came in the form of loans, but no progress has been made to fulfil the pledges.

"The biggest problem we have is the lack of funds," said Mustafa al-Hiti, the head of a government-run reconstruction fund.

"What we spent till now is about 1.5 percent of what we need and that came as loans and donations," al-Hiti added.

Another challenge is the unexploded ordnance, mainly in the northern city of Mosul, where the climactic battle occurred. He estimated that 4 million unexploded bombs are still littered around Mosul, the largest city IS once held, with only 6 percent cleared so far.

Nuri Mehmud, an SDF spokesman speaking by telephone from Syria, said all of IS' experienced fighters are now in the besieged area of Hajin.

"It is a difficult battle but in the end we will wipe out Daesh," he said.

Mroue reported from Beirut. Associated Press writer Sinan Salaheddin in Baghdad contributed.

Chinese executive facing US extradition appears in court

By JIM MORRIS, ROB GILLIES and PAUL WISEMAN, Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — A Canadian prosecutor urged a Vancouver court to deny bail to a Chinese executive at the heart of a case that is shaking up U.S.-China relations and worrying global financial markets.

Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of telecommunications giant Huawei and daughter of its founder, was detained at the request of the U.S. during a layover at the Vancouver airport last Saturday — the same day that Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping of China agreed over dinner to a 90-day ceasefire in a trade dispute that threatens to disrupt global commerce.

The U.S. alleges that Huawei used a Hong Kong shell company to sell equipment in Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. It also says that Meng and Huawei misled American banks about its business dealings in Iran.

The surprise arrest, already denounced by Beijing, raises doubts about whether the trade truce will hold and whether the world's two biggest economies can resolve the complicated issues that divide them.

"I think it will have a distinctively negative effect on the U.S.-China talks," said Philip Levy, senior fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and an economic adviser in President George W. Bush's White House. "There's the humiliating way this happened right before the dinner, with Xi unaware. Very hard to save face on this one. And we may see (Chinese retaliation), which will embitter relations."

Canadian prosecutor John Gibb-Carsley said in a court hearing Friday that a warrant had been issued for Meng's arrest in New York Aug. 22. He said Meng, arrested en route to Mexico from Hong Kong, was aware of the investigation and had been avoiding the United States for months, even though her teenage son goes to school in Boston.

Gibb-Carsley alleged that Huawei had done business in Iran through a Hong Kong company called Skycom. Meng, he said, had misled U.S. banks into thinking that Huawei and Skycom were separate when, in fact, "Skycom was Huawei." Meng has contended that Huawei sold Skycom in 2009.

In urging the court to reject Meng's bail request, Gibb-Carsley said the Huawei executive had vast resources and a strong incentive to bolt: She's facing fraud charges in the United States that could put her in prison for 30 years.

Meng's lawyer, David Martin, argued that it would be unfair to deny her bail just because she "has worked hard and has extraordinary resources."

He told the court that her personal integrity and respect for her father, Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei, would prevent her violating a court order. Meng, who owns two homes in Vancouver, was willing to wear an ankle bracelet and put the houses up as collateral, he said.



In this courtroom sketch, Meng Wanzhou, right, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies, sits beside a translator during a bail hearing at British Columbia Supreme Court in Vancouver, on Friday, Dec. 7, 2018. Meng faces extradition to the U.S. on charges of trying to evade U.S. sanctions on Iran. She appeared in a Vancouver court Friday to seek bail. (Jane Wolsak/The Canadian Press via AP)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 52 of 79

There was no bail decision by the judge on Friday so Meng will spend the weekend in jail and the hearing will resume Monday. Justice William Ehrcke said he would think about proposed bail conditions over the weekend.

Huawei, in a brief statement emailed to the AP, said that "we have every confidence that the Canadian and U.S. legal systems will reach the right conclusion."

The company is the world's biggest supplier of network gear used by phone and internet companies and long has been seen as a front for spying by the Chinese military or security services.

"What's getting lost in the initial frenzy here is that Huawei has been in the crosshairs of U.S. regulators for some time," said Gregory Jaeger, special counsel at the Stroock law firm and a former Justice Department trial attorney. "This is the culmination of what is likely to be a fairly lengthy investigation."

Meng's arrest came as a jarring surprise after the Trump-Xi trade cease-fire in Argentina. Exact details of the agreement are elusive. But the White House said Trump suspended for 90 days an import tax hike on \$200 billion in Chinese goods that was set to take effect Jan. 1; in return, the White House said, the Chinese agreed to buy a "very substantial amount of agricultural, energy, industrial" and other products from the United States.

The delay was meant to buy time for the two countries to resolve a trade conflict that has been raging for months.

The U.S. charges that China is using predatory tactics in its drive to overtake America's dominance in technology and global economic leadership. These allegedly include forcing American and other foreign companies to hand over trade secrets in exchange for access to the Chinese market and engaging in cyber theft.

Washington also regards Beijing's ambitious long-term development plan, "Made in China 2025," as a scheme to dominate such fields as robotics and electric vehicles by unfairly subsidizing Chinese companies and discriminating against foreign competitors.

The United States has imposed tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese goods to pressure Beijing to change its ways. Trump has threatened to expand the tariffs to include just about everything China ships to the United States. Beijing has lashed back with tariffs on about \$110 billion in American exports.

An editorial in a Chinese Communist Party newspaper highlighted the challenges to Huawei and called on the government to ease geopolitical and ideological tensions with the West.

"The severe political discrimination and repulsion from the U.S. reflect an undeniable fact — the political gap between China and the U.S. and a few other Western nations is too wide to bridge," the Global Times wrote.

Fears the Huawei case might spark renewed U.S.-China trade hostilities have rattled global financial markets. On Friday, the Dow Jones industrial average plunged nearly 560 points.

But in a sign the case might not derail the Trump-Xi truce, Beijing protested Meng's arrest but said talks with the Trump administration would go ahead. Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said China is confident it can reach a deal during the 90-day timeout.

Still, Cornell University economist Eswar Prasad warned that "this incident highlights the huge gap in trust between the two sides, casting a pall over the tough negotiations that still lie ahead. It will clearly take more than one convivial dinner between the leaders of the two countries to start bridging that gap."

Gillies reported from Toronto and Wiseman reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Frank Bajak in Boston, Joe McDonald in Beijing and Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Absentee vote changes may have invited 'ballot harvesting'

By GARY D. ROBERTSON, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Changes made to absentee voting procedures five years ago in North Carolina may have emboldened workers to run the type of illegal "ballot-harvesting" operation alleged to have been used in a disputed congressional race, election experts and lawmakers said.

Some observers are concerned that the changes made it possible for more people to apply for absentee ballots. Then so-called harvesters could collect unsealed ballots and manipulate them or throw out ones from minority voters who might have otherwise gone to the polls.

The heavily Republican Legislature crafted the 2013 law that scaled back some voting options amid a national GOP push for voter ID laws and other restrictions they said were aimed at preventing in-person voting fraud, which experts say is rare. Many provisions were struck down in court, but unchallenged absentee changes may have opened wider a door to possible widespread fraud.

"It could have exacerbated the problem," Republican state Sen. Tommy Tucker said this week. He and other



FILE - In this Sept. 26, 2018, file photo, Democratic congressional candidate Dan McCready leans against wallboard as he pauses during a Habitat For Humanity building event in Charlotte, N.C. The nation's last unresolved fall congressional race with McCready against Republican Mark Harris is awash in doubt as North Carolina election investigators concentrate on a rural county where absentee-ballot fraud allegations are so flagrant they've put the Election Day result into question. (AP Photo/Chuck Burton, File)

state legislators believe more absentee ballot restrictions may be necessary.

Investigators are scrutinizing mail-in ballot requests and ballot envelopes in the 9th Congressional District — a process that could lead to criminal charges or even a new election. Republican Mark Harris leads Democrat Dan McCready by 905 votes out of nearly 283,000 cast. The focus appears to be on Bladen and Robeson counties.

Since the 2013 law was approved, a decades-old political practice in which workers are paid to get people to vote by mail "became more visible," Robeson elections board Chairman Steve Stone said, particularly after the law eliminated their access to nursing homes. Unfettered access to blank ballot request forms also likely helped.

"When you have these people that possibly are getting paid a bounty per registration or per voter, then they're limited and can't go to the facilities, they are going to go out in the neighborhood to do it," Stone said in an interview.

Before 2013, voters had to submit a handwritten request for an absentee ballot or call to receive a form generated by each county board office. The person filled out the ballot in the presence of a witness. The voter and the witness had to sign the envelope, which was either mailed or taken in person by the voter, a near relative or a legal guardian.

The 2013 law ended the letter requirement and created a statewide ballot-request form that had to be

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 54 of 79

filled out. The form, which is posted online, could be used in any county and could be reprinted, making it easier for political parties, interest groups and broad get-out-the-vote efforts to recruit people to request mail-in ballots.

But the law also required applicants to provide more information on those requests to prove their identity, including a driver's license number or the last four digits of a Social Security number. And the envelope containing the completed ballot now had to be signed by two witnesses or a notary public.

In all, 104,000 people voted by mail this fall in North Carolina.

McCrae Dowless, a contractor for the Harris campaign's chief strategy firm, is listed as one of the top collectors of absentee ballot requests turned in to the Bladen County elections office. Collecting requests is lawful and done by both major parties. The election board now calls Dowless a "person of interest" in its investigation. He's been mentioned in ballot operations going back to at least 2014.

Election officials and prosecutors are looking at whether political operatives collected absentee ballots from voters but did not deliver them to county board offices. Some affidavits suggest voters received absentee ballot applications they never requested or were met by workers at their homes who took ballots that were either not completed or not placed in a sealed envelope. Those activities are illegal.

The law also attempted to rein in situations where nursing home operators were helping patients fill out ballot requests or the ballots themselves, or bringing in a campaign or party to do so. Now a team from the county election board will come in to help if a relative is not available.

Brad Crone, a longtime Democratic consultant in North Carolina, said improved access to request forms is positive, and he doesn't see the 2013 law as the problem. "The abuse comes in when you send campaign staff out to collect completed ballots or uncompleted ballots. That's where you cross the line."

