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



**Card Shower
for
Dee Baily's
90th Birthday
Send to:
715 W. Willow
Groton, SD 57445
Her birthday is Dec. 21**

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Tuesday, December 18, 2018

5:15pm: Basketball: Boys C Game vs. Britton-Hecla School @ Groton Area High School followed by JV and varsity games.

6:00pm: Wrestling: Boys Varsity Quad vs. Britton-Hecla School, Ellendale/Edgeley-Kulm, Oakes @ Britton-Hecla High School

Thursday, December 20, 2018

4:00pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game vs. Ipswich @ Ipswich High School (7th Grade 4pm 8th Grade 5pm)

6:30pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Game vs. Ipswich @ Ipswich

Friday, December 21, 2018

End of 2nd Quarter

1:00pm: Elementary Christmas Concert at Groton Area High School

2:00pm: Early Dismissal Groton Area School District

It's Boys' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Britton-Hecla
Braves**

VS



Groton Area Tigers

**Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2018
Varsity Game at 8:00 p.m.
at the Groton Area Arena**

Tuesday's Livestream is sponsored by:

Allied Climate Professionals
Bahr Spray Foam
Blocker Construction
Doug Abeln Seed Company
James Valley Seed - Doug Jorgensen
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Northeast Chiropractic Clinic
Sanford Health
Tyson DeHoet Trucking
Weber Landscaping

Make sure you tell these sponsors "Thank You" and patronize them as well!

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Tigers score 10 straight to pull away from Britton-Hecla

Groton Area scored 10 straight points in the first half to pull away from Britton-Hecla to secure a 46-30 win. The game was played Monday in Britton.

The game was tied five times and there were three lead changes in the first quarter. The Braves held a 9-7 lead before Groton Area scored 10 straight points to take a 17-9 lead. The game was tied at nine after the first quarter with Groton leading, 20-13, at half time and 36-23 after three quarters of play.

Jennie Doeden led the Tigers with 12 points and seven rebounds, Miranda Hanson made two three-pointers and finished the night with 10 points, Gracie Traphaghen had eight points and six rebounds, Eliza Wanner had five points, five steals and four assists, Payton Maine added four points and had three steals, Kaycie Hawkins had four points, Tadyn Glover had three points and Kenzie McInerney led the Tigers in rebounds with eight.

Mya Hageson and Jenna Werner each led the Braves with 11 points, Peris Fellows had four and Jaidyn Roehr and Emma Storley each had two points.

Groton Area had nine turnovers while the Braves had 18 turnovers. The Tigers made two of 10 free throws compared to four of seven for Britton-Hecla.

Shooting wise, Groton Area made 16 percent of its first quarter shots, 31 percent in the second quarter, 58 percent in the third quarter and 36 percent in the fourth quarter. Britton-Hecla made 27 percent in the first quarter, 33 percent in the second quarter, 25 percent in the third quarter and 50 percent in the fourth quarter.

In the junior high game, Groton Area held a 19-3 lead at half time and hung on to win, 25-23. There was no junior varsity game.

This GDILIVE.COM event was sponsored by

Aberdeen
Chrysler Center

**901 Auto Plaza Drive
Aberdeen, SD**

800.874.9173

www.aberdeenchrysler.com



*Groton Community Transit
invites you to their*

CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE

Thursday, December 20

9:00am - 4:00pm

Main Street Groton

Coffee, cider & goodies served
Door Prizes

*If you would like to donate baked
goods, please call the Transit at 397-8661. Thanks.*

Game, Fish and Parks Statewide Fisheries Plan Available for Public Comment

PIERRE, S.D. - South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has prepared a draft Statewide Strategic Fisheries Plan for 2019 – 2023, which is available for public comment and review until Jan. 4, 2019.

The plan is a continuation of planning efforts that began in 2014 and will guide statewide fisheries activities through 2023.

The Statewide Plan is a component of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Adaptive Management System and contains plans for seven statewide aquatic programs including surveys, research, fishing access, nongame fish, fish production, bait and private aquaculture, and fish health and contaminants. For each program, issues were identified and objectives and strategies were developed to address those management issues.

A summary of the 2014 – 2018 Fisheries plan objectives and progress toward those objectives are included in the plan appendices. Comments can be submitted online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mailed to 523 E. Capitol Ave Pierre, SD 57501.

The draft statewide plan and a one page summary of the plan can be viewed online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/management-plans/> under "Plans Up for Revision."

Request a hard copy by emailing WildInfo@state.sd.us or calling 605.223.7660.

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Homecare Services Caregivers

Flexible, part time positions available in the Groton area. Home Care Services is looking for friendly dependable people to provide care and companionship for elderly and disabled people in their homes. You will be assisting our clients with personal care needs, meal preparations, light housekeeping, errands and other tasks. If you have a passion for helping others and need a flexible schedule, please call our office at (605) 225-1076 or 1-800-899-2578. (1218.0101)

Cheapest December National Gas Price Average in Two Years

December 17, 2018 - At \$2.37, the national gas price average continues to drive toward the cheapest pump prices seen during the month of December since 2016, which is welcome news for the millions of Americans expected to begin holiday travel later this week.

"AAA expects 102 million Americans to drive to their holiday destination this year, which is a four percent increase year-over-year," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson. "No doubt cheaper gas prices are fueling their decision to hit the road."

The national average is a nickel less than last week, 26-cents less than last month and six-cents less than a year ago. With gasoline production on the high side – 10 million b/d - amid low demand, motorists can expect gas prices to continue declining through year-end.

South Dakota's gas price average today is \$2.38, seven cents lower than one year ago and 25 cents lower on the month.

Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 least expensive markets are: Missouri (\$1.96), South Carolina (\$2.03), Oklahoma (\$2.04), Arkansas (\$2.04), Alabama (\$2.05), Louisiana (\$2.05), Texas (\$2.05), Mississippi (\$2.06), Kansas (\$2.06) and Ohio (\$2.07).

The nation's top 10 largest weekly decreases are: Ohio (-12 cents), Indiana (-9 cents), Idaho (-9 cents), Montana (-9 cents), Michigan (-9 cents), Colorado (-8 cents), Illinois (-8 cents), Washington (-7 cents), Utah (-7 cents) and Hawaii (-6 cents).

Central and Great Lakes Region

At the start of the week, pump prices are cheaper on the week for all Great Lakes and Central states. This week's declines wiped out any increases from the previous week in Ohio (-12 cents), Indiana (-9 cents) and Michigan (-9 cents). In fact, these states, in addition to Illinois (-8 cents) land on the top 10 list with the largest weekly changes in the country.

At \$1.96, Missouri has the cheapest gas price average in the region and in the country. The last time the state saw prices this cheap was two years ago in December 2016. At that time, crude oil prices ranged from \$50-52/bbl, which is similar to crude oil prices as of late.

Oil market dynamics

At the close of Friday's formal trading session on the NYMEX, WTI decreased \$1.38 to settle at \$51.20. Oil prices mostly fell last week as market observers continue to worry that the global crude market is over-supplied. Although the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other oil producers, including Russia, agreed last week to reduce output by 1.2 million barrels per day at the beginning of 2019, crude prices will likely remain low until the production reduction agreement is in place.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at AAA.com/mobile.

AAA provides automotive, travel, and insurance services to 59 million members nationwide and over 100,000 members in South Dakota. AAA advocates for the safety and mobility of its members and has been committed to outstanding road service for more than 100 years. AAA is a non-stock, non-profit corporation working on behalf of motorists, who can now map a route, find local gas prices, discover discounts, book a hotel, and track their roadside assistance service with the AAA Mobile app (AAA.com/mobile) for iPhone, iPad and Android. For more information, visit www.AAA.com.



Opinion: Revised WOTUS rule a win for landowners, ag community and states' rights

By: U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) - Tri-State Neighbor

Between the weather, market prices and crop production, farmers and ranchers are already faced with significant uncertainty as they seek to make a profit while feeding and fueling the world.

The last thing they need is more uncertainty and overregulation from the federal government. Fortunately, over the past two years, we've made significant progress undoing many of the damaging regulations from the previous administration and enacting smarter policies to help our producers flourish and thrive. A recent example is the revised Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule, which the Trump administration announced earlier this week.

WOTUS is a rule that seeks to define the bodies of water that will be regulated under the Clean Water Act of 1972. Originally drafted by the Obama administration, the original WOTUS rule replaced a standard definition of a body of water with a vague definition in which a bureaucrat would make a decision on whether water could be regulated on a case-by-case basis. This vagueness and uncertainty was deeply troubling to many of us who recognized it as a massive power grab by the federal government seeking to expand its power over private property.

The revised WOTUS rule gives farmers, ranchers and landowners the certainty they need to know exactly when the Clean Water Act applies to them and when it does not. It adapts the 'ordinary meaning' of the term navigable water – essentially oceans, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and adjacent wetlands – and clarifies that not all water is 'waters of the U.S.' Landowners are already good stewards of our land. We don't need unelected bureaucrats in Washington making ambiguous decisions about land they are not familiar with.

Additionally, the rule works with landowners to strengthen water safety – rather than saddle them with unnecessary burdens with little to no benefit to the environment and our water supply. It also respects states' rights, recognizing that state and tribal governments have a right to regulate and manage their land and water resources themselves.

Throughout the process of rewriting WOTUS, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also worked with states, tribes, local governments and other stakeholders who are directly affected to make certain their most pressing concerns have been addressed.

As chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Subcommittee on Oversight, which oversees the operations of the EPA, we have spent a great deal of time focused on the real-world impact that EPA rules and other federal regulations have on American families. In the case of WOTUS, our committee found that not only was the earlier version of the rule unpopular and unworkable, the previous administration continuously ignored the concerns of farmers, ranchers, agriculture groups, state governors, attorneys general and even its own Small Business Administration before moving ahead with it.

The previous administration's proposed WOTUS rule would have been one of the largest federal land grabs in U.S. history. In completely redefining a 'navigable' waterway under the Clean Water Act, it would have given the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA control of nearly all water, including man-made water

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management systems, farm ponds, drainage ditches and any other water the federal government wanted to decide has a 'significant nexus' to downstream water.

This would have required farmers, ranchers and landowners to spend countless hours filling out burdensome paperwork to get permits from the federal government just to conduct normal agricultural activities or spray for weeds along our county roads.