It's also possible that absentee ballot activities simply turned more brazen because they have rarely been prosecuted. Gary Bartlett, the state elections director for 20 years until 2013, said his office referred absentee ballot fraud cases in at least six counties to local prosecutors, but nothing became of them.

North Carolina legislators have already acted on absentee ballot security. When GOP lawmakers passed a law this week implementing a new photo ID requirement, they also directed state election officials to make rules so mail-in ballot users meet a similar ID standard.

State House Minority Leader Darren Jackson said the state should revert to the pre-2013 law and accept ballot requests only from individuals to lessen the risk for fraud.

GOP Sen. Dan Bishop said he hopes a bipartisan task force will be created to look at Bladen County's absentee ballot issues and come up with some alterations to the rules.

"I think we're seeing shortcomings of some kind," Bishop said, "and they need to be dealt with."

Pearl Harbor survivor and Navy veteran recalls 1941 attack

By **CALEB JONES, Associated Press**

HONOLULU (AP) — Retired U.S. Navy Cmdr. Don Long was alone on an anchored military seaplane in the middle of a bay across the island from Pearl Harbor when Japanese warplanes started striking Hawaii on December 7, 1941, watching from afar as the attack that killed and wounded thousands unfolded.

The Japanese planes reached his base on Kaneohe Bay soon after Pearl Harbor was hit, and the young sailor saw buildings and planes explode all around him.

When the gunfire finally reached him, setting the aircraft ablaze, he jumped into the water and swam through the flames to safety.

Now 97, Long marked the 77th anniversary from his home in Napa, California on Friday.

He shared some of his memories with The Associated Press:

DECADES OF ANNIVERSARIES

Long was fresh out of boot camp when he arrived in Hawaii in 1941.

"I got off that ship with my sea bag over my shoulder and we threw it on a truck and they carted me over to Kaneohe from Pearl Harbor where we had landed," Long recalled.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 55 of 79

It was a different experience when he was flown to Hawaii for the 75th anniversary in 2016.

"We came in on a first class United chartered jet . all the girls with the leis were there with the Hawaiian music," he remembered. "We ended up not in a bunk in the barracks, but in a very nice ocean room."

He attended a dinner where survivors were seated with dignitaries. At his table were Japan's Honolulu-based consul general and his wife.

"He and his wife were there in full regalia," Long said. He asked if they might be able to help him identify the pilot who attacked his plane.

"They did some searching I guess, or told somebody to do it, but within a month or so I got a message from them and the proof is not positive but they sent the information on three Japanese pilots. It was probably one of those three," Long said.

Long no longer harbors ill will against Japan or its people.

"I don't know when that feeling left me. But as you are probably well aware, we were taught to hate those people with all our hearts, and when you're looking at one down a gun sight, you can't really feel much love for anyone — that's for darn sure," he said.

"That has long since changed."

Long has not always marked the anniversary like he does now.

"For about 50, 60 years or so, it was a day that rang a little bell to me, but I did not do much," he said. "In the past 20 or so (years), I take part in some kind of activity that I'll say is appropriate for the day."

This year, Long was visiting school children before attending a Pearl Harbor ceremony atop Mount Diablo in Concord, California.

On Friday morning at about the time of the attack, Long spoke with the AP at his home as he prepared for the day: "I recall the day very, very distinctly," he said, remembering "the day that started the war for our country that caused so, so much havoc. And I do recall the friends who never came back with, oh, much sadness."

In his office are about 25 photos of old planes on the wall including one of the type of aircraft he was aboard that day. There is also a photo of a Japanese plane similar to the one he believes attacked him.

He keeps about a half dozen medals, including his Purple Heart. On his dresser is a photo of himself as a pilot in 1943. He also keeps one of his wife, who died 10 years ago.

His 1999 Volkswagen camper van has two magnetic signs — one with a photo of him and another reading "Remember Pearl Harbor." A special license plate notes he is a Pearl Harbor survivor.



Retired U.S. Navy Cmdr. Don Long holds up a replica of the military seaplane he was standing watch on when Japanese warplanes attacked Hawaii 77 years ago, Friday, Dec. 7, 2018 at his home in Napa, California. Long was alone on the anchored plane in the middle of Kaneohe Bay, across the island from Pearl Harbor, when the attack happened, watching from afar as the bombs and bullets killed and wounded thousands. When the gunfire finally reached his plane, setting the aircraft ablaze, he jumped into the water and found himself swimming through fire to safety. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 56 of 79

A ROUTINE WEEKEND

Long remembers that weekend of the attack as routine, "or so it started out," he wrote in a 1992 essay that he provided to The Associated Press.

The 20-year-old from Minnesota enrolled in boot camp in March 1941, a "snotty nose kid, fresh off the farm." That Sunday morning was his first day of operational duty with the squadron he had been assigned to about a month earlier.

He took a small boat toward the awaiting Catalina flying boat, cruising across the turquoise waters of windward Oahu with Hawaii's 73-degree air splashing across his face.

"I recall it was a beautiful sunny day in Hawaii that morning," Long said.

He began preparing for a solitary day of signal drills and regular maintenance checks. He settled into the pilot's compartment to wait for contact from the beach signaling station to begin his drills.

A few minutes later, he heard the roar of airplanes overhead. In the distance, Long saw planes flying over hangars and buildings exploding. Another plane that was anchored nearby was hit and burst into flames.

Seconds later, a Japanese plane made a run toward his position. "The sequence of events during the next few minutes is not entirely clear," he recalled.

Long jumped from the pilot's seat and started looking for a life jacket, but bullets were immediately producing fountains of seawater inside the cabin. The fuel tanks in the wings were hit, and he was surrounded by flames.

He made a run for the rear exit. Gasoline was ablaze on the water, so he jumped into the bay and swam beneath the fire to get away from the sinking plane. He came to the surface and through the flames three times for air.

His military-issued high-top work shoes were bogging him down, so he dove underwater and removed them. Still far from shore, Long found a wooden channel marker and swam to it, ducking beneath the waves to hide every time a Japanese plane made a pass.

Once the Japanese were gone, Long spotted a boat that was searching for survivors and flagged them down.

Long burned his head, face and arms making his escape, but he considered himself in good health compared to the wounded and dead around him.

"Shipmates on the shore greeted me with comments like 'we never expected to see you again,'" Long recalled. "I was told I looked pretty bad."

"The attack was over, but much turmoil remained," he wrote. "That's it — the start of the first day of a long war."

Follow Associated Press Hawaii correspondent Caleb Jones on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CalebAP>

Associated Press photographer Eric Risberg contributed to this report from Napa, California.

US: Trump lawyer met Russian offering 'political synergy'

By CHAD DAY, ERIC TUCKER and JIM MUSTIAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen, was in touch as far back as 2015 with a Russian who offered "political synergy" with the Trump election campaign and proposed a meeting between the candidate and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the special counsel said Friday.

Court filings from prosecutors in New York and special counsel Robert Mueller's office lay out previously undisclosed contacts between Trump associates and Russian intermediaries and suggest the Kremlin aimed early on to influence Trump and his campaign by playing to both his political aspirations and his personal business interests.

The filings, in cases involving Cohen and former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, cap a dramatic week of revelations in Mueller's ongoing investigation into potential coordination between the Trump campaign

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 57 of 79

and the Kremlin.

They make clear how witnesses previously close to Trump — Cohen once declared he'd "take a bullet" for the president — have since provided damaging information about him in efforts to come clean to the government and in some cases get lighter prison sentences. One witness, former national security adviser Michael Flynn, provided so much information to prosecutors that Mueller this week said he shouldn't serve any prison time.

The interviews with prosecutors have yielded intimate information about episodes under close examination, including possible Russian collusion and hush money payments during the campaign to a porn star and Playboy model who say they had sex with Trump a decade earlier.

In one of the filings, Mueller details how Cohen spoke to a Russian who "claimed to be a 'trusted person' in the Russian Federation who could offer the campaign 'political synergy' and 'synergy on a government level.'" The person repeatedly dangled a meeting between Trump and Putin, saying such a meeting could have a "phenomenal" impact "not only in political but in a business dimension as well."

That was a reference to a proposed Moscow real estate deal that prosecutors say could have netted Trump's business hundreds of millions of dollars. Cohen admitted last week to lying to Congress by saying discussions about a Trump Tower in Moscow ended in January 2016 when in fact they stretched into that June, well into the U.S. campaign.

Cohen told prosecutors he never followed up, though the offer bore echoes of a proposal presented by Trump campaign aide George Papadopoulos, who raised the idea to other advisers of leveraging his connections to set up a Putin encounter.

In an additional filing Friday evening, prosecutors said Manafort lied to them about his contacts with a Russian associate and Trump administration officials, including in 2018.

The court papers say that Manafort initially told prosecutors he didn't have any contact with anyone while they were in the Trump administration. But prosecutors say they recovered "electronic documents" showing his contacts with multiple administration officials. The officials are not identified in the court filings.

Manafort, who has pleaded guilty to several counts, violated his plea agreement by then telling "multiple discernible lies" to prosecutors, they said.

Prosecutors in Cohen's case said that even though he cooperated in their investigation into the hush money payments to women he nonetheless deserved to spend time in prison.

"Cohen did provide information to law enforcement, including information that assisted the Special Counsel's Office," they said. "But Cohen's description of those efforts is overstated in some respects and incomplete in others."

Cohen, dubbed Trump's "legal fixer" in the past, also described his work in conjunction with Trump in orchestrating hush money payments to two women — adult actress Stormy Daniels and Playboy model Karen McDougal— who said they had sex with Trump.

Prosecutors in New York, where Cohen pleaded guilty in August in connection with those payments, said the lawyer "acted in coordination and at the direction" of Trump, suggesting they had implicated him in Cohen's crime.

Despite such specific allegations of Trump's actions, the president quickly tweeted after news of the filings: "Totally clears the President. Thank you!"

In addition, the filings reveal that Cohen told prosecutors he and Trump discussed a potential meeting with Putin on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in 2015, shortly after Trump announced his candidacy for president.

In a footnote, special counsel Robert Mueller's team writes that Cohen conferred with Trump "about contacting the Russia government before reaching out to gauge Russia's interest in such a meeting," though it never took place.

In meetings with Mueller's team, Cohen "provided information about his own contacts with Russian interests during the campaign and discussions with others in the course of making those contacts," the court documents said.