Under the new proposal, federally regulated water would include traditional navigable waters, certain lakes and ponds, tributaries to navigable waters, impoundments of jurisdictional waters and wetlands adjacent to jurisdictional waters. It would not regulate areas that only contain water for periods of time after rainfall, like most ditches, stormwater control features and groundwater, to name a few.

I thank the administration for recognizing the damage the previous administration's WOTUS rule would have had on agricultural operations and job creators. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this new commonsense proposal forward. The new rule reins in the role of the federal government and provides much-needed certainty to our producers. It is a commonsense proposal that protects our water while allowing our ag community to continue doing their jobs without unnecessary burdens.

A 60-day comment period is now underway for anyone wishing to weigh in on the proposal. I encourage anyone who may be affected by the new rule to share their thoughts at www.epa.gov.

Elda Stange Thank You

Thank you to all of you who sent a card, visited me, called me, or attended my 95th Birthday celebration at the church.

You helped make my birthday so special! I am truly blessed to have so many wonderful friends. God's blessings to each of you!

- Elda Stange

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Truth in Labeling: It's Your Turn to Speak Up

HURON, S.D. - When Danni Beer, cattle rancher from Keldron, thinks about truth in labeling, it's from a mom's perspective.

"I want what is best for my kids. I want what is most healthy and most nutritious," says the third-generation rancher and president of the U.S. Cattlemen's Association.

As a mom, rancher and leader of U.S. Cattlemen's, Beer was among a group of Farmers Union members who testified before the U.S. Department of Agriculture, asking that the USDA not to allow cell-cultured protein to be labeled as meat.

"Make it truthful labeling. Our beef can compete with any product out there if consumers know the difference," Beer says. "And, if the USDA allows cell-cultured protein to be blended with meat raised in the conventional manner, that is not truthful. How will consumers know?"

Truthful labeling is not a "wait and see what happens," issue for Beer and South Dakota Farmers Union. Along with testifying in D.C., during convention, SDFU staff helped members share their thoughts on truthful labeling and comment on the USDA website.

If you have not yet commented, call the Huron office and our staff will assist you over the phone, 605-352-6761. The comment period is open until Dec. 26.

"Commenting does matter," explains Tammy Basel, Union Center sheep and cattle producer and a member of the Cattlemen's Beef Board.

Her thoughts were supported by Jess Peterson. During his convention address, the U.S. Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice President explained the impact of lobbying efforts of U.S. Cattlemen's and National Farmers Union in D.C.

"Does it matter to get involved? Does it make a difference? Yes. We have done a great job working together. So far, we have gotten the other side to stop referencing their product as 'clean meat.' But, we still have work to do," he says. "It's always been about the word, 'meat.' Something grown in a petri-dish should not be labeled as meat."

Peterson explained that due to lobbying efforts, the labeling of petri-dish or cell-based protein is now a decision that will be made by the USDA and it will be regulated by the Food and Drug Administration.

"We want consumers to have a choice," Peterson explains.

SDFU member and third-generation Amherst cattle producer, Paul Symens says he is happy truthful labeling is an issue SDFU is taking up. "We need to hit this hard. Something grown in a petri-dish has no right being labeled as meat," Symens says.

He added that he is quite concerned over the health risks associated with petri-dish protein. Jerry Petik is too.

"The beef animal produces nutrients essential to life and those are passed along to us when we eat their meat. These may not be produced when protein is grown in a test tube," explains the Meadow cow/calf and small grains producer. "The consumer needs to know what they are eating."

If you have questions on this issue contact Karla Hofhenke, SDFU Executive Director, at 605-352-6167 ext. 114.

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S.D. Farmers Union Members Unite During 2018 Convention

HURON, S.D. - Support and unity were felt among many Farmers Union members during the 2018 South Dakota Farmers Union state convention held Nov. 29-30 in Pierre.

"Times are tough, but during convention we have an opportunity to come together, relate and be uplifted," says Doug Sombke, SDFU President, during his convention address.

Getting together with old friends is among the reasons Frederick crop and cattle farmer, John Sumption made time for convention. "Convention is a great place to see old friends and develop a united message for agriculture through policy," Sumption says.

Being there for friends and neighbors during these tough economic times in agriculture was the focus of Andrea Bjornestad's convention speech on mental health. The South Dakota State University Assistant Professor and SDSU Extension Mental Health Specialist encouraged members to focus on getting together with friends and family as isolation during tough times can lead to depression. And, if a friend or family member seems depressed, don't hesitate to ask tough questions and help them seek help. Her message rang true for Alvin Novak, a Yankton farmer.

"A neighbor of ours who was a young farmer committed suicide. I will never forget that day," he says. "And, she was right about the importance of making time to visit with other farmers and ranchers because they understand what we do every day and what we are going through. I go to church coffee and if it's raining, friends will come up and say, 'you don't have anything to do today because it's raining.' If you're not a farmer or rancher, you just don't understand what it's like to have machinery that needs to be fixed and livestock that still need to be fed. We don't have days off."

Another concern facing many is truth in labeling. Currently, the USDA is deciding whether or not cell-cultured, lab-grown protein can be labeled as meat. During convention, SDFU members heard about lobbying efforts of Farmers Union and U.S. Cattlemen's Association from USCA Executive Director Jess Peterson. SDFU staff were on hand to help them log in and comment online.

If you haven't told the USDA why you believe only traditionally raised livestock should be labeled as meat, it's not too late. Call SDFU staff today and they will assist you, 605-352-6761. Comment period ends Dec. 26.

Providing a strong voice for family farmers and ranchers in South Dakota and across the nation is top priority for SDFU. It is the main reason many members belong. And, it's what motivated Dallas cattle producers Melissa and Hank Wonnberg to find someone to watch their two young daughters, fill in for them at their off-farm jobs and make time for convention. "When we were looking for an organization to become involved in, we talked to Karla Hofhenke and decided Farmers Union was a good fit for us," explains Melissa, who served on the Credentials Committee. "We wanted to be part of a group where we could get involved and get things accomplished."

Danni Beer, cattle rancher from Keldron, says she was impressed with the lively policy discussion this convention. "Farmers Union has always been on top of policy and helping farmers and ranchers with issues that are relevant to our business," explains Beer, who also served on the Policy Committee.

Sombke agrees. "Active participation in policy is yet another way members show unity. We are all rowing together. No one is just sitting in the boat alone."

Looking to bring some long-term solutions to the low markets facing farmers Sombke and SDFU member Craig Blindert discussed Inventory Management Soil Enhancement Tool (IMSET) with members.

Blindert, a Salem farmer and crop insurance agent, developed IMSET as a farmer-led solution to poor markets. IMSET incentivizes soil health building. During the 2018 National Convention policy discussion, NFU agreed to endorse SDFU efforts to bring IMSET forward as a product for USDA-Risk Management Agency to release to farmers to use alongside crop insurance.

"If you're going to do something different, you need to look at what has been done and understand what does not work," Blindert explains.

Along with IMSET, another long-term solution discussed was increasing the use of ethanol. This was the focus of Glacial Lakes Energy CEO Jim Seurer's convention talk, which focused on the E30 Challenge, which increased consumption of ethanol by 600 percent in Watertown.

A new farm bill was on the minds of many convention goers, but the timing of when it will come to fruition is still a big unknown, explains Paul Schubeck, State Director of Farm Service Agency. "There is nothing to talk about (when it comes to) the farm bill," he says. However, he did say, although the timing is unknown, he remains optimistic. "We will have a farm bill."

To see a complete convention agenda and learn about upcoming events, visit www.sdfu.org.

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Today in Weather History

December 18, 1985: On one of the coldest mornings of the year, most places in South Dakota experienced low temperatures of less than 20 degrees below zero. The coldest temperature was 30 below zero at Huron in Beadle County and Canton in Lincoln County. Aberdeen dropped to 22 below zero, Highmore and Mobridge fell to 23 below zero; Britton fell to 24 below zero, and Summit bottomed out at 25 below.

December 18, 1996: A powerful Alberta Clipper and a slow-moving deep Arctic high-pressure system brought widespread prolonged blizzard conditions to the entire region from the 16th to the 19th. The clipper dropped from 1 to 5 inches of snowfall on top of the already extensive snow cover of 1 to almost 4 feet. Across central and north central South Dakota, northerly winds increased to 25 to 40 mph with gusts to 55 mph late in the morning of the 16th. Temperatures also fell, and widespread blizzard conditions and dangerous wind chills of 40 to 70 below zero developed, prevailing through noon on the 18th. Across northeast South Dakota, conditions changed through late in the day of the 16th, with widespread blowing snow, falling temperatures, and dangerous wind chills. Widespread blizzard conditions developed on the morning of the 17th and continued into the evening of the 18th. Conditions changed throughout the afternoon of the 16th in west central Minnesota, with a full-fledged blizzard by the morning of the 17th.

North winds of 30 to 40 mph gusting to 50 mph brought visibilities to near zero and caused heavy drifting, making travel difficult. Many people had to be rescued from their vehicles after getting stuck in massive snowdrifts or going into ditches because of low visibilities. Some people had to wait to be rescued for many hours, for some over a day. Due to the massive amount of blowing snow, widespread heavy drifting occurred across the entire area, blocking roads, making travel difficult, and leaving some people stranded to wait out the storm. Some snowdrifts from the storm were as high as 15 feet with a few houses almost buried. A Burlington Northern locomotive became stuck in a 12-foot drift near Hazel and had to be dug out. Due to the weight of the snow, the roof of a hanger at the Gettysburg Airport collapsed on an airplane.

All schools were let out early on the 16th with some schools not reopening until the 20th. Several school buses went into the ditch or got stuck in drifts and had to be pulled out. There were several accidents, most with minor injuries; however, one accident in Dewey County resulted in serious injury. Most of the roads, state highways and Interstate 90 were closed for a day or two until road crews could get to them. Interstate 29 also received heavy drifting, with parts of it closed for a while during the storm. Most snow plows had to be called back because they could not see the roads or the roads would be drifted over shortly after they were plowed. Some county snow removal budgets were already depleted or were close to being consumed. Emergency personnel and road crews were working extended hours to keep up with the storm. Rescue vehicles had a difficult time responding to emergencies. In one case, a lady from Mobridge had to be brought to Aberdeen. The 100-mile trip took six hours. Also, a rural Westport man died because the rescue units could not get to him in time.