Cohen provided prosecutors with a "detailed account" of his involvement, along with the involvement

of others, in efforts during the 2016 presidential campaign to complete a deal to build a Trump Tower Moscow, the documents said. He also provided information about attempts by Russian nationals to reach Trump's campaign, they said.

However, in the crimes to which he pleaded guilty in August, he was motivated "by personal greed and repeatedly used his power and influence for deceptive ends."

Prosecutors said the court's Probation Department estimated that federal sentencing guidelines call for Cohen to serve at least four years in prison. They said that "reflects Cohen's extensive, deliberate and serious criminal conduct."

Prosecutors say Cohen "already enjoyed a privileged life," and that "his desire for even greater wealth and influence precipitated an extensive course of criminal conduct."

Associated Press writers Larry Neumeister in New York and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

Trump prods McConnell on sentencing bill: 'Go for it Mitch!'

By LISA MASCARO and KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's reluctance to hold a vote on a popular criminal justice bill has angered top Republican senators and created an unusual rift with a longtime GOP ally, Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa. And on Friday, it also brought on a tweet from President Donald Trump.

"Hopefully Mitch McConnell will ask for a VOTE on Criminal Justice Reform," Trump tweeted. "It is extremely popular and has strong bipartisan support. It will also help a lot of people, save taxpayer dollars, and keep our communities safe. Go for it Mitch!"

Minutes later Grassley tweeted that he and the president had spoken about "the growing support" for the legislation.

"Pres Trump told me he wants it done THIS CONGRESS," Grassley tweeted.

Grassley has spent years working to build a coalition around the bill and is pushing for a year-end vote. Grassley says more than two-thirds of the Senate supports it. But McConnell is refusing to bring the legislation forward in a standoff that's dividing the Republican majority and putting President Donald Trump on the spot.

"We've done what needs to be done," Grassley said about the overwhelming support for the bill. "So what's holding it up?"

For the 85-year-old chairman of the Judiciary Committee, this is not the way the Senate is supposed to operate. Grassley was expecting some deference from McConnell after delivering on Trump's judicial



FILE - In this Oct. 6, 2018 file photo, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., finishes speaking to reporters at the Capitol in Washington. McConnell's blockade of a popular criminal justice reform package has angered top senators. And it's created an unusual rift with a longtime Republican ally, Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 59 of 79

nominees — including two now on the Supreme Court. Despite Trump's support for the measure, McConnell says it's divisive. His reluctance to take up Grassley's priority shows the limits of the Senate's old-fashioned customs in an era of heightened partisan politics.

"What's so irritating about this is, first of all, he and I have been hand-in-glove working to get the judiciary vacancies filled," Grassley told Iowa reporters.

"I think I ought to have some consideration for delivering on tough Supreme Court nominees, and a lot of tough circuit court nominees and maybe even once in a while you get a tough district court nominee," Grassley went on.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., intervened Friday, talking directly to Trump about attaching the criminal justice legislation to the must-pass year-end spending bill, which is already tangled in a separate fight over funds for the border wall with Mexico.

"Just talked with President," Graham tweeted. "He strongly believes criminal justice reform bill must pass now. He also indicated he supports putting criminal justice reform bill on year-end spending bill which must include MORE wall funding."

Trump has called senators about the bill and spoke briefly about it Friday at an event on safe neighborhoods in Kansas City.

The bill is a project of Trump's son-in-law, White House adviser Jared Kushner, and would be the biggest sentencing overhaul in decades. It would reduce mandatory prison terms for certain drug crimes and give judges in some cases more discretion on punishments. It would allow about 2,600 federal prisoners sentenced for crack cocaine offenses before August 2010 the opportunity to petition for a reduced penalty. It also includes provisions to encourage education and workforce training in prisons.

Roughly 90 percent of prison inmates are held in state facilities and would not be affected by the legislation.

While Kushner has been meeting with senators on Capitol Hill, Trump is also hearing from allies who are against the legislation. Chief among them is Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., who is warning senators that Republicans will be blamed if criminals are released and commit new crimes.

"Only thing worse than early release from prison of thousands of serious, violent, & repeat felons is to do that in a spending bill with no debate or amendments, forcing senators to either shut down government or let felons out of prison," Cotton tweeted Friday. The spending bill will need approval by Dec. 21 to avoid a funding lapse days before Christmas.

Cotton and others, including Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, No. 2 Senate Republican, insist there is not as much support for the bill as Grassley claims. Cotton says senators may tell the chairman they're in favor of it when actually they're not.

The bill has support from several conservative and liberal advocacy groups, uniting such disparate partners as the influential Koch network and the American Civil Liberties Union, but it splits law enforcement groups. It is backed by the Fraternal Order of Police and the International Association of Chiefs of Police but opposed by the National Sheriff's Association.

Amid this divide, McConnell has been choosing caution, saying there's just not enough time to push the bill forward in the remaining days of the Congress.

"The question is, can you shoe-horn something that's extremely controversial into the remaining time?" he said Monday in an interview at a Wall Street Journal forum.

Criminal justice reform has traditionally been a Democratic priority, as Republicans prefer a more tough-on-crime approach. And McConnell acknowledges it's "extremely divisive" among Senate Republicans. Leaders tend to protect senators from taking tough votes that could have political blowback.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said Thursday that bill backers are making a last-push to attach it to the spending measure and picking up new supporters. But he acknowledged the package's chances are slipping with each passing day. "We're still lobbying Sen. McConnell — he has all the power to allow it or not allow it," said Paul.

McConnell and Grassley have worked side by side for decades. When then-President Barack Obama nominated Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court in early 2016, Grassley stood by McConnell's decision to

keep the seat open during the election year for the new president to decide. He's ushered in 84 Trump judicial nominees, including a record number of circuit court judges.

But their split over criminal justice reform is testing not just their partnership but also the longstanding norms of the Senate.

"What's holding it up is our leader, the majority leader," Grassley said. "There's no reason it shouldn't come up."

Associated Press writer David Pitt in Iowa contributed to this report.

On Twitter follow Lisa Mascaro at <https://twitter.com/lisamascaro> and Kevin Freking at <https://twitter.com/kfreking>

This story corrects name of civil rights group to American Civil Liberties Union.

Caregivers for 3600 migrant teens lack complete abuse checks

By MARTHA MENDOZA and GARANCE BURKE, Associated Press

Nearly every adult working with children in the U.S. — from nannies to teachers to coaches — has undergone state screenings to ensure they have no proven history of abusing or neglecting kids. One exception: thousands of workers at two federal detention facilities holding 3,600 migrant teens in the government's care, The Associated Press has learned.

The staff isn't being screened for child abuse and neglect at a Miami-based emergency detention center because Florida law bans any outside employer from reviewing information in its child welfare system. Until recently at another facility holding migrant teens in Tornillo, Texas, staff hadn't even undergone FBI fingerprint checks, let alone child welfare screenings, a government report found.

The missing screening at both sites involves searching child protective services systems to see whether potential employees had a verified allegation of abuse, neglect or abandonment, which could range from having a foster child run away from a group home to failing to take a sick child to the hospital. These allegations often are not criminally prosecuted and therefore wouldn't show up in other screenings.

Tornillo has 2,100 staff for about 2,300 teens; Homestead has 2,000 staff for about 1,300 teens.

The two facilities can operate unlicensed and without required checks because they are located on



FILE - In this Wednesday, June 20, 2018 file photo, immigrant children walk in a line outside the Homestead Temporary Shelter for Unaccompanied Children, a former Job Corps site that now houses them, in Homestead, Fla. Nearly every adult working with children in the U.S. — from nannies to teachers to coaches — has undergone state screenings to ensure they have no proven history of abusing or neglecting kids. One exception: thousands of workers at this and another federal detention facility holding 3,600 migrant teens in the government's care, The Associated Press has learned. (AP Photo/Brynn Anderson)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 61 of 79

federal property and thus don't have to comply with state child welfare laws. Tornillo is on Customs and Border Protection land along the U.S.-Mexico border, and Homestead is on a former Labor Department Jobs Corps site.

Last week, bipartisan lawmakers from Texas and beyond called for swift reforms and public hearings after the AP reported that the government put thousands of teens at risk at Tornillo by waiving the security screenings and having fewer mental health workers than needed. And on Tuesday, two members of Congress called for the immediate shutdown of Tornillo.

The government report said the screenings were waived at Tornillo because the agency was under pressure to open the camp quickly and the federal government erroneously assumed staff members already had FBI fingerprint checks.

Except for Homestead, every child shelter and foster care facility in Florida — including two others holding migrant children — runs employees' names through child protective services records.

State law prohibits the Florida Department of Children and Families from sharing results of those checks more widely due to concerns that child protective services might be reluctant to flag an individual, and thereby avoid providing services such as parenting classes for them, if it could put the person's job in jeopardy.

Health and Human Services Department spokesman Mark Weber said Homestead didn't need the extensive background screenings.

"Child abuse and neglect checks were waived because of the limitations in the state of Florida and the fingerprint background checks conducted on employees would show relevant information," he said.

Tornillo launched a month-long program to run staff through FBI fingerprint checks last week in response to a wave of public pressure prompted by the government memo and media reports about the lack of staff screening there.

Child welfare experts say child abuse and neglect background screenings are typically required because some people who hurt children may never be convicted of criminal charges serious enough to warrant an FBI red flag but could be charged civilly, which would appear only in state registries.

"An FBI background check doesn't provide a full and complete picture of that individual's criminal history," said Alonzo Martinez, associate counselor for compliance at HireRight, a private employer background check service. Local police departments aren't required to enter fingerprints of offenders in the FBI database and deeper checks — including reviewing state and county child abuse registries — can turn up different information about potential applicants, Martinez said.

During his time serving as the director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Scott Lloyd granted screening waivers for both Homestead and Tornillo, which was allowed under federal rules since the shelters were opened on a temporary basis. Homestead has been open for eight months and Tornillo for five, however, with no indication they will close.

In August, Lloyd wrote a letter to the Washington Post defending the shelters, saying, "The same standard of care we expect for your kids and mine we expect for the kids in Office of Refugee Resettlement care."

The contractors for both detention centers — Comprehensive Health Services for Homestead, and BCFS Health and Human Services for Tornillo — deferred to HHS for comment. HHS says it is working to safely care for all children referred to the agency.

The Obama administration opened Homestead as a temporary shelter for up to 800 migrant teens for 10 months in 2016. Since then, the federal government has budgeted more than \$330 million for the for-profit company to operate the facility, according to an AP review of federal contracts. The review found that Tornillo could cost taxpayers as much as \$430 million this year.

A memo obtained by the AP shows the ORR director at the time, Robert Carey, also waived child abuse and neglect background checks for Homestead staff during the Obama administration.

Children at Homestead wear government-issued clothes and live in dormitory-style bedrooms in a tightly guarded compound surrounded by chain-link fence. At Tornillo, they sleep in bunk beds inside canvas tents; outside temperatures near 100 in the summer and are below freezing on winter nights.

The 13- to 17-year-olds held at Homestead and Tornillo weren't separated from their families at the border this summer. They remain in government custody in part because new federal requirements mandating more stringent background checks on their families have slowed their reunifications, filling shelter beds around the country to capacity. Almost all the teens at both facilities entered the U.S. on their own, hoping to join relatives or friends.

Neha Desai, immigration director at the Oakland-based National Center for Youth Law, said that the federal government is required to hold children in licensed facilities when they are detained for more than a short period of time.

"Homestead's failure to perform child abuse and neglect checks on its staff is just another reason that the government in no circumstances should be holding children there for more than a few days at a time," said Desai. "Yet, we know that numerous children are languishing there for months on end."

Associated Press data journalist Larry Fenn in New York also contributed to this report.

Stocks drop 4 percent in rocky week on trade, growth worries

By ALEX VEIGA, AP Business Writer

Wall Street capped a turbulent week of trading Friday with the biggest weekly loss since March as traders fret over rising trade tensions between Washington and Beijing and signals of slower economic growth.

The latest wave of selling erased more than 550 points from the Dow Jones Industrial Average, bringing its three-day loss to more than 1,400. For the week, major indexes are down more than 4 percent.

Worries that the testy U.S.-China trade dispute and higher interest rates will slow the economy have made investors uneasy, leading to volatile swings in the market from one day to the next.

On Monday, news that the U.S. and China had agreed to a 90-day truce in their escalating trade conflict drove stocks sharply higher, adding to strong gains the week before. The

next day, as doubts mounted over the likelihood of a swift resolution to the trade dispute, stocks sank.

That sell-off extended to Thursday, when U.S. stock markets reopened for trading after a national day of mourning for former President George H.W. Bush. An early plunge knocked 700 points off the Dow as investors worried the arrest of a senior Chinese technology company official would undermine trade negotiations between Washington and Beijing, but stocks bounced nearly all the way back by the end of the day on news that the Federal Reserve was considering a wait-and-see approach to its interest rate hikes.

That optimism fueled a rally early Friday, which faded into another sharp drop.

"We're in a market where investors just want to sell any upside that they see," said Lindsey Bell, investment strategist at CFRA. "The volatility we've seen the last couple of weeks has been pretty extreme in both directions."



FILE- In this Dec. 3, 2018, file photo trader Michael Milano, right, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The U.S. stock market opens at 9:30 a.m. EST on Friday, Dec. 7. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 63 of 79

The S&P 500 index fell 2.3 percent. The index has ended lower three out of the last four weeks. The Dow dropped 2.2 percent. The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite slid 3 percent.

The S&P 500 and Dow are now in the red for the year again. The Nasdaq was holding on to a modest gain.

The current bull market for stocks, which began in March 2009, has shown signs of sputtering this year, with the S&P 500 entering into a correction, or drop of 10 percent from a recent high, twice this year. The index is now down 10.2 percent from its all-time high on Sept. 20.

The market is now on track for its worst year since 2008, when the S&P 500 ended with a 38.5 percent loss.

Volatility has gripped the market since early October, reflecting investors' worries that the Federal Reserve might raise interest rates too aggressively as it tries to keep inflation in check, potentially slowing economic growth.

"The Fed has taken the punch bowl away in getting back to rates where they are today," said Doug Cote, chief market strategist for Voya Investment Management. "We're also going to get back to more normal volatility."

Traders also fear that a prolonged trade dispute between the U.S. and China could crimp corporate profits and that tariffs will raise costs for businesses and consumers. Uncertainty over those issues helped drive the market's sell-off this week.

The U.S. has announced tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports this year, with the tax rate on many products set to rise Jan. 1, while China put new taxes on \$110 billion in U.S. goods.

Last weekend, President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping agreed over dinner at the G-20 summit in Argentina to a temporary, 90-day stand-down in the two nations' trade conflict to allow time to smooth out a dispute over Chinese technology policies that the U.S. and other trading partners consider predatory.

Trump agreed to hold off on plans to raise tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods. In return, Xi agreed to buy a "very substantial amount" of agricultural, energy and industrial products from the U.S. to reduce its large trade deficit with China.

The development, and the boost it gave the market, didn't last, however. Analysts began to question whether the Trump-Xi talks put both sides any closer to resolving their differences.

The arrest of a senior Chinese technology executive, which was disclosed on Wednesday, also could complicate trade negotiations.

Canadian authorities arrested Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer at China's Huawei Technologies, for possible extradition to the U.S. Meng, a prominent member of Chinese society, is suspected of trying to evade U.S. trade curbs on Iran.

Technology companies would have much to lose if trade relations with China worsen.

Apple, for instance, relies on China for 18 percent of its sales, according to FactSet. Chipmakers rely on China even more. Nearly 23 percent of Intel's revenue comes from mainland China.

That's one reason technology stocks, which have accounted for much of the market's gains in recent years, led the market's broad slide Friday. Apple shares dropped 3.6 percent to \$168.49 Friday, while chipmaker Advanced Micro Devices slid 8.6 percent to \$19.46.

Health care sector stocks, the biggest gainer in the S&P 500 this year, took some of the heaviest losses Friday. Medical device company Cooper lost 12.3 percent to \$243.01.

Utilities, which investors favor when they're fearful, eked out a slight gain. PPL Corp. gained 2.8 percent to \$31.09.

Oil prices rose after OPEC countries agreed to reduce global oil production by 1.2 million barrels a day for six months, beginning in January. The move would include a reduction of 800,000 barrels per day from OPEC countries and 400,000 barrels per day from Russia and other non-OPEC nations.

The news, which had been widely anticipated, pushed crude oil prices higher. U.S. benchmark crude rose 2.2 percent to \$52.61 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 2.7

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 64 of 79

percent to \$61.67 a barrel in London.

The Labor Department said U.S. employers added 155,000 jobs in November, a slowdown from recent months but enough to suggest that the economy is expanding at a solid pace despite sharp gyrations in the stock market. The unemployment rate remained at 3.7 percent, nearly a five-decade low, for the third straight month.

Bond prices rose, sending yields slightly lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 2.86 percent from 2.87 percent late Thursday.

The decline in bond yields, which affect interest rates on mortgages and other consumer loans, weighed on banks, which make more money when rates are rising. Morgan Stanley slid 3 percent to \$41.32.

In other trading Friday:

— The S&P 500 index fell 62.87 points, or 2.3 percent, to 2,633.08. The index has ended lower three out of the last four weeks.

— The Dow dropped 558.72 points, or 2.2 percent, to 24,388.95.

— The Nasdaq composite slid 219.01 points, or 3 percent, to 6,969.25.

— The Russell 2000 index of small-company stocks gave up 29.32 points, or 2 percent, to 1,448.09.

— The dollar fell to 112.64 yen from 112.65 yen late Thursday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1422 from \$1.1373.

— Gold gained 0.7 percent to \$1,252.60 an ounce. Silver climbed 1.3 percent to \$14.70 an ounce. Copper added 0.6 percent to \$2.76 a pound.

— Wholesale gasoline climbed 3.7 percent to \$1.49 a gallon. Heating oil rose 1.5 percent to \$1.89 a gallon. Natural gas gained 3.7 percent to \$4.49 per 1,000 cubic feet.

— In Europe, Germany's DAX dipped 0.2 percent while the CAC 40 in France rose 0.7 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 jumped 1.1 percent. Major indexes in Asia finished mostly higher.

— Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.8 percent and Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.4 percent. South Korea's Kospi rose 0.3 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gave up 0.3 percent.

France girds for weekend protests, fearing more violence

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN and SYLVIE CORBET, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Anticipating a fourth straight weekend of violent protests, France on Friday mobilized armored vehicles and thousands of police, cordoned off Paris' broad boulevards and made plans to shut down tourist sites like the Eiffel Tower and Louvre.

The heavy security will put central Paris in a virtual lockdown Saturday against what the interior minister called "radicalized and rebellious people," who authorities believe will join members of the "yellow vest" movement that has been holding anti-government demonstrations.

Nationwide, about 89,000 police will fan out in the streets, an increase from 65,000 last weekend, when more than 130 people were injured and over 400 arrested as the protests degenerated into the worst street violence to hit the French capital in decades.

Fearing increasing violence, hundreds of businesses planned to close Saturday, preferring to lose a key holiday shopping day rather than have stores smashed and looted, like they were a week ago when protests over rising taxes turned into a riot. Workers hammered plywood over the windows of shops and businesses, making the plush Champs-Elysees neighborhood appear to be bracing for a hurricane.

"According to the information we have, some radicalized and rebellious people will try to get mobilized tomorrow," Interior Minister Christophe Castaner told a news conference. "Some ultra-violent people want to take part."

President Emmanuel Macron met Friday night with about 60 anti-riot security officers who will be deployed in Paris. He made the unannounced visit, without the press, to a fort used as military accommodation in Nogent-sur-Marne, east of Paris, and thanked the officers for their work.

About 8,000 police will be deployed across Paris, equipped with a dozen barricade-busting armored vehicles that could be used for the first time in a French urban area since riots in 2005.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 65 of 79

"These vehicles can be very useful to protect buildings," said Stanislas Gaudon, head of the Alliance police union. "And in case they set up barricades, we can quickly clear out the space and let our units progress."

Police removed any materials from the streets that could be used as weapons, especially at construction sites in high-risk areas. Those included the renowned Champs-Elysees, which would normally be packed with tourists and shoppers.

"It's with an immense sadness that we'll see our city partially brought to a halt, but your safety is our priority," said Mayor Anne Hidalgo. "Take care of Paris on Saturday because Paris belongs to all the French people."