Airports were closed or flights were canceled or delayed. Mail was delayed for some people up to several days with a massive backup of Christmas packages. Some government offices and many businesses were closed for several days. All sports and other activities were postponed or canceled. Farmers and ranchers had a difficult time getting feed to their livestock. Many cattle were loose and had to be found as they walked on snow drifts over fences. The storm also killed several animals and a countless number of pheasants with some buried in the snow. Several dairy producers had to dump thousands of pounds of milk because trucks could not get to them in time. Fortunately, there were only spotty power outages throughout the storm. For several hours on the night of the 16th in the extreme cold, 3000 people in Pierre were without power for several hours.

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Today



Becoming Sunny

High: 48 °F

Tonight



Increasing Clouds

Low: 28 °F

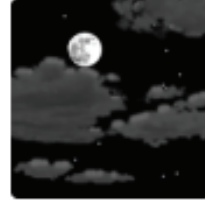
Wednesday



Chance Freezing Rain then Partly Sunny

High: 47 °F

Wednesday Night



Partly Cloudy

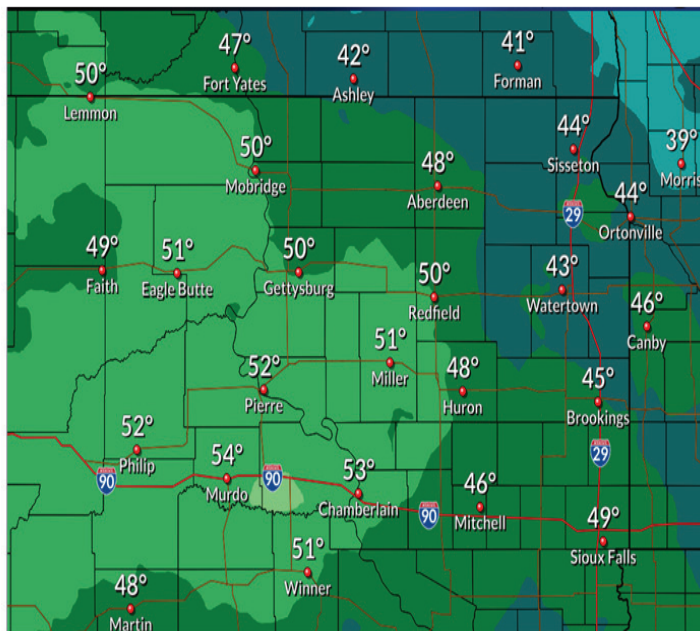
Low: 27 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 40 °F



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Another Mild Day



Tonight

Chance for Freezing Rain, Sleet, and Rain.
Slippery Roads Possible.

Wednesday

Freezing Rain and Sleet Possible in the Morning.
Breezy to Windy by the Afternoon.

Published on: 12/18/2018 at 5:20AM

12/18/2018 4:52 AM

Another mild day is expected across the area with highs in the 40s and 50s. A front crossing the region tonight will bring a chance for sleet and freezing rain. Icy roads could be possible for the Wednesday morning commute.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 43 °F at 1:55 PM

Low Outside Temp: 22 °F at 7:21 AM

High Gust: 21 mph at 11:14 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1979

Record Low: -37° in 2016

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 5°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.28

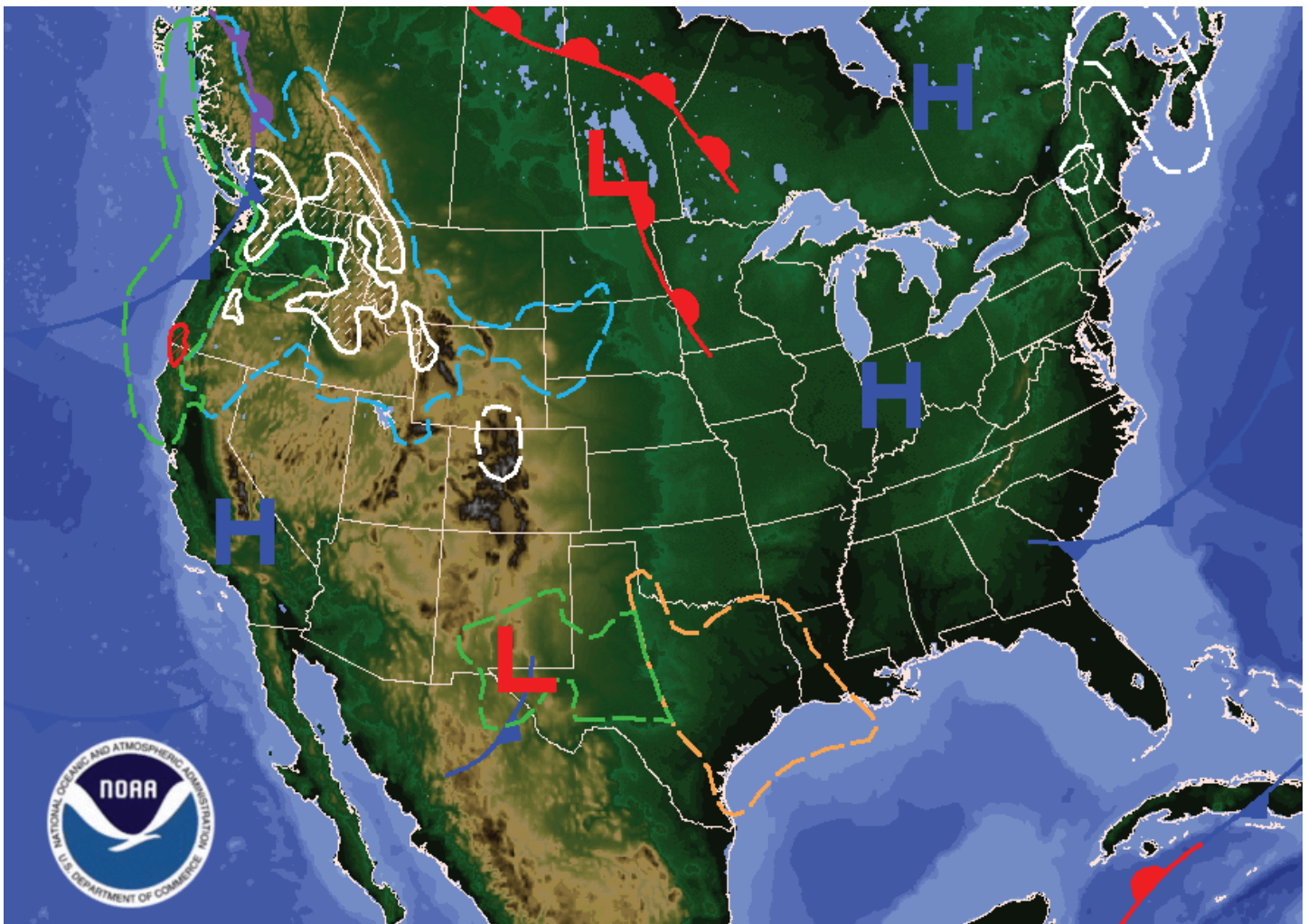
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.48

Precip Year to Date: 15.81

Sunset Tonight: 4:52 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Dec 18, 2018, issued 4:43 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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

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NO ROOM, BUT...

The annual church Christmas play was rapidly approaching and Mrs. Adams was assigning roles to the children in her Sunday school class. Albert, she said, I'd like you to be the inn keeper this year.

No way, not me, absolutely not! said Albert. I'm not going to be the one who turned Mary and Joseph away from a good night's rest.

Oh, please, she begged. I really need you to do this. We won't be able to have the play without you, she pleaded. Finally he agreed.

On the night of the performance, Joseph went to the door and knocked. Whos there? he asked.

My names Joseph and Mary and I need a place to sleep, was the reply.

I'm sorry, he said politely. We have no rooms available. And then added kindly, But if you'd like you can rest awhile and I'll get you some cookies and milk.

There are many, like Albert, who would gladly give our Lord some cookies and milk but would never allow Him to come into their hearts and change their lives. It's enjoyable to visit the manger, sing a few carols, read the story of His birth and then exchange gifts. But to make Him a permanent resident?

See Him now: Patiently standing. Gently knocking. Carefully listening. Waiting hopefully. Wanting desperately to save us and give us eternal life.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for wanting to be our Savior and to fellowship with us. Come, dwell within us. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

News from the Associated Press

Man gets 30 years for fatally shooting girl on reservation

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man convicted of fatally shooting a 13-year-old girl on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation has been sentenced to serve 30 years in prison.

A federal jury in May 2017 found James Dowty of Pine Ridge guilty of second-degree murder and a firearms count in the killing of Te'Ca Clifford, who was walking with three friends in July 2016 when she was shot.

A judge in July rejected Dowty's request for an acquittal or a new trial. He was sentenced Monday to 20 years on the murder charge and an additional 10 years on the weapons count.

Colorado man caught in Sturgis trafficking sting convicted

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Colorado man caught during an undercover sex trafficking sting during the 2016 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota has been convicted of a child sex crime.

The U.S. attorney's office says 53-year-old Joel Zupnik, of Fort Collins, Colorado, engaged in multiple chats and text messages about sex with a person he thought was a 15-year-old girl but was in fact an undercover agent.

Zupnik was one of 10 men indicted as a result of the rally sting. He was convicted of attempting to entice a minor via the internet after a three-day trial last week in federal court in Rapid City and will be sentenced later.

Chamberlain woman sentenced for embezzling from tribe

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Chamberlain woman has been sentenced to four years of probation for embezzling from the Crow Creek Sioux tribe.

The U.S. Attorney's Office says 53-year-old Lana Steele also was ordered to pay \$11,500 in restitution.

Authorities say Steele stole from the Crow Creek District Business Committee while serving as treasurer over a two-year period beginning in November 2013.

Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Arlington 53, Castlewood 50
Central Lyon, Rock Rapids, Iowa 61, West Central 56
Chester 37, Dell Rapids St. Mary 26
Deubrook 43, Wilmot 42
Garretson 62, Baltic 51
Hot Springs 70, Oelrichs 40
Kadoka Area 65, Philip 32
Lennox 59, Canton 38
Mitchell Christian 48, Iroquois 28
Sioux Valley 88, Parker 71
South Border, N.D. 55, Eureka/Bowdle 42
Sully Buttes 56, Mobridge-Pollock 49
Viborg-Hurley 58, Howard 33
Warner 69, Potter County 61

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Waubay/Summit 66, Great Plains Lutheran 32

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Beresford 49, Madison 31

Castlewood 49, Arlington 28

Chester 61, Dell Rapids St. Mary 53

Florence/Henry 58, Langford 48

Groton Area 46, Britton-Hecla 30

Hanson 55, Avon 48

Highmore-Harrold 63, Faulkton 32

Irene-Wakonda 67, Canistota 44

Kadoka Area 56, Philip 46

Lennox 59, Canton 27

McCook Central/Montrose 55, Tea Area 47

Parker 45, Sioux Valley 37

Sully Buttes 49, Mobridge-Pollock 31

Tripp-Delmont/Armour 59, Parkston 55

Viborg-Hurley 57, Howard 51

Warner 54, Potter County 15

Waubay/Summit 60, Great Plains Lutheran 37

West Central 62, Central Lyon, Rock Rapids, Iowa 44

Wolsey-Wessington 55, Lake Preston 43

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Girl's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press \ \ \

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school girl's preseason poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records, total points and last week's ranking.

Class AA

| Rank-School | FPV | Rcd | TP | Pvs | |
|-----------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1. Brandon Valley | (9) | 3-0 | 98 | 2 | |
| 2. O'Gorman | (14) | 2-1 | 97 | 1 | |
| 3. Harrisburg | - | 3-0 | 68 | 4 | |
| 4. Washington | - | 4-0 | 57 | 5 | |
| 5. Rapid City Stevens | - | - | 3-1 | 19 | RV |

Others receiving votes: Lincoln 5, Brookings 1.

Class A

| Rank-School | FPV | Rcd | TP | Pvs | |
|----------------------|-----|------|-----|-----|----|
| 1. St. Thomas More | | (21) | 2-0 | 112 | 1 |
| 2. Lennox | (2) | 3-1 | 91 | 2 | |
| 3. Winner | - | 3-0 | 71 | 3 | |
| 4. Aberdeen Roncalli | | - | 3-0 | 13 | RV |
| 5. Todd County | - | 6-0 | 12 | RV | |

Others receiving votes: Garretson 11, Miller 11, Vermillion 9, McCook Central/Montrose 8, Hamlin 3, Sioux

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Falls Christian 2, Dell Rapids 1, Belle Fourche 1.

Class B

| Rank-School | FPV | Rcd | TP | Pvs |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Ethan (17) | 3-0 | 109 | 1 | |
| 2. Warner (6) | 3-0 | 98 | 2 | |
| 3. De Smet - | 4-0 | 63 | 5 | |
| 4. Corsica-Stickney - | | 3-0 | 25 | RV |
| 5. Castlewood - | | 1-1 | 21 | 3 |

Others receiving votes: White River 14, Clark-Willow Lake 8, Faith 4, Kimball-White Lake 2, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 1.

Boy's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school boy's preseason poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records, total points and last week's ranking.

Class AA

| Rank-School | FPV | Rcd | TP | Pvs |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Yankton (22) | 4-0 | 113 | 1 | |
| 2. Roosevelt | - | 3-0 | 85 | 3 |
| 3. Lincoln (1) | 2-0 | 70 | 5 | |
| 4. Stevens - | 2-2 | 24 | 2 | |
| 5. Huron - | 3-1 | 16 | NR | |

Others receiving votes: Brandon Valley 12, O'Gorman 9, Sturgis 6, Washington 5, Pierre 3, Watertown 1, Harrisburg 1.

Class A

| Rank-School | FPV | Rcd | TP | Pvs |
|--------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Tea Area (23) | 3-0 | 115 | 1 | |
| 2. SF Christian | - | 4-0 | 92 | 2 |
| 3. St. Thomas More | - | 3-0 | 50 | 5 |
| 4. Pine Ridge | - | 3-1 | 45 | 3 |
| 5. Red Cloud | - | 4-1 | 20 | 4 |

Others receiving votes: Parker 19, Dakota Valley 2, Vermillion 1, Todd County 1.

Class B

| Rank-School | FPV | Rcd | TP | Pvs |
|-----------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Bridgewater-Emery | (19) | 1-0 | 110 | 1 |
| 2. Clark-Willow Lake | (3) | 3-0 | 88 | 2 |
| 3. White River (1) | | 5-0 | 78 | 3 |
| 4. Timber Lake (1) | | 4-0 | 42 | 5 |
| 5. Aberdeen Christian | - | 3-0 | 11 | RV |

Others receiving votes: Sully Buttes 8, Dell Rapids St. Mary 4, Kimball-White Lake 2, Colome 2.

Developers consider ethanol plant, pipeline in Napa Junction

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Napa Junction in southeastern South Dakota is poised for more development as officials consider building an ethanol plant and a private natural gas pipeline in the area.

Several companies have expressed interest in bringing an ethanol plant to Napa Junction, which has seen much activity over the past year and a half with the opening of a grain shuttling facility and a new pelleting plant that's under construction.

Ethanol businesses are still hashing out the details, but officials have found that a cost-effective option to feed the ethanol operation would be to build a private natural gas pipeline for the area northwest of Yankton, according to Matt Winsand, general manager of Dakota Plains Ag LLC.

Winsand told the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan that Dakota Plains, which operates the grain shuttling facility in Napa Junction, has been looking into an ethanol plant in the area for a few years.

Building a private gas line for the plant would cost up to \$33 million, compared to an \$87 million option to extend a Northern Natural Gas line from Yankton that would require revamping the line's infrastructure down into Missouri, Winsand said.

A private gas pipeline could also benefit other nearby areas, he added.

"Nothing's been set in stone with (the state)," Winsand said. "But they're willing to listen to the options that we're bringing to the table. It's not a Napa Junction pipeline fix; it's a southeast South Dakota opportunity."

The Yankton County Commission will consider a conditional-use permit for the ethanol plant on Dec. 28.

Todd Woods, the commission's chairman, has already expressed support for the plant.

"For me, it's a win-win," Woods said. "If the ethanol plant comes to fruition, it's another place for our farmers to sell their grain and get a better price for their grain."

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

Vivian men sentenced to serve 40 years for baby girl's death

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Vivian man has been sentenced to serve 40 years in prison for the death of his baby daughter.

Thirty-eight-year-old Gerald Brink pleaded guilty in October to manslaughter in the May 2017 death of 7-week-old Neveah Brink. Authorities say she died of skull fractures and bleeding in her brain.

Attorney General Marty Jackley and Lyman County State's Attorney Steve Smith announced the sentence Monday of 50 years in prison with 10 years suspended.

Garth Brooks adds 2nd Minneapolis show at governor's request

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Country superstar Garth Brooks says Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton is why he's adding a second concert when he visits Minneapolis.

Brooks told reporters during a call Monday that his upcoming stadium tour is "all about one special night." But the 50,000 tickets for his May 4 show sold out within an hour Friday, so officials at the state-owned U.S. Bank Stadium asked the governor to ask Brooks to add a second show, which Dayton did via Twitter.

Brooks says that was enough to get him to relax his one-night-only rule.

The second show will be May 3. Dayton plans to attend.

Brooks planned to make the announcement at a news conference with Dayton at the state Capitol, but the musician's plane's door wouldn't close, so he couldn't fly in.

Woman awaiting manslaughter sentence accused of escape

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A St. Francis woman has pleaded not guilty to federal charges of escape from custody and criminal contempt.

Twenty-five-year-old Omalewin Neck pleaded guilty on Aug. 7 to involuntary manslaughter in an October

2017 vehicle crash that killed another person.

The U.S. attorney's office says she was ordered held in custody pending her Jan. 4 sentencing but was granted furlough for a funeral and didn't report back to jail on Dec. 1 as ordered.

Proposal would bar university coach-athlete relationships

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents is considering a policy that would bar university faculty members from having sexual relations with students who are under their athletic supervision.

Faculty members who have students under their academic supervision are already barred from having consensual relationships. But that policy has not applied to students under athletic supervision.

The Argus Leader reports that Board of Regents officials began looking at the policy on employee-to-employee relationships and faculty-to-student relationships following concerns brought about by the #MeToo movement.

A final vote could come at the board's meeting in April.

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

Flynn heads to sentencing, with 'Good luck' wish from Trump

By ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michael Flynn will likely walk out of a courtroom a free man due to his extensive cooperation with federal prosecutors, but the run-up to his sentencing hearing Tuesday has exposed raw tensions over an FBI interview in which he lied about his Russian contacts.

The former Trump national security adviser's lawyers have suggested that investigators discouraged him from having an attorney present during the January 2017 interview and never informed him it was a crime to lie. Prosecutors shot back, "He does not need to be warned it is a crime to lie to federal agents to know the importance of telling them the truth."

On Monday evening, the dispute — and a judge's intervention — led prosecutors to publicly file a redacted copy of the notes from Flynn's FBI interview that largely bolster the case, showing he told agents things he later said were false.

Still, the mere insinuation of underhanded tactics has been startling given the seemingly productive relationship between the two sides, and it was especially striking since prosecutors with special counsel Robert Mueller's office have praised Flynn's cooperation and recommended against prison time. The defense arguments spurred speculation that Flynn may be trying to get sympathy from President Donald Trump or may be playing to a judge known for a zero-tolerance view of government misconduct.

"It's an attempt, I think, to perhaps characterize Flynn as a victim or perhaps to make him look sympathetic in the eyes of a judge — and, at the same time, to portray the special counsel in a negative light," said former federal prosecutor Jimmy Gurule, a University of Notre Dame law school professor.

Trump wished Flynn "Good luck" in court on Tuesday.

"Will be interesting to see what he has to say, despite tremendous pressure being put on him, about Russian Collusion in our great and, obviously, highly successful political campaign. There was no Collusion!" Trump tweeted hours before Flynn was to be sentenced.

Until the dueling memos were filed last week, Flynn had cooperated extensively and largely eschewed the aggressive tactics of others involved in the Mueller probe.

Prosecutors, for instance, have accused former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort of lying to them even after he agreed to cooperate. Another potential target, Jerome Corsi, leaked draft court documents and accused Mueller's team of bullying him. And George Papadopoulos, a Trump campaign adviser recently released from a two-week prison sentence, has lambasted the investigation and publicly claimed that he was set up.

But then came Flynn's sentencing memo.