As it did last weekend, the U.S. Embassy advised Americans to avoid the demonstrations.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe met Friday night with representatives of the movement to try to open a dialogue.

The seven "yellow vest" invited to the meeting said they were satisfied from the discussion. One participant, Christophe Chalancon, told reporters the prime minister "listened to us."

Since the unrest began Nov. 17 in response to a sharp increase in diesel taxes, four people have been killed in protest-related accidents. Now the demands of the "yellow vest" movement — named for the fluorescent safety gear that French motorists keep in their cars — is pressing for a wider range of benefits from the government to help workers, retirees and students.

Macron on Wednesday agreed to abandon the fuel tax increase, but the protesters' anger at his government has not abated. Macron, since returning from the G-20 meeting last weekend, has kept largely out of sight, a move that has puzzled supporters and critics.

He has left his unpopular government to try to calm the nation. In response, "Macron, resign!" has become the main slogan of the "yellow vest" demonstrators.

The 40-year-old leader mostly spent the week holding closed-door meetings in the Elysee presidential palace, and many protesters consider him to be hiding from the people.

Students opposing changes in key high school tests protested again Friday, a day after video that was shared widely on social media showed the arrest of high school pupils outside Paris and prompted an outcry. Trade unions and far-left parties have lashed out at perceived police brutality.

The images, filmed Thursday at Mantes-la-Jolie, showed students on their knees with their hands behind their head, being watched over by armed, masked police.

Castaner, the interior minister, said 151 people were arrested in the small town, some carrying weapons. He said no students were injured.

The rioting has also had an economic impact at the height of the holiday shopping season. Rampaging groups last weekend threw cobblestones through Paris storefronts and looted valuables in some of the city's richest neighborhoods.

The national Federation of French markets said that Christmas markets have been "strongly impacted"



A woman walks past a worker fixing wooden pieces on a bank window near the Champs-Elysees avenue, Friday, Dec. 7, 2018 in Paris. Drastic security measures will put a lockdown on downtown Paris on Saturday as French authorities try to prevent another outbreak of violence during anti-government protests. (AP Photo/Bertrand Combaldieu)

and that its members registered "an average fall of their estimated figures between 30 and 40 percent since the beginning of the yellow vest movement."

Six French league soccer matches were canceled around the country. The Nicolas wine chain, one of France's biggest retailers, canceled all its wine tasting sessions scheduled for Saturday.

In addition to the closure of the Eiffel Tower, many shops and museums across Paris, including the Louvre, the Orsay Museum and the Grand Palais, will be shut on Saturday for safety reasons. Music festivals, operas and other cultural events in the capital were canceled.

"We need to protect culture sites in Paris but also everywhere in France," Culture Minister Franck Riester told RTL radio.

Heather Nauert likely to be quizzed on her diplomatic resume

By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's pick to be America's ambassador at the United Nations is likely to face questions about her thin diplomatic resume during an upcoming Senate confirmation hearing that will shine fresh attention on the president's "America first" approach to foreign policy.

If confirmed by the Senate, Heather Nauert, a 48-year-old former Fox News Channel reporter, will replace Nikki Haley. Nauert had little foreign policy experience before taking the podium as spokeswoman for the State Department.

Nauert's confirmation could hinge on her performance at the hearing. Still, she stands a good chance of approval because after the new Congress begins in January, Republicans will have a 53-47 vote majority over Democrats in the Senate.

In announcing his decision on Friday, Trump said Nauert was "very talented, very smart, very quick." He said he thought she would be "respected by all."

Others, including former U.S. ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, criticized the choice. Nauert's job as spokeswoman at State is "to read talking points and explain policy," McFaul tweeted. The job of U.N. ambassador is very different, he said, and usually requires foreign policy or diplomatic expertise or both.

Trump backer Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., issued a statement praising Nauert, but his Republican colleagues who sit on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were silent.

"I've known Heather for many years. She is a fine and capable person," Graham said, adding that she had the confidence of Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

If she gets the job, Nauert would take the post with less clout than Haley, a former South Carolina governor who announced in October that she would step down at the end of this year.

Trump is downgrading the ambassador's position to a sub-Cabinet-level post. That means Nauert could



FILE - In this Aug. 9, 2017, file photo, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert speaks during a briefing at the State Department in Washington. Trump announced Friday he's nominating State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert to be the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon, File)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 67 of 79

be overshadowed by Pompeo or Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, who had the U.N. job in 2005 and 2006. She also would be going up against foreign counterparts like the U.N. representatives from Russia and China, who each have decades of experience in diplomacy.

Nauert thanked Trump and said she was humbled at being chosen. "If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the outstanding job Ambassador Haley has done representing your administration and the American people."

Trump's announcement comes just a day after the U.S. lost a high-profile vote in the U.N. General Assembly for a resolution condemning the Palestinian militant group Hamas. Haley had lobbied hard to get the resolution passed, but couldn't garner the two-thirds majority needed.

Haley herself arrived at the United Nations with little foreign policy experience beyond promoting international investments in South Carolina. However, she quickly learned key issues and how the U.N. operates.

Because of her work at the State Department, Nauert would have the advantage of already knowing the Trump administration's position on all major global issues. But without being a member of the Cabinet, she wouldn't have the same independence that Haley has enjoyed.

Pompeo tweeted that Nauert has traveled with him since he took the helm of the State Department. "I have great confidence in her. Heather plays a key role in advancing U.S. foreign policy & I look forward to her speedy confirmation."

She also would arrive at a time when Trump and members of his foreign policy team have all displayed sometimes open contempt for the United Nations and its affiliated agencies.

In its first two years, the Trump administration has pulled out of the U.N. scientific, educational and cultural organization UNESCO, the U.N. Human Rights Council and threatened to leave the International Postal Union. It has cut off contributions for the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees and U.N. population fund. It has also sought to reduce funding for U.N. peacekeeping operations.

Pompeo, Nauert's current boss, recently delivered a speech attacking multinational institutions and agreements that many believe have served as pillars of stability in the post-World War II era.

In that speech in Brussels, Pompeo questioned the value and credibility of organizations like the U.N., the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, saying they are in need of dire change if they are to continue to have U.S. support or membership.

"Haley lost a degree of autonomy when John Bolton became the national security adviser, because he had strong views about the U.N.," said Stephen Pomper of the Crisis Group, an organization that works to prevent wars.

"Bringing Nauert aboard in a sub-Cabinet role will diminish the position yet further," said Pomper, who worked at the National Security Council under former President Barack Obama. "For better or worse, the administration's U.N. policy is pretty established at this point, and there's no reason to expect that Nauert will deviate from the 'America First' course that Haley, Bolton, and Pompeo have set."

Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon, the top Democrat on a Senate subcommittee that oversees America's relationship with the U.N., slammed Trump's nomination of Nauert. He said she lacks experience and that her loyalty to Trump and experience as an anchor on his favorite cable news network are insufficient qualifications.

Nauert, a native of Rockford, Illinois, also worked at State as the acting undersecretary for public diplomacy and public affairs.

As a New York-based anchor and correspondent at the Fox News Channel, Nauert oversaw breaking news, anchored programs, covered global and domestic crises and interviewed senior elected and military officials.

Nauert, who also was a network correspondent for ABC News, is a graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and Mount Vernon College in Washington.

US hiring pullback could signal mild slowdown in growth

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. job growth declined modestly in November, a move that could signal a slower but still steady pace of hiring and growth next year.

The potential for a more anemic economy contributed to a sharp drop in the stock market Friday, sending the Dow Jones average down 560 points, or 2.2%, by market close.

Yet most economists said last month's job gain of 155,000 is more sustainable than some of the larger increases posted earlier this year. And hiring at last month's pace would make it easier for the Federal Reserve to slow its interest rate increases, which investors worry are weighing on the economy.

"This is the new Goldilocks," said Josh Wright, chief economist at iCIMS, a recruiting software company. "Still strong-enough job growth, but a more cautious Fed."

The unemployment rate stayed at 3.7 percent, a nearly five-decade low, for the third straight month, the Labor Department said Friday in its monthly jobs report.

Still, the panicky financial markets illustrate how the views of Wall Street and most of the rest of the U.S. can differ.

For most Americans, jobs and incomes are the most important economic measures. Average hourly earnings increased 3.1% in November from a year earlier, Friday's report said, only the second time they have climbed that much since the recession ended nine years ago.

That's boosting consumer confidence to nearly 18-year highs, spurring more spending, and bolstering winter holiday shopping. Americans lifted their spending in October by the most in seven months.

"We're still a little surprised to see such a growing panic in markets develop quite so soon given the relatively benign economic backdrop," Paul Ashworth, an economist at Capital Economics, said in a research note.

Yet for Wall Street, higher pay can crimp corporate profit margins. Many large, publicly-traded companies are hit by slower growth in places such as Europe and Japan. They are also more directly affected by tariffs that the Trump administration has imposed on a range of imports.

"There is a disconnect between the gloom and doom environment in financial markets and real economic conditions," said Gad Levanon, chief economist at the Conference Board, a research group.

Most analysts do expect economic growth to decelerate next year. The boost from the Trump administration's tax cuts, implemented late last year, is expected to fade. The Fed's rate hikes could send borrowing costs higher. And the Trump administration has imposed tariffs on almost half of all imports from China, which will remain in place during a 90-day window for negotiations announced last weekend.



FILE - In this Jan. 30, 2018 file photo, a job applicant talks with company representatives at a JobNewsUSA job fair in Miami Lakes, Fla. Jobs report on Friday, Dec. 7, for November is expected to point to a solid economy for most Americans, with steady hiring, a low unemployment rate and faster wage gains. If so, it would provide a dose of welcome news after this week's frantic financial market gyrations, which have been driven by concerns that the U.S.-China trade war could escalate and weaken a U.S. economy already facing higher interest rates and slowing global growth. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky, File)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 69 of 79

Those concerns have roiled financial markets, sending major stock indexes down more than 4% this week. That's the worst weekly decline since March.

Growth is forecast to slow to a still-solid 2% to 2.5% percent, analysts say, down from roughly 3% this year. Hiring will likely decline to about 150,000 a month from just above 200,000 this year, through November.

"The economy continues to churn out new jobs and reflects the strong underlying business conditions that point to steady, albeit slower job growth and economic activity in 2019," said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at consulting firm RSM.

Fed policymakers are still likely to raise short-term interest rates at its meeting later this month, Brusuelas said. But Friday's report suggests the Fed may not hike rates next year as rapidly as many investors have feared.

The ongoing job gains are pushing down unemployment rates to historically low levels for a variety of groups. The unemployment rate for men aged 20 and above fell last month to 3.3%, the lowest in 18 years. And the rate for Americans with just high school diplomas dropped to 3.5%, the lowest since December 2000. The African-American jobless rate declined to 5.9%, matching May's figure as the lowest on record.

That's making it more challenging for businesses to find the workers they need. Employers have posted 7 million open jobs, outnumbering the ranks of the unemployed, which fell last month to just under 6 million.

Michael Mabry, chief operating officer at Mooyah, a fast-causal burger chain mostly located in the South, says his company has had to raise pay and offer more flexible scheduling to attract new workers. The company plans to open 15 locations next year, which could create up to 450 new jobs.

Applications have fallen "to an all-time low," Mabry said.

"We've had to get competitive on work-life balance," Mabry said.

Nearly all employees make at least \$10 an hour, and management salaries have risen 5 to 10 percent in the past year, he added.

Nationwide, hiring in November was led by health care firms, which added 40,100 jobs, and manufacturing companies, which hired 27,000 new workers, the most in seven months and a sign that trade tensions have yet to weaken factory hiring.

Strong holiday shopping helped lift retailer hiring by 18,200 in November, the most in six months. Online spending likely boosted shipping and warehousing jobs, which grew 25,400, the largest in 14 months.

Construction firms added just 5,000 jobs, the fewest in eight months. A weakening housing market, held back by higher mortgage rates, contributed to that decline. New home building fell 2.6 percent in October from a year earlier.

Trump Justice pick likely to be queried on Mueller comments

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday picked former Attorney General William Barr to once again serve as America's top law enforcement official. But while his experience and mainstream background may boost his prospects for confirmation, Democrats are raising alarms about his comments on the Russia investigation and Hillary Clinton.

Barr has expressed concerns about political donations made by prosecutors on special counsel Robert Mueller's team and has supported calls for an investigation into a uranium deal approved while Clinton was secretary of state, a pet issue of Trump supporters.

It's not clear whether Barr, if confirmed, would take office in time to shape the Mueller investigation, which has shown signs of being in its final stages. But even if it wraps up before he takes office, Barr would be in a position to influence prosecutions stemming from the probe, as well as deal with other politically sensitive cases, such as responding to referrals from the House's new Democratic majority.

Barr, 68, would succeed former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, whom Trump forced out after constant heckling because he had stepped aside from overseeing the Russia investigation. Sessions' chief of staff, Matthew Whitaker, was elevated to acting attorney general and took control of Mueller's investigation.

Barr's confirmation would create uncertainty about the future of Rod Rosenstein, the deputy attorney

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 70 of 79

general who oversaw the Mueller investigation before Whitaker's appointment. Frequently, new deputies are also appointed when there's a new attorney general.

Barr's appointment could bring more stability to the Justice Department. Sessions' tenure was marked by the incessant attacks from Trump, and Whitaker's elevation was also controversial. Questions were raised about Whitaker's credentials, critical comments he had made about the Mueller investigation before joining the Justice Department and his involvement with a company that was accused of misleading consumers and is under investigation by the FBI.

Barr was attorney general between 1991 and 1993 at the same time Mueller oversaw the department's criminal division. Barr later worked as a corporate general counsel and is currently of counsel at a prominent international law firm, Kirkland & Ellis LLP.

Trump called Barr "one of the most respected jurists in the country."

"During his tenure, he demonstrated an unwavering adherence to the rule of law," Trump said. "There's no one more capable or qualified for this role."

Confirmation hearings are unlikely before January, when Republicans will have a 53-47 majority, leaving Democrats powerless to block the nomination unless four Republicans break ranks.

The next chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., called Barr's pick an "outstanding decision" and pledged to "do everything in my power" to quickly push the nomination through the committee and onto the Senate floor for confirmation.

But the Senate's top Democrat, Chuck Schumer, said Barr must promise that Mueller's investigation can proceed unimpeded and that Mueller's final report will be made available to Congress and the public immediately after it is completed.

Democrats have begun pointing to Barr's weigh-ins on hot-button investigative matters.

In November 2017, Barr told the New York Times that there was more basis to investigate the uranium deal approved while Clinton led the State Department than potential collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign.

"To the extent it is not pursuing these matters, the department is abdicating its responsibility," Barr said.

He told the newspaper that there "is nothing inherently wrong about a president calling for an investigation," but he cautioned that an investigation shouldn't be launched just because a president wants it.

In a May 2017 op-ed for The Washington Post, Barr defended Trump's decision to fire FBI Director James Comey, an action Mueller has been examining for possible obstruction of justice. He was quoted two months later in a Post story as expressing concern that members of Mueller's team had contributed to Democratic candidates.

"In my view, prosecutors who make political contributions are identifying fairly strongly with a political party," Barr said. "I would have liked to see him have more balance on this group."

In an episode that may hold parallels to the current special counsel investigation, Barr was attorney general when Bush on Christmas Eve 1992 pardoned six former Reagan administration officials — including former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger — in the Iran-Contra scandal.

Barr said in a 2001 University of Virginia oral history interview that he supported the pardons.

"I certainly did not oppose any of them," Barr said. "I favored the broadest— There were some people



This undated photo provided by Time Warner shows William Barr, who served as attorney general under President George H.W. Bush, has emerged as a top contender for that job in President Donald Trump's Cabinet, two people familiar with the president's selection process said Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018. (Time Warner via AP)

arguing just for Weinberger, and I said, 'No, in for a penny, in for a pound.'"

Those who worked with Barr previously were quick to tout Barr's qualifications.

"I think the president has chosen a superb nominee who is precisely what the Department of Justice needs now, which is a steady hand," said Joseph diGenova, a Trump supporter and former U.S. attorney.

Paul McNulty, who worked at the Justice Department under Barr and a decade later became deputy attorney general, recalled him as decisive on the need for a strong federal response after the riots in Los Angeles following the acquittals on state charges of police officers involved in the Rodney King beating. He praised Barr's "boldness and thoughtfulness" in sending in the FBI to deal with a 1991 Alabama prison riot involving dozens of Cuban detainees.

Barr, who was acting attorney general at the time of the Talladega prison riots, has said he overruled a Bureau of Prisons plan to respond and instead directed the FBI to go in, telling officials there'd be no concessions and to prepare for a hostage rescue situation.

McNulty, now president of Pennsylvania's Grove City College, said Barr "has an extraordinary strategic mind so that as he thinks through the issues factually, he has a remarkable ability to then think about steps forward — what plan of action makes the most sense in light of these facts and these circumstances."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Zeke Miller in Washington and Darlene Superville in Kansas City, Missouri, contributed to this report.

On Twitter, follow Michael Balsamo at <https://twitter.com/MikeBalsamo1> , Eric Tucker at <https://twitter.com/etuckerAP> and Chad Day at <https://twitter.com/etuckerAP> .

Oil producers join forces and cut production again

By **ANTHONY MILLS, KIYOKO METZLER and DAVID RISING, Associated Press**

VIENNA (AP) — Oil prices spiked sharply higher Friday as major oil producers, including the OPEC cartel, agreed to cut global oil production by 1.2 million barrels a day to reduce oversupply.

Following two days of meetings, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries that includes the likes of Saudi Arabia and Iraq said they would cut 800,000 barrels per day for six months from January, though some countries such as Iran, which is facing wide-ranging sanctions from the United States, have been given an exemption.

The balance will come from Russia and other non-OPEC countries. The United States, one of the world's biggest producers, is not part of the deal.

"This is a major step forward," said United Arab Emirates' Energy Minister Suhail Mohamed al-Mazrouei, who chairs the regular meetings in Vienna in his capacity as President of the



Khalid Al-Falih Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia speaks prior to the start of a meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, at their headquarters in Vienna, Austria, Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018. (AP Photo/Ronald Zak)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 72 of 79

OPEC Conference.

Oil producers have been under pressure to reduce production following a sharp fall in oil prices over the past couple of months. The price of oil has fallen about 25 percent recently because major producers — including the U.S. — are pumping oil at high rates.

The reduction has certainly met with the response hoped for by ministers as it was at the upper end of most predictions. Following the announcement, Brent crude, the international standard, was up \$2.79 a barrel, or 4.7 percent, at \$62.85. Benchmark New York crude was \$2.11, or 4.1 percent, higher at \$53.60 a barrel.

Ann-Louise Hittle, a vice president at oil industry expert Wood Mackenzie, said the production cut “would tighten” the oil market by the third quarter next year and help lift Brent prices back above \$70 per barrel.

“For most nations, self-interest ultimately prevails,” she said. “Saudi Arabia has a long-term goal of managing the oil market to avoid the sharp falls and spikes which hurt demand and the ability of the industry to develop supply. On top of this, Saudi Arabia also needs higher oil revenues to fund domestic Saudi spending.”

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak called the negotiations with the OPEC nations “fairly challenging” but said the decision “should help the market reach a balanced state.”

“I think this is a strong signal to anybody who has doubted it that our cooperation is continuing and we can react to any challenge the market throws at us,” he said in Russian through a translator.

OPEC’s reliance on non-members like Russia highlights the cartel’s waning influence in oil markets, which it had dominated for decades. The OPEC-Russia alliance was made necessary in 2016 to compete with the United States’ vastly increased production of oil in recent years. By some estimates, the U.S. this year became the world’s top crude producer.

The cut is unlikely to be greeted warmly by U.S. President Donald Trump, who has been pressuring the cartel publicly to maintain production. On Wednesday, he tweeted: “Hopefully OPEC will be keeping oil flows as is, not restricted. The World does not want to see, or need, higher oil prices!”

One stumbling block to an agreement had been Iran, Saudi Arabia’s regional rival and fellow OPEC member, which had been arguing for an exemption to any cuts because its crude exports are already being pinched already by U.S. sanctions.

Al-Mazrouei said that in the end Iran had been given an exemption, as well as Venezuela and Libya.