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Although Flynn and his attorneys stopped short of any direct accusations of wrongdoing, but they suggested the FBI, which approached Flynn at the White House just days after Trump's inauguration, played to his desire to keep the encounter quiet and as a result kept him from involving a lawyer.

They also insinuated that Flynn deserves credit for not publicly seizing on the fact that FBI officials involved in the investigation later came under scrutiny themselves. Former Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, who contacted Flynn to arrange the interview, was fired this year for what the Justice Department said was a lack of candor over a news media leak. Peter Strzok, one of the two agents who interviewed Flynn, was removed from Mueller's team and later fired for trading anti-Trump texts with another FBI official.

Mueller's team has sharply pushed back at any suggestion that Flynn was duped, with prosecutors responding that as a high-ranking military officer steeped in national security issues Flynn "knows he should not lie to federal agents."

Trump has made no secret that he sees Mueller's investigation as a "witch hunt" and has continued to lash out at prosecutors he sees as biased against him and those who help them. He's shown continued sympathy for Flynn, though, calling him a "great person" and asserting erroneously last week that the FBI said he didn't lie.

Flynn has not tried to retract his guilty plea, and there's every indication the sentencing will proceed as scheduled.

Arun Rao, a former Justice Department prosecutor in Maryland, said the defense memo is striking because it's "inconsistent" with Flynn's cooperative stance so far.

"You also wonder in this very unusual situation," he said, "whether it is a play for a pardon."

It's also possible that at least some of the defense arguments may resonate with U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan, who was the judge in the Justice Department's botched prosecution of now-deceased Republican Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska. He dismissed the case after prosecutors admitted that they withheld exculpatory evidence, prompting the judge to say that in nearly 25 years on the bench, "I've never seen anything approaching the mishandling and misconduct that I've seen in this case."

In an opinion piece for The Wall Street Journal last year, Sullivan said the case inspired him to explicitly remind prosecutors in every criminal case before him of their obligation to provide defendants with favorable evidence. He says he has encouraged colleagues to do the same.

In Flynn's case, he directed prosecutors to produce FBI records at the center of his case, including portions of the notes from his Jan. 24, 2017, FBI interview.

The notes, publicly filed Monday evening, show that FBI agents interviewed Flynn about his contacts with Russia, including his past trips to the country and his conversations with Sergey Kislyak, then Russia's ambassador to the U.S.

The notes show Flynn told agents he didn't ask Kislyak not to escalate Russia's response to sanctions imposed by the Obama administration in response to election interference. But Flynn admitted in court papers last year that he did.

The notes also show Flynn told agents he didn't ask Kislyak to see if Russia would vote a certain way on a United Nations resolution involving Israeli settlements. But in court papers last year he admitted that he did ask Kislyak to see if Russia would vote against or delay the resolution. Court papers show Flynn made that request at the direction of Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner.

It's unclear what impact, if any, the notes will have on Sullivan's sentencing decision.

Follow Eric Tucker and Chad Day on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/etuckerAP> and <https://twitter.com/ChadSDay>

Read the Flynn FBI interview notes: <http://apne.ws/xfm8IsO>

US surgeon general warns of teen risks from e-cigarettes

By **MATTHEW PERRONE, AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government's top doctor is taking aim at the best-selling electronic cigarette brand in the U.S., urging swift action to prevent Juul and similar vaping brands from addicting millions of teenagers.

In an advisory Tuesday, Surgeon General Jerome Adams said parents, teachers, health professionals and government officials must take "aggressive steps" to keep children from using e-cigarettes. Federal law bars the sale of e-cigarettes to those under 18.

For young people, "nicotine is dangerous and it can have negative health effects," Adams said in an interview. "It can impact learning, attention and memory, and it can prime the youth brain for addiction."

Federal officials are scrambling to reverse a recent explosion in teen vaping that public health officials fear could undermine decades of declines in tobacco use. An estimated 3.6 million U.S. teens are now using e-cigarettes, representing 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 20 middle schoolers, according to the latest federal figures.

Separate survey results released Monday showed twice as many high school students used e-cigarettes this year compared to last year.

E-cigarettes and other vaping devices have been sold in the U.S. since 2007, growing into a \$6.6 billion business. Most devices heat a flavored nicotine solution into an inhalable vapor. They have been pitched to adult smokers as a less-harmful alternative to cigarettes, though there's been little research on the long-term health effects or on whether they help people quit. Even more worrisome, a growing body of research suggests that teens who vape are more likely to try regular cigarettes.

Adams singled out Silicon Valley startup Juul. The company leapfrogged over its larger competitors with online promotions portraying their small device as the latest high-tech gadget for hip, attractive young people. Analysts now estimate the company controls more than 75 percent of the U.S. e-cigarette market.

The surgeon general's advisory notes that each Juul cartridge, or pod, contains as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. Additionally, Adams states that Juul's liquid nicotine mixture is specially formulated to give a smoother, more potent nicotine buzz. That effect poses special risks for young people, Adams says.

"We do know that these newer products, such as Juul, can promote dependence in just a few uses," Adams said.

Juul said in a statement that it shares the surgeon general's goal: "We are committed to preventing youth access of Juul products."

Last month, San Francisco-based Juul shut down its Facebook and Instagram accounts and halted in-store sales of its flavored pods. The flavors remain available via age-restricted online sales. That voluntary action came days before the Food and Drug Administration proposed industrywide restrictions on online and convenience store sales of e-cigarettes to deter use by kids.

Adams recommends parents, teachers and health professionals learn about e-cigarettes, talk to children about the risks and set an example by not using tobacco products.

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

10 Things to Know for Today

By **The Associated Press**

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

1. WHO IS HEADED FOR SENTENCING

Michael Flynn, the former national security adviser, will probably walk out of a courtroom a free man due to his extensive cooperation with federal prosecutors.

2. HOW THE BORDER WALL IMPASSE IS MORE OF THE SAME

The standoff over President Donald Trump's \$5 billion wall funds deepens, threatening a partial govern-

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ment shutdown in a standoff that has become increasingly common in Washington.

3. WHERE TRUMP'S IMMIGRATION ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY HIT A SNAG

Federal judges in California are putting the brakes on some of the administration's efforts to curb immigration.

4. WHAT THE BIGGEST THREAT TO TRUMP'S RE-ELECTION BID COULD BE

The greatest threat to President Trump's re-election bid may not be the slew of investigations closing in on his Oval Office but a possible economic slowdown. And the president knows it.

5. WHY STOCK MARKETS ARE SLIPPING

World markets are mostly lower, tracking losses on Wall Street as traders braced for an interest rate hike by Federal Reserve.

6. WHY U.S. LIFE EXPECTANCY IS DECLINING

One state offers clues about what's happening: West Virginia. Public health problems such as drug overdoses, suicides and obesity became widespread in the state before the rest of the country, the AP finds.

7. WHO WON'T GET A GOLDEN PARACHUTE

Former CBS CEO Les Moonves won't receive his \$120 million severance package after the company's board of directors determines he was fired "with cause" over sexual misconduct allegations.

8. WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Ruinous conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Iraq seem to be winding down. Yet the potential for unrest remains high, including in countries that escaped civil war after the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.

9. WHO IS TAKING HIS TIME BEFORE DECIDING ON A PRESIDENTIAL RUN

Beto O'Rourke's team says he has no timeline or roadmap for deciding if he'd like to parlay a surprisingly close loss to Republican Sen. Ted Cruz into a White House try.

10. WHICH LEADER OF AN ICONIC SOCCER TEAM GOT FIRED

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho is out after 2½ seasons.

Little if any progress as partial government shutdown looms

By **LISA MASCARO, MATTHEW DALY** and **CATHERINE LUCEY**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fight over President Donald Trump's \$5 billion wall funds has deepened, threatening a partial government shutdown in a standoff that has become increasingly common in Washington.

It wasn't always like this, with Congress and the White House at a crisis over government funding. The House and Senate used to pass annual appropriation bills, and the president signed them into law. But in recent years the shutdown scenario has become so routine that it raises the question: Have shutdowns as a negotiating tool lost their punch?

Monday brought few signs of progress. A partial shutdown that could occur at midnight Friday risks disrupting government operations and leaving hundreds of thousands of federal employees furloughed or working without pay over the holiday season. Costs would be likely in the billions of dollars.

Trump was meeting with his team and getting regular updates, said White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders. Trump was also tweeting Monday to keep up the pressure.

Exiting a Senate Republican leadership meeting late Monday, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota said, "It looks like it probably is going to have to build for a few days here before there's a solution."

The president is insisting on \$5 billion for the wall along the southern border with Mexico, but he does not have the votes from the Republican-led Congress to support it. Democrats are offering to continue funding at current levels, \$1.3 billion, not for the wall but for fencing and other border security.

It's unclear how many House Republicans, with just a few weeks left in the majority before relinquishing power to House Democrats, will even show up midweek for possible votes. Speaker Paul Ryan's office had no update. Many Republicans say it's up to Trump and Democrats to cut a deal.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Trump talk most days, but the senator's spokesman would not confirm if they spoke Monday about a plan. McConnell opened the chamber hoping for a "bipartisan

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collaborative spirit" that would enable Congress to finish its work.

"We need to make a substantial investment in the integrity of our border," McConnell said. "And we need to close out the year's appropriation process."

Meanwhile more than 800,000 government workers are preparing for the uncertainty ahead.

The dispute could affect nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks and forests.

About half the workers would be forced to continue working without immediate pay. Others would be sent home. Congress often approves their pay retroactively, even if they were ordered to stay home.

"Our members are asking how they are supposed to pay for rent, food, and gas if they are required to work without a paycheck," said a statement from J. David Cox, Sr., president of the American Federation of Government Employees, the large federal worker union. "The holiday season makes these inquiries especially heart-wrenching."

Many agencies, including the Pentagon and the departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, are already funded for the year and will continue to operate as usual, regardless of whether Congress and the president reach agreement this week.

Congress already approved funding this year for about 75 percent of the government's discretionary account for the budget year that began Oct. 1.

The U.S. Postal Service, busy delivering packages for the holiday season, wouldn't be affected by any government shutdown because it's an independent agency.

Trump said last week he would be "proud" to have a shutdown to get Congress to approve a \$5 billion down payment to fulfill his campaign promise to build a border wall.

During his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump promised that Mexico would pay for the wall. Mexico has refused.