That “means that the percentage we will contribute among us is going to be a bit higher,” he said.

“We within OPEC are committed to distribute the 800 (thousand bpd) among us and deliver on it.”

—
Rising reported from Berlin

Marlboro maker places \$1.8 billion bet on marijuana

NEW YORK (AP) — One of the world’s biggest tobacco companies is diving into the cannabis market with a \$1.8 billion buy-in.

Marlboro maker Altria Group Inc. is taking a 45 percent stake in Cronos Group, the Canadian medical and recreational marijuana provider said Friday.

The agreement includes a warrant to acquire additional shares over the next four years that could give the Altria, which is based in Richmond, Virginia, a 55 percent ownership stake in the Toronto company.

That would mean Altria’s investment would be in the same league as the \$4 billion spent earlier this year by Constellation Brands to acquire shares of Canopy Growth Corp., another Canadian pot producer.

The August investment by Constellation, which makes Corona and other beverages, was the largest to date by a major U.S. corporation in the cannabis market.

Whatever hesitation larger corporations in the U.S. had about entering the cannabis market appears to be fading if there is a financial justification.

Altria’s huge investment lit up shares of cannabis companies that have begun to set up shop in Canada, where recreational use was legalized this year.

U.S. traded shares of Cronos Group Inc. jumped 22 percent Friday.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 73 of 79

Rapid growth in the cannabis market is expected to continue as legalization expands in the U.S. and social norms change. On Tuesday, ultra-conservative Utah became the latest state to legalize marijuana use for medical purposes.

Consumers are expected to spend \$57 billion per year worldwide on legal cannabis by 2027, according to Arcview Market Research, a cannabis-focused investment firm. In North America, that spending is expected to grow from \$9.2 billion in 2017 to \$47.3 billion in 2027.

This story has been updated to correct the U.S. dollar amount of the deal. Altria's initial investment is valued at \$1.8 billion, not \$2.4 billion.



FILE - In this July 17, 2015, file photo, store manager Stephanie Hunt poses for photos with a pack of Marlboro cigarettes, an Altria brand, at a Smoker Friendly shop in Pittsburgh. Altria is diving into the Canadian cannabis market with a \$2.4 billion investment in Toronto-based medical and recreational marijuana provider Cronos Group. The investment from Altria Group Inc., would give it about 45 percent ownership of Cronos. Altria will also pay another \$1.4 billion for warrants of Cronos Group that if exercised, would give the Altria a 55 percent majority ownership of Cronos. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar, File)

Kevin Hart quits as Oscars host over his anti-gay tweets

By JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Just two days after being named host of the Academy Awards, Kevin Hart stepped down following an outcry over past homophobic tweets by the comedian.

Capping a swift and dramatic fallout, Hart wrote on Twitter just after midnight Thursday that he was withdrawing as Oscars host because he didn't want to be a distraction. "I sincerely apologize to the LGBTQ community for my insensitive words from my past," wrote Hart.

Hart, who is in Australia for a comedy tour, also tweeted Friday morning: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. Martin Luther King, Jr."

Earlier Thursday evening, the comedian had refused to apologize for tweets that resurfaced after he was announced as Oscars host on Tuesday. In a video on Instagram, Hart said the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences gave him an ultimatum: apologize or "we're going to have to move on and find another host."

"I chose to pass on the apology," Hart said. "The reason why I passed is because I've addressed this several times."

The film academy didn't respond to messages Thursday evening.

Hart has since deleted some of the anti-gay tweets, mostly dated from 2009-2011. But they had already been screen-captured and been shared online. In 2011, he wrote in a since-deleted tweet: "Yo if my

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 74 of 79

son comes home & try's 2 play with my daughters doll house I'm going 2 break it over his head & say n my voice 'stop that's gay.'"

In an earlier post Thursday, Hart wrote on Instagram that critics should "stop being negative" about his earlier anti-gay remarks.

"I'm almost 40 years old. If you don't believe that people change, grow, evolve? I don't know what to tell you," said Hart, who added, in all-caps: "I love everybody."

Hart's attitudes about homosexuality were also a well-known part of his stand-up act. In the 2010 special "Seriously Funny," he said "one of my biggest fears is my son growing up and being gay."

"Keep in mind, I'm not homophobic, I have nothing against gay people, do what you want to do, but me, being a heterosexual male, if I can prevent my son from being gay, I will," Hart said.

GLAAD, the advocacy group for LGBTQ rights, said Thursday that it reached out to Oscars broadcaster ABC, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, and Hart's management to "discuss Kevin's anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and record."

Comedian and actor Billy Eichner said "a simple, authentic apology showing any bit of understanding or remorse would have been so simple."

It's not the first time an Oscars host has been derailed by anti-gay remarks. Ahead of the 2012 Academy Awards, producer Brett Ratner, who had been paired with host Eddie Murphy, resigned days after using a gay slur at a film screening. Murphy soon after exited, as well.

That year, a tried-and-true Oscars veteran — Billy Crystal — jumped in to save the show, hosting for his eighth time. This time, speculation has already been rampant that few in Hollywood want the gig, for which few win glowing reviews.

The film academy moved up this year's ceremony to Feb. 24, giving producers little time to find a replacement.

At a Hollywood event Thursday night, comedian Kathy Griffin, whose career suffered last year when she posted a photo on social media that looked like a beheaded President Donald Trump, said Hart messed up, yet had empathy for the situation.

"He wrote that tweet eight years ago when gay marriage wasn't even legal yet, so we all do things. God knows in my 23 specials I've said heinously inappropriate things," she said.

Griffin hoped Hart's departure would open the door for a woman comedian to host the show.

"I want more women to host the Oscars and in the entire history of the Oscars, they've only been hosted by three women, three times and so we haven't leveled the playing field yet," she said.

Terry Crews, who described Hart as a "brother," said he respected Hart's decision to walk away from the show.

"I'm thankful that he acknowledged things that maybe weren't right, and he'll come back from this,"



FILE - In this Dec. 11, 2017 file photo, Kevin Hart arrives at the Los Angeles premiere of "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" in Los Angeles. Hart will host the 2019 Academy Awards, fulfilling a lifelong dream for the actor-comedian. Hart announced Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2018, his selection in an Instagram statement and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences followed up with a tweet that welcomed him "to the family." (Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP, File)

Crews said. "We do have to admit our guilt and say, 'Hey I messed up and let's fix this thing.' I think that he will do that, and he has always done that."

Associated Press writer Marcela Isaza contributed to this report.

Lamar leads Grammy noms, where women make a comeback

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The music of "Black Panther," with Kendrick Lamar in its starring role, officially owns the 2019 Grammy Awards, where women are heavily represented in the major four categories following a year where their presence was barely felt.

The Recording Academy announced Friday that Lamar is the top contender with eight nominations, including seven for his musical companion to the Marvel Studios juggernaut starring Chadwick Boseman and Michael B. Jordan. "Black Panther: The Album, Music From and Inspired By" is up for album of the year, a category where women make up five of the eight nominees. Cardi B, Kacey Musgraves, Janelle Monae, H.E.R. and Brandi Carlile also are up for the top prize, along with Drake and Post Malone.

The upcoming Grammys is the first where the academy extended its top four categories from five nominees to eight.

The "Panther" nomination would give Lamar a chance to win album of the year after losing three times. His most recent loss was in February when his critically acclaimed "DAMN" fell short to Bruno Mars' "24K Magic," though Lamar's project would go on to win a Pulitzer Prize for music two months later, making him the first non-classical or jazz artist to win the prestigious honor.

Lamar's Top 10 hit, the SZA-assisted "All the Stars," is nominated for both record and song of the year (a songwriter's award). Five other songs scored nominations in both categories, including Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper's "Shallow" from "A Star Is Born"; Childish Gambino's "This Is America"; Drake's "God's Plan"; Zedd, Maren Morris and Grey's "The Middle"; and Carlile's "The Joke."

Ella Mai's "Boo'd Up" and Shawn Mendes' "In My Blood" earned song of the year nods, while Post Malone's "Rockstar" and Cardi B's "I Like It," featuring Bad Bunny and J Balvin, round out the nominees for record of the year.

Following Lamar, Drake — the year's most successful artist — earned seven nominations. Though nominated for album of the year, he was surprisingly shut out of best rap album, where his rival Pusha T earned a nomination.



FILE - In this July 7, 2017, file photo, Kendrick Lamar performs during the Festival d'ete de Quebec in Quebec City, Canada. A list of nominees in the top categories at the 2019 Grammys, including Lamar, who is the leader with eight nominations, were announced Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, by the Recording Academy. Drake, Cardi B, Brandi Carlile, Childish Gambino, H.E.R., Lady Gaga, Maren Morris, SZA, Kacey Musgraves and Greta Van Fleet also scored multiple nominations. (Photo by Amy Harris/Invision/AP, File)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 76 of 79

Drake's frequent collaborator, producer Boi-1Da, earned six nods, as did Carlile, who also scored nominations in the American Roots category.

Cardi B, Gaga, H.E.R., Morris, Gambino, producer Sounwave and engineer Mike Bozzi scored five nominations each.

The nominees for the 2019 Grammys mark a departure from this year's show, where women were underrepresented in the top four categories. Of the eight best new artist nominees, six are women, including H.E.R., Chloe x Halle, Dua Lipa, Margo Price, Bebe Rexha and Jorja Smith. Rock band Greta Van Fleet and country singer Luke Combs also earned nominations.

Recording Academy CEO Neil Portnow was criticized earlier this year at the Grammys when he said women need to "step up" when asked about the lack of women in the top categories, which he later acknowledged was a "poor choice of words." It forced the academy to launch a new task force focused on inclusion and diversity; Portnow also announced he would be leaving the academy in 2019.

"In any given year there could be more folks from one area or one gender or one genre or one ethnicity that are making recordings and being successful with them than in another year. So, in many ways we're just a reflection of that," Portnow said in an interview with The Associated Press. "This year clearly there were many women not only making music but making great music and making music that resonates with our peer voters in terms of excellence, and so that certainly is at the forefront."

Another milestone for women is in the non-classical producer of the year category, where songwriting extraordinaire Linda Perry earned a nomination. She's just the seventh woman ever nominated for prize and first since 2004.