Democratic leaders Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, in a meeting last week at the White House, suggested keeping funding at its current level, \$1.3 billion, for improved fencing. Trump had neither accepted nor rejected the Democrats' offer, telling them he would take a look.

Schumer said Monday he had yet to hear from Trump. Speaking on the Senate floor, Schumer warned that "going along with the Trump shutdown is a futile act" because House Democrats would quickly approve government funding in January.

"President Trump still doesn't have a plan to keep the government open," Schumer said Monday. "No treat or temper tantrum will get the president his wall."

One option for lawmakers would be to provide stopgap funding for a few weeks, until the new Congress convenes Jan. 3, when Pelosi is poised to become House speaker.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, who is in line to become the No. 3 Republican in the Senate, suggested a stopgap bill could be one way to resolve the issue or a longer-term bill that includes money for border security.

GOP leaders, though, were frustrated as the clock ticked away. Leaving the weekly leadership meeting, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., said any planning was a "very closely held thing. That's why we should never let this happen. We should pass the bills the way we're supposed to pass them."

Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman in Washington contributed to this report.

In locked compound, minorities in China make clothes for US

By DAKE KANG, MARTHA MENDOZA and YANAN WANG, Associated Press

HOTAN, China (AP) — Barbed wire and hundreds of cameras ring a massive compound of more than 30 dormitories, schools, warehouses and workshops in China's far west. Dozens of armed officers and a growling Doberman stand guard outside.

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Behind locked gates, men and women are sewing sportswear that can end up on U.S. college campuses and sports teams.

This is one of a growing number of internment camps in the Xinjiang region, where by some estimates 1 million Muslims are detained, forced to give up their language and their religion and subject to political indoctrination. Now, the Chinese government is also forcing some detainees to work in manufacturing and food industries. Some of them are within the internment camps; others are privately owned, state-subsidized factories where detainees are sent once they are released.

The Associated Press has tracked recent, ongoing shipments from one such factory inside an internment camp to Badger Sportswear, a leading supplier in Statesville, North Carolina. The shipments show how difficult it is to stop products made with forced labor from getting into the global supply chain, even though such imports are illegal in the U.S. Badger CEO John Anton said Sunday that the company would source sportswear elsewhere while it investigates.

Chinese authorities say the camps, which they call training centers, offer free vocational training for Uighurs, Kazakhs and others, mostly Muslims, as part of a plan to bring minorities into "a modern civilized" world and eliminate poverty in Xinjiang. They say that people in the centers have signed agreements to receive vocational training.

The Xinjiang Propaganda Department did not respond to a faxed request for comment. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman accused the foreign media Monday of making "many untrue reports" about the training centers, but did not specify when asked for details.

"Those reports are completely based on hearsay evidence or made out of thin air," the spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, said at a daily briefing.

However, a dozen people who either had been in a camp or had friends or family in one told the AP that detainees they knew were given no choice but to work at the factories. Most of the Uighurs and Kazakhs, who were interviewed in exile, also said that even people with professional jobs were retrained to do menial work.

Payment varied according to the factory. Some got paid nothing, while others earned up to several hundred dollars a month, they said — barely above minimum wage for the poorer parts of Xinjiang. A person with firsthand knowledge of the situation in one county estimated that more than 10,000 detainees — or 10 to 20 percent of the internment population there — are working in factories, with some earning just a tenth of what they used to earn before. The person declined to be named out of fear of retribution.

A former reporter for Xinjiang TV in exile said that during his monthlong detention last year, young people in his camp were taken away in the mornings to work without compensation in carpentry and a cement factory.

"The camp didn't pay any money, not a single cent," he said, asking to be identified only by his first name, Elyar, because he has relatives still in Xinjiang. "Even for necessities, such as things to shower with or sleep at night, they would call our families outside to get them to pay for it."

Rushan Abbas, a Uighur in Washington, D.C., said her sister is among those detained. The sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, was taken to what the government calls a vocational center, although she has no specific information on whether her sister is being forced to work.

"American companies importing from those places should know those products are made by people being treated like slaves," she said. "What are they going to do, train a doctor to be a seamstress?"

The predominantly Muslim Uighur and Kazakh ethnic minorities in China live mostly in the Xinjiang region bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, with a legacy dating to ancient traders on the Silk Road. In recent decades, violent attacks by Uighur militants have killed hundreds and prompted the Chinese government to blanket Xinjiang with stifling security.

About two years ago, authorities launched a vast detention and re-education campaign. They also use checkpoints, GPS tracking and face-scanning cameras for surveillance of ethnic minorities in the region. The slightest perceived misstep can land someone in the internment camps.

Men and women in the complex that has shipped products to Badger Sportswear make clothes for

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privately-owned Hetian Taida Apparel in a cluster of 10 workshops within the compound walls. Hetian Taida says it is not affiliated with the internment camps, but its workforce includes detainees.

As China faced growing international pressure about the detention camps, its state broadcaster aired a 15-minute report in October that featured a "vocational skills education and training center" in the southern Xinjiang city of Hotan.

"Terrorism and extremism are the common enemy of human civilization," the China Central Television program began. In response, the report said, the Xinjiang government was using vocational training to solve this "global issue."

Wu Hongbo, the chairman of Hetian Taida, confirmed that the company has a factory inside the same compound as the training center featured in the China Central Television report. Hetian Taida provides employment to those trainees who were deemed by the government to be "unproblematic," he said, adding that the center is government-operated.

"We're making our contribution to eradicating poverty," Wu told the AP over the phone.

The 20 to 30 trainees at the factory are treated like regular employees and make up a small fraction of the hundreds of people in its workforce, he said.

Trainees featured in the state television report praised the Communist Party for saving them from a criminal path.

"I don't dare to imagine what would have happened to me if I didn't come here," one Uighur student said. "The party and government found me in time and saved me. They gave me a chance to reinvent myself."

The segment said that in addition to law and Mandarin-language classes, the training center collaborated with companies to give trainees practical experience. Trainees were shown hunched over sewing machines in a factory whose interior matches that of Hetian Taida's main Hotan branch, as seen in prior Chinese media reports.

Police told the AP journalists who approached the compound earlier this month that they could not take photos or film in the area because it was part of a "military facility." Yet the entrance was marked only by a tall gate that said it was an "apparel employment training base."

Posters line the barbed-wire perimeter, bearing messages such as "Learn to be grateful, learn to be an upright person" and "No need to pay tuition, find a job easily."

Nathan Ruser, a cyber-policy researcher at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), analyzed satellite images for the AP and found that in Hetian Taida's case, the apparel factory and the government-run training camp are connected by a fenced path.

"There are watchtowers throughout," Ruser said. "There are clear fences between the buildings and walls that limit movement. Detainees can only access the factories area through walkways, and the entire facility is closed."

The AP could not independently determine if any workers were allowed to come and go, or how much if anything they were paid.

At least 10 times this year shipping containers filled with thousands of men's, women's and youth polyester knitted T-shirts and pants were sent to Badger Sportswear, a 47-year-old athletic gear seller. The company mostly manufactures in Nicaragua and the U.S., and there is no way to tell where the products from Xinjiang specifically end up. But experts say supply chains are considered tainted by forced labor and modern slavery if even one item was produced by someone forced to work.

Sprinkled on the internet are clues that repeatedly tie the company to the detention camp's sewing factory floor.

Shawn Zhang, a researcher at the University of British Columbia, noted an overlooked Hotan city social media post from February about the first batch of some 1.5 million pieces of clothing worth \$400,000 heading overseas from the Hetian Taida Factory. In the middle of a photo of young women flashing the peace sign is Badger Sportswear's marketing director Ginny Gasswint, who is quoted as saying she's surprised the workers are "friendly, beautiful, enthusiastic and hardworking."

Badger Sportswear goes to university bookstores and sports teams large and small around the country,

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places like Charlotte Country Day School squash team in Charlotte, North Carolina, Rhode Island's Coventry Little League and Hansberry College Prep in Chicago, according to its website and advertisements. Dozens of college bookstores advertise their gear printed on Badger Sportswear, including Texas A&M, University of Pennsylvania, Appalachian State University, University of Northern Iowa, University of Evansville and Bates College. However, it's impossible to say if any particular shirt is made with forced labor.

All the teams and schools that responded to the AP condemned forced labor.

Badger chief executive Anton said Sunday that his company has sourced products from an affiliate of Hetian Taida for many years. He said about a year ago, the affiliate opened a new factory in western China. Anton confirmed Badger Sportswear officials visited the factory and have a certificate that the factory is certified by social compliance experts.

"We will voluntarily halt sourcing and will move production elsewhere while we investigate the matters raised," he said.

Badger Sportswear was acquired by New York investment firm CCMP Capital Advisor in August 2016. Since then, CCMP has acquired three more team sportswear companies, which they are managing under the umbrella of Founder Sport Group.

In recent years, Badger imported sportswear — jerseys, T-shirts, workout pants and more — from Nicaragua and Pakistan. But in April this year, it began importing 100 percent polyester T-shirts and pants from Hetian Taida Apparel, according to U.S. customs data provided by ImportGenius, which analyzes consumer shipments. The address on the shipping records is the same as for the detention camp.

The U.S. and United Nations say forced labor is a type of modern slavery, and that items made by people being exploited and coerced to work are banned from import to the U.S.

It's unclear whether other companies also export products made by forced labor in Xinjiang to the U.S., Europe and Asia. The AP found two companies exporting to the U.S. that share approximately the same coordinates as places experts have identified as internment camps, and Chinese media reports mention "training" there. But the AP could not confirm whether the companies use forced labor.

New Jersey Republican Congressman Chris Smith, a member of the House Foreign Relations Committee, called on the Trump Administration Monday to ban imports from Chinese companies associated with detention camps.

"Not only is the Chinese government detaining over a million Uyghurs and other Muslims, forcing them to revoke their faith and profess loyalty to the Communist Party, they are now profiting from their labor," said Smith. "U.S. consumers should not be buying and U.S. businesses should not importing goods made in modern-day concentration camps."

The detention camp system is part of China's increasingly stringent state security under President Xi Jinping. Some detainees told AP earlier this year about beating, solitary confinement and other punishments if they do not recite political songs, names and phrases. The AP has not been given access to these facilities despite repeated attempts to get permission to visit.

Not all the camps have forced labor. Many former detainees say they were held in facilities that didn't have any manufacturing equipment and focused solely on political indoctrination.

"They didn't teach me anything. They were brainwashing me, trying to make us believe how great China is, how powerful it is, how developed its economy is," said Kairat Samarkan, a Kazakh citizen who said he was tortured with a metal contraption that contorts your body before being released in February after he tried to kill himself.

Interviewees described a wave of factory openings earlier this year. Ex-detainee Orynbek Koksebek said that shortly before his release in April, the director strode into his class and announced that a factory would be built in the camp. Koksebek, who cannot speak Mandarin, listened to a policeman as he translated the director's words into Kazakh for the roughly 90 women and 15 men in the room.

"We're going to open a factory, you're going to work," Koksebek recalled him as saying. "We'll teach you how to cook, how to sew clothes, how to fix cars."

This fall, months after Koksebek's release, news began trickling into Kazakhstan that the Chinese govern-

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ment was starting forced labor in internment camps and would transfer some detainees out into gated, guarded factories. The workers must live in dormitories on factory grounds. Contact with family ranges from phone calls or in-person visits, to weekends at home under police surveillance.

In October, Chinese authorities acknowledged the existence of what they called vocational training centers. State media published an interview with Shohret Zahir, the governor of Xinjiang, saying that "some trainees" were nearly done with their "courses."

"We will try to achieve a seamless connection between school teaching and social employment, so that after finishing their courses, the trainees will be able to find jobs and earn a well-off life," Zahir said.

The forced labor program goes along with a massive government initiative to develop Xinjiang's economy by constructing enormous factory parks. Another internment camp the AP visited was inside a factory compound called Kunshan Industrial Park, opened under the national anti-poverty push. A local propaganda official, Chen Fang, said workers inside made food and clothes.

A hospital, a police station, smokestacks, dormitories and a building with a sign that read "House of Workers" could be seen from outside the surrounding barbed wire fencing. Another section resembled a prison, with guard towers and high walls. The AP did not track any exports from Kunshan to the U.S.

Many of those with relatives in such camps said their loved ones were well-educated with high-paying jobs before their arrest, and did not need a poverty alleviation program. Nurbakyt Kaliaskar, a sheep-herder's wife in Kazakhstan, said her daughter, Rezila Nulale, 25, was a college graduate with a well-paid advertising job in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, where she lived a typical urban lifestyle with a computer, a washing machine and an apartment in the city center.

Then last August, after returning from a visit to her family across the border in Kazakhstan, Nulale vanished. She didn't answer phone calls and stopped showing up to work.

Four months later a stranger contacted Kaliaskar online and confirmed her fear: her daughter had been detained for "political training." The next spring, she said she fainted when two cases of her daughter's clothes were delivered to her home in Kazakhstan.

Last month, Kaliaskar got word via a friend who knows the family that Nulale was working in a factory next to the camp where she had been detained. The friend had heard from Kaliaskar's brother, who had visited Nulale, bringing medicine for an injured hand.

Kaliaskar learned her daughter wasn't being paid and had to meet a daily quota of three articles of clothing. She couldn't leave. Her uncle thought she looked pale and thin.

"They say they're teaching her to weave clothes. But the thing is, she's well educated and had a job," said Kaliaskar. "What's the point of this training?"

A former detainee, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to protect himself and his family members, said other detainees from his camp also had been forced into jobs at factories far away. They were taken to a government office and handed labor contracts for six months to five years in a distant factory, which they were required to sign.

If they ran from the factories, they were warned, they'd be taken straight back to the camps for "further education."

Farmers, herders and manual laborers with little Mandarin and no higher education say they appreciated Beijing's past initiatives to help the poor, including subsidized housing and the installation of electricity and running water. But the camps, the forced education, and the factories, they say, go too far.

"I never asked the government to find work for my husband," said Mainur Medetbek, whose husband did odd repair jobs before vanishing into a camp in February during a visit to China from their home in Kazakhstan.

She has been able to glean a sense of his conditions from monitored exchanges with relatives and from the husband of a woman who is in the same camp. He works in an apparel factory and is allowed to leave and spend the night with relatives every other Saturday. Though she's not certain how much her husband makes, the woman in his camp earns 600 yuan (about \$87) a month, less than half the local minimum wage and far less than what Medetbek's husband used to earn.

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Since her husband was detained, Medetbek and her children have had no reliable source of income and sometimes go hungry. The ordeal has driven her to occasionally contemplate suicide.

"They say it's a factory, but it's an excuse for detention. They don't have freedom, there's no time for him to talk with me," she said. "They say they found a job for him. I think it's a concentration camp."

Martha Mendoza reported from Santa Cruz, California.

Missouri poacher ordered to repeatedly watch 'Bambi'

OZARKS, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri poacher has been ordered to repeatedly watch the movie "Bambi" as part of his sentence in a scheme to illegally kill hundreds of deer.

David Berry Jr. was ordered to watch the Disney classic at least once a month during his year-long jail sentence in what conservation agents have called one of the largest deer poaching cases in state history, the Springfield News-Leader reports .

"The deer were trophy bucks taken illegally, mostly at night, for their heads, leaving the bodies of the deer to waste," said Don Trotter, the prosecuting attorney in Lawrence County.

Berry, his father, two brothers and another man who helped them had their hunting, fishing and trapping privileges revoked temporarily or permanently. The men have paid a combined \$51,000 in fines and court costs — but the judge ordered a special addition to Berry's sentence for illegally taking wildlife.

Court records show he was ordered by Lawrence County Judge Robert George to "view the Walt Disney movie Bambi, with the first viewing being on or before December 23, 2018, and at least one such viewing each month thereafter" while at the county jail.

Berry was also sentenced to 120 days in jail in nearby Barton County for a firearms probation violation.

His father, David Berry Sr., and his brother, Kyle Berry, were arrested in August after a nearly nine-month investigation that also involved cases in Kansas, Nebraska and Canada. The Missouri Department of Conservation said information from the investigation led to 14 Missouri residents facing more than 230 charges in 11 counties.

Investigators say David Berry Sr.'s other son, Eric Berry, was later caught with another person spotlighting deer, where poachers use light at night to make deer pause and easier to hunt.

The investigation into the Berrys began in late 2015, when the conservation agency received an anonymous tip about deer poaching in Lawrence County.

Information from: Springfield News-Leader, <http://www.news-leader.com>

As US life expectancy falls, West Virginia offers lessons

By MIKE STOBBE, AP Medical Writer

MADISON, W.Va. (AP) — If you want to understand why U.S. life expectancy is declining, West Virginia is a good place to start.

The state is a bellwether of bad health, portending major problems years before they became severe nationally.

"It seems that the worst outcomes happen here first," said Dr. Michael Brumage, a West Virginia University public health expert who formerly ran the health department in Charleston. "We're the canary in the coal mine."

The drug overdose death rate for all Americans today is where West Virginia's rate was 10 years ago. The nation's suicide rate is where West Virginia's was nearly 20 years ago.

Obesity was common in West Virginia before it became widespread in the rest of the country. And life expectancy started tumbling in the Mountain State before it began falling across the U.S.

Maggie Hill has lived in the state for all of her 67 years. Sitting in her cabin in the town of Madison recently, she ticked off the many deaths that have befallen her family: An older brother drowned in a flood in 1977. A sister died in a house fire. Two siblings, both smokers, died of lung cancer. Two others were

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stillborn. Her first husband died of congestive heart failure.

Then there were the suicides. Two of her three sons shot themselves to death, one of them after losing his job. Her second husband died the same way, using a gun in their bedroom closet one Sunday morning while she was still in bed.

"I don't think people have a lot to live for," she said. "I really and truly don't see things getting better."

LIFE EXPECTANCY

After decades of steady increases, U.S. life expectancy has been declining since 2014. A government report released last month said the trend continued last year, driven in part by suicides and drug overdoses — the so-called diseases of despair.

What else is driving the decline? Experts say America's obesity problem has worsened the diabetes death rate and helped stall progress against the nation's leading killer, heart disease.

West Virginia eclipses most other states in the percentage of people affected by diabetes, heart disease and obesity. It has had the nation's highest rate of drug overdose deaths for years running. It also has the highest obesity rate and the highest rates of diabetes and high blood pressure. Adding to those woes is the highest suicide rate among states east of the Mississippi River.

Earlier this fall, U.S. health officials released for the first time life expectancy predictions at a neighborhood level. An Associated Press analysis of the data found wide disparities in cities and towns. Among states, the AP found, Hawaii had the highest life expectancy. West Virginia was the second lowest, behind Mississippi.

Mississippi, Oklahoma and a few other states suffer death and disease rates that are about as bad — or sometimes worse. But those places have unusually large populations of low-income black or Native American people, who suffer a disproportionate share of disability, disease and death.

West Virginia is 94 percent white. That makes it a telling indicator. Nearly 80 percent of the Americans who die each year are white people, and death rates rose in white men and women last year but were flat or falling in blacks and Hispanics.

So white deaths — particularly those of people who are not elderly — are mainly responsible for the nation's declining life expectancy.

WIDESPREAD ATTENTION

Ten years ago, The Associated Press described Huntington, West Virginia, and its environs as the unhealthiest place in America, based on health survey data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that put it at the bottom of the charts in more than a half-dozen measures, including the highest proportions of people who were obese, had diabetes and had heart disease.

The AP report, and others like it, drew widespread attention that peaked in 2010, when celebrity chef Jamie Oliver staged a reality TV show in Huntington to teach people how to eat better.

The attention was not entirely welcomed. It felt like outsiders coming in to criticize and perpetuate "hill-billy" stereotypes, said Steve Williams, who was elected Huntington's mayor in 2012.

But Williams said it also was motivating, prompting changes in school food and even improvements to parks and sidewalks.

"We get slammed all the time with obesity," said Andy Fischer, a financial adviser who organized a 2,500-person community walking program. "We've got to get better."

These days, the Huntington area looks somewhat better in government health surveys. For example, the region's obesity rate is only a few percentage points above the national median — instead of 10 or 20 points.

That said, it's clear the Huntington area still has some big problems. It ranks among the worst metro areas in measures like the percentage of adults who smoke, have high blood pressure and have had a stroke.

OPIOIDS AND OBESITY

About the time Huntington was trying to tackle its weight problem, it was rocked by a new crisis — opioid addiction.

West Virginia now has the distinction of having the nation's highest drug overdose death rate. Last year,

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for the first time, the state's body count surpassed 1,000. The epidemic also produced ripple effects such as a spike in the number of children taken into foster care because of dead or addicted parents.

In the last two years, no West Virginia county has seen more overdose deaths than Cabell County, which includes Huntington.

One of the grimmest spots has been Huntington's West End — some locals call it "the Worst End." The AP analysis of neighborhood-level death data found the area had a life expectancy at birth of only 62 years, 16 years shorter than national life expectancy.

Huntington's reputation crystalized on a chaotic Monday in August 2016, when emergency responders saw 28 overdoses over six hours — including two deaths.

The city soon became known as America's overdose capital. As documentary crews descended, Huntington tried to confront the problem. Among the efforts were quick-response teams charged with finding people days after they were treated for an overdose. The teams include a police officer, a clergy member, a paramedic and a treatment counselor who hand out overdose-reversing naloxone and provide information about treatment. They also direct people to a needle-exchange program run by the Cabell-Huntington Health Department.

One of the key figures in the program is Thommy Hill, a former drug dealer who has become its gatekeeper and central cog. He knows every drug user who visits and constantly tries to persuade them to try treatment — arranging immediate transportation and handing them a backpack full of clothes if they agree.

One morning in late October, bantering with a man who had come in for fresh needles, Hill lit up when the visitor mentioned a past vacation. Hill pitched him a one-week stay at a treatment hospital, joking that "people will wait on you hand and foot."

A few minutes later, he explained: "It's all about treating them like people. They don't get a lot of that."

Something seems to be working. Non-fatal overdoses in Huntington have fallen and are on track to be 40 percent lower than 2017, city officials said. They are optimistic deaths will be down this year, too.

"If we can turn around overdose numbers here, we can do it anywhere," Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams said in May at a health summit in Huntington.

Politicians including President Donald Trump have decried the opioid epidemic, prioritizing it over other health crises. But obesity still presents a towering threat.

West Virginians exercise less than other Americans. They eat fruits and vegetables less often. Only Mississippi has a larger proportion of adults drinking soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages each day.

In some cases, state policies are not helping.

For example, bariatric surgery can help certain obese people for whom conventional diet and exercise programs have no lasting effect. But West Virginia's Medicaid program has unusually harsh cost-control barriers that make it difficult for severely obese people to get approved for surgery, according to a recent analysis by George Washington University.

Then there's the soda tax, which health advocates say can give consumers second thoughts about choosing those drinks. Last year, Gov. Jim Justice proposed raising it from 1 cent per 16.9-ounce bottle to a penny per ounce. It failed in the Republican-controlled Legislature.

SIGNS OF CHANGE

There are some signs of hope in West Virginia. In October, health advocates held a conference on obesity in the South in West Virginia's capital city. It was a surprisingly upbeat meeting.

The South has long had the highest obesity rates in the country, and nowhere has adult obesity been more common than in West Virginia. But future-focused projects are popping up all over the state, aimed at getting kids to embrace exercise and healthy eating.

"We want to give people hope that we can be knocked off the unhealthiest list" of states, said Kayla Wright, director of an organization called Try This West Virginia that's funding many of them.

One grant paid for high school students to build a 5K trail and explore creating a teen cross-country running group. Another grant went toward restoring a greenhouse and helping people learn to garden.

Many of the projects are baby steps, but conference participants cited a few places where progress seems broader. Huntington is one, they say.

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Another is Mingo County, in the southwest corner of the state, deep in the heart of coal country. Life expectancy there has never been high. Jobs in the lumber and coal industries were notoriously dangerous. Doctors could be hard to find. And there was violence: The deadly Hatfield-McCoy feud played out in those hills, as did bloody labor battles between miners and coal companies.

The largest municipality in the county, Williamson, became known in the last decade as a center for the abuse of prescription opioid painkillers. (Some called the 3,000-person town "Pilliamson.")

But while the drug crisis was playing out, some local leaders — led by a young doctor named C. Donovan "Dino" Beckett — built a series of programs aimed at creating a culture of health. It started seven years ago with the opening of a free clinic that later became the Williams Health and Wellness Center. That spawned a community garden and a vegetable delivery service, a running club and once-a-month 5K races that draw a few hundred runners. Also in the works, for next year, is a federally funded treatment program for people addicted to drugs.

So far, perhaps the most successful program is one that sends health workers to the homes of diabetics.

Jamie Muncy is one success story.

The 48-year-old lost his job three years ago when the mine he was working in shut down. Last fall, he had just pulled out of a long-term habit of pain pills and other drugs when he bizarrely tore a tendon in his foot while picking up a piece of paper at a post office.

It was so painful he rarely walked, but he continued to eat terribly. Out of a job and with his marriage in ruins, "I had no motivation" to be healthy, he said. "I didn't care."

By January, the 5-foot-3 former mine foreman ballooned from 165 pounds to 196. "I was round as I was tall," he said.

A visit to the Williamson health center revealed he had alarming, diabetes-qualifying blood sugar levels. He'd had mini-strokes in the past, and his physician said a much bigger one was probably on its way if Muncy did not take drastic steps.

The doctor put him on a tight carb-cutting diet, connected him to physical therapy and put him in the home-visit diabetes program.

Now Muncy walks 5 miles a day and is a regular at the farmer's market. His weight is down to about 145 pounds, he said in a recent interview. He still smokes, though.

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

University of Washington researchers recently calculated something called "healthy life expectancy" — the period someone born today could expect to live in relative health. West Virginia, at 62½ years, was the lowest among states.

Clearly, health problems abound.

Black lung disease rates and coal mine injury rates appear to be up.

West Virginia has been at the top of the charts in hepatitis B and C infection rates. Adding to that, the state saw an HIV outbreak last year, and it is still weathering a hepatitis A outbreak — both associated with injection drug users

Maggie Hill, the lifelong West Virginian, has little hope for the future. But she does have Charity.

Charity is a 10-year-old girl Hill adopted about five years ago. Hill's son had been raising her but lost custody during his ongoing struggle with drug addiction, Hill said.

Hill and Charity live in a small wooded valley with a creek in it — a holler, as they say in West Virginia. Her house is a cabin that from the outside resembles a small, tidy barn. Charity has given her life a purpose, she said.

"I taught her how to survive when I'm gone," she said. "I have to. She's going to need to know how to cook. ... She needs to know how to keep house. She needs to know how to mow grass, so if she ain't got a man, she can keep the yard clean. I teach her every bit of this."

Charity is a good student ("Four A's and a B on her last report card," Hill said). And there's hope that she will do well enough to go to college. Hill is saving for it. "She wants to be a doctor," Hill said.

If Charity does go to college, some place away from Boone County, Hill says she will move there with her. "If I'm alive," she said.

AP data journalist Nicky Forster contributed from New York.

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CBS denies former CEO Les Moonves \$120 million severance

By ALEXANDRA OLSON, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — CBS announced Monday that former CEO Les Moonves will not receive his \$120 million severance package after the board of directors concluded he violated company policy and was uncooperative with an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations.

The decision, which came after a five-month outside investigation, capped the downfall of one of television's most influential figures, the biggest entertainment powerbroker to see his career derailed amid the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct.

A lawyer for Moonves said the board's conclusion "are without merit" but did not say whether the former CEO would challenge it in arbitration.

Moonves was ousted in September after allegations from women who said he subjected them to mistreatment including forced oral sex, groping and retaliation if they resisted.

"This is an important reminder that harassment happens everywhere, and that in this moment, even someone who has been perceived as untouchable will be held accountable," said Fatima Goss Graves, a co-founder of the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, which provides legal assistance to victims of assault, harassment or abuse. "I hope other corporations are learning that lesson."

New York-based CBS Corp. said at the time of Moonves' departure that it had set aside \$120 million in severance for him but warned that he would not get the money if the board concluded it had cause to terminate him.

"We have determined that there are grounds to terminate for cause, including his willful and material misfeasance, violation of company policies and breach of his employment contract, as well as his willful failure to cooperate fully with the company's investigation," the CBS said in a statement.

The board did not provide details. Earlier this month, The New York Times said a draft report from the outside investigation found that Moonves deleted numerous text messages and was "evasive and untruthful at times."

Andrew Levander, an attorney for Moonves, said his client "vehemently denies any non-consensual sexual relations and cooperated extensively and fully with investigators."

"Consistent with the pattern of leaks that have permeated this 'process,' the press was informed of these baseless conclusions before Mr. Moonves, further damaging his name, reputation, career and legacy," Levander said.

Moonves had been widely admired for turning around the fortunes of CBS when he took over as entertainment chief in 1995 with hits as "Two and a Half Men" and "Survivor." He was also one of the highest-paid executives in the nation, making about \$70 million in each of the past two years.

Attorney Gloria Allred, who represents four women who have accused Moonves of misconduct, called on CBS to publicly release the details of the investigators' findings and compensate those with provable misconduct claims.

"The public has a right to know who at CBS was aware of Mr. Moonves' alleged misconduct and when they knew of it," said Allred, whose clients all spoke to the investigators. "Instead of keeping this money and rewarding their corporation for Mr. Moonves' alleged misconduct, they should share these many millions with those who can prove that they are victims."

Three major figures at CBS have lost their jobs over misconduct allegations: Moonves, "60 Minutes" top executive Jeff Fager, and news anchor Charlie Rose.

Last week, CBS acknowledged that it reached a \$9.5 million confidential settlement last year with actress

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Eliza Dushku, who said she was written off the show "Bull" in March 2017 after complaining about on-set sexual comments from its star, Michael Weatherly.

The board said the investigation, which was conducted by two outside law firms, "concluded that harassment and retaliation are not pervasive at CBS."

Still, the board said investigators "learned of past incidents of improper and unprofessional conduct" and that CBS has not placed a "high institutional priority on preventing harassment and retaliation."

The 11-member board, which includes six new members who came aboard during a shake-up following Moonves' ouster, said it has "already begun to take robust steps to improve the working environment for all employees."

In a move criticized by women's rights activists, CBS had previously said Moonves would stay on as an adviser for up to two years, providing him with office and security services. The board did not say whether that decision remained in effect.

CBS declined to comment beyond its statement.

Last week, the CBS revealed a list of 18 women's rights organizations that would receive \$20 million donations with funds the company had previously said would be deducted from Moonves' severance.

The groups