"Linda represents what we hope becomes the norm, which is the elimination of gender bias in producing and engineering in our industry," Portnow said.

Perry will compete with Pharrell Williams, Boi-1Da, Larry Klein and Kanye West, the only nomination he earned.

Taylor Swift, a two-time album of the year winner, also only earned one nomination — her "reputation" album is up best pop vocal album. Justin Timberlake, whose "Man of the Woods" albums flopped earlier this year, picked up a nod for "Say Something," his collaboration with Chris Stapleton.

Beyonce and Jay-Z, billed as The Carters, as well Ariana Grande, didn't earn any of the big nominations. The Carters earned two nods in the R&B category along with best music video, while Grande picked up two nods in pop.

Artists who were completely snubbed include Carrie Underwood, Sam Smith, Migos, Kane Brown, Nicki Minaj, XXXTentacion and Juice WRLD, whose "Lucid Dreams" was one of the year's biggest hits.

Some acts scored their first nominations ever, including Florida Georgia Line, whose megahit "Meant to Be" with Rexha is up best country duo/group performance. Camila Cabello, Malone, Mendes, Dan + Shay and DJ Mustard are also first-time nominees.

Gaga, who earned acting and music Golden Globe nominations Thursday, picked up four Grammy nominations for "Shallow," while "Joanne" is up for best pop solo performance. The soundtrack for "A Star Is Born" was released after Grammy eligibility, though "Shallow" was released in time and also earned Cooper two nominations.

Other famous faces outside of music to earn nominations include Tiffany Haddish and former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, both up for best spoken word album. Dave Chappelle, Chris Rock, Fred Armisen, Jim Gaffigan and Patton Oswalt are up for best comedy album.

Mac Miller, who died in September, earned a nomination for best rap album with "Swimming." Chris Cornell, who died last year, is up for best rock performance with "When Bad Does Good."

Demi Lovato, who relapsed after six years of sobriety and was hospitalized for an overdose in July, earned a nomination for best pop duo/group performance for "Fall In Line," her duet with Christina Aguilera.

Those who earned four nominations are Musgraves, Malone, PJ Morton, Dave Cobb, Ludwig Goransson, Noah Shebib and SZA, who earned a Golden Globe nomination alongside Lamar for "All the Stars" on Thursday.

Lamar has won 12 Grammys throughout his career. Though seven of his eight nominations come from "Black Panther," he also earned a nod for co-writing Jay Rock's "Win," up for best rap song.

The 2019 Grammys will hand out awards in its 84 categories live from the Staples Center in Los Angeles on Feb. 10, 2019.

Online:

<http://www.grammy.com>

Storm brings record rainfall, snow to Southern California

By AMANDA LEE MYERS, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Crews were busy Friday assessing damage and cleaning up after a storm that brought record rainfall to Los Angeles, snowfall to northern elevations, snarled traffic and forced evacuations as debris flows hit areas burned by wildfires.

Evacuation orders were either lifted or downgraded Thursday night and Friday morning as the storm moved out of the area.

That includes the area of Orange County's Trabuco Creek, which overflowed with debris that took down a guardrail and overcame a narrow bridge. Workers need to clear out the debris from the bridge and install a new guardrail.

Other crews were focused on Malibu, where a mudslide shut down the Pacific Coast Highway and surrounding roads in and around neighborhoods charred by wildfire last month that destroyed more than 1,000 homes and killed three people.

There were no reported injuries associated with the mudslide or debris flows and no homes were seriously damaged, though multiple people had to be rescued in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties as water overcame roadways and at times submerged cars. More than 300 people living in a San Diego shelter had to be evacuated to a stadium.

The storm also caused several roof collapses and sent an airliner skidding off a runway in Burbank, though no associated injuries were reported.

"It did cause a lot of headaches," said Eric Boldt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

He said the storm was more typical of January or February for the region and called it a win for drought-weary Los Angeles.

"It does put us ahead for Los Angeles," he said. "It's kind of a good start for December."

The downtown area set a rainfall record for the day with 1.9 inches (4.8 centimeters) of rain, nearly double the previous record set in 1997, the National Weather Service reported. Normal monthly rainfall



Mud and debris fill the outfall where Trancas Creek flows into the Pacific Ocean in an area burned by the Woolsey fire in Malibu, Calif. Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018. The second round of a fall storm is causing flooding on Los Angeles-area roads. Snow has forced the closure of Interstate 5 in the Grapevine area between Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley. Closer to sea level, the system dumped rain that flooded highways and caused nightmare traffic conditions for commuters. (AP Photo/Reed Saxon)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 78 of 79

for December is only a bit more — 2.33 inches (5.8 centimeters).

Rainfall also broke a record in the high-desert city of Lancaster, northeast of Los Angeles. That city saw 1.4 inches (3.5 centimeters) of rain, beating the previous record of 1.2 inches (3 centimeters) in 1997.

Other total rainfalls exceeded 4.5 inches (11.4 centimeters) in some parts of Los Angeles County, including Avalon and the Pasadena foothills, and in San Diego County.

Some residents took advantage of the rare rainy day, with at least one man captured on video surfing down the street as an SUV pulled him. Another paddle-boarded in a wetsuit near a flooded truck in Costa Mesa.

While rain caused numerous accidents and backups on LA-area freeways, heavy snow forced the closure of Interstate 5 in the Grapevine area between Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley. The hours-long shutdown along the key north-south route caused backups for miles.

Drivers were urged to use caution on mountain passes, where up to 10 feet (3 meters) of snow fell at higher elevations.

Follow Myers at <https://twitter.com/AmandaLeeAP>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 8, the 342nd day of 2018. There are 23 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 8, 1941, the United States entered World War II as Congress declared war against Imperial Japan, a day after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

On this date:

In 1813, Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92, was first performed in Vienna, with Beethoven himself conducting.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which holds that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was free of original sin from the moment of her own conception.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction for the South.

In 1886, the American Federation of Labor was founded in Columbus, Ohio.

In 1972, a United Airlines Boeing 737 crashed while attempting to land at Chicago-Midway Airport, killing 43 of the 61 people on board, as well as two people on the ground; among the dead were Dorothy Hunt, wife of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt, U.S. Rep. George W. Collins, D-Ill., and CBS News correspondent Michele Clark.

In 1980, rock star John Lennon was shot to death outside his New York City apartment building by an apparently deranged fan.

In 1982, a man demanding an end to nuclear weapons held the Washington Monument hostage, threatening to blow it up with explosives he claimed were inside a van. (After a 10-hour standoff, Norman D. Mayer was shot dead by police; it turned out there were no explosives.)

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed a treaty at the White House calling for destruction of intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

In 1991, AIDS patient Kimberly Bergalis, who had contracted the disease from her dentist, died in Fort Pierce, Fla., at age 23.

In 1992, Americans got to see live television coverage of U.S. troops landing on the beaches of Somalia as Operation Restore Hope began (because of the time difference, it was early Dec. 9 in Somalia).

In 1998, struggling to stave off impeachment, President Bill Clinton's defenders forcefully pleaded his case before the House Judiciary Committee. The Supreme Court ruled that police cannot search people and their cars after merely ticketing them for routine traffic violations.

In 2001, the U.S. Capitol was reopened to tourists after a two-month security shutdown.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 08, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 152 ~ 79 of 79

Ten years ago: In a startling about-face, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed told the Guantanamo war crimes tribunal he would confess to masterminding the Sept. 11 attacks; four other men also abandoned their defenses. A malfunctioning F/A-18D Hornet military jet trying to reach Marine Corps Air Station Miramar slammed into a densely populated San Diego neighborhood, killing four members of a family and incinerating two homes; the pilot ejected safely. Mystery writer Hillary Waugh died in Torrington, Conn. at age 88. Character actor Robert Prosky died in Washington, D.C. five days short of his 78th birthday.

Five years ago: Hundreds of thousands of protesters poured into the streets of the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, toppling the statue of former Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin and blocking key government buildings in an escalating stand-off with the president on the future of the country. Zach Johnson rallied from four shots behind with eight holes to play and beat Tiger Woods, the No. 1 player in golf, at the World Challenge. Lydia Ko, a 16-year-old from New Zealand, rallied to win her first title as a professional, winning the Swinging Skirts World Ladies Masters with a three-stroke victory over South Korea's So Yeon Ryu.

One year ago: During a campaign rally in the Florida panhandle, near the Alabama border, President Donald Trump urged Alabama voters to elect Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore, who had been dogged by allegations of sexual misconduct. Japanese pitching and hitting star Shohei Ohtani announced that he would sign with the Los Angeles Angels.

Today's Birthdays: Flutist James Galway is 79. Singer Jerry Butler is 79. Pop musician Bobby Elliott (The Hollies) is 77. Actress Mary Woronov is 75. Actor John Rubinstein is 72. Reggae singer Toots Hibbert (Toots and the Maytals) is 70. Actress Kim Basinger (BAY'-sing-ur) is 65. Rock musician Warren Cuccurullo is 62. Rock musician Phil Collen (Def Leppard) is 61. Country singer Marty Raybon is 59. World Bank President Jim Yong Kim is 59. Political commentator Ann Coulter is 57. Rock musician Marty Friedman is 56. Actor Wendell Pierce is 55. Actress Teri Hatcher is 54. Actor David Harewood is 53. Rapper Bushwick Bill (The Geto Boys) is 52. Singer Sinead (shih-NAYD') O'Connor (AKA Shuhada' Davitt) is 52. Actor Matthew Labor-teaux is 52. Rock musician Ryan Newell (Sister Hazel) is 46. Actor Dominic Monaghan is 42. Actor Ian Somerhalder is 40. Rock singer Ingrid Michaelson is 39. R&B singer Chrisette Michele is 36. Actress Hannah Ware is 36. Country singer Sam Hunt is 34. Rock singer-actress Kate Voegelé (VOH'-gehl) is 32. Christian rock musician Jen Ledger (Skillet) is 29. Actress Wallis Currie-Wood is 27. Actress AnnaSophia Robb is 25.

Thought for Today: "The unknown is what it is. And to be frightened of it is what sends everybody scurrying around chasing dreams, illusions, wars, peace, love, hate, all that. Unknown is what it is. Accept that it's unknown and it's plain sailing." — John Lennon (1940-1980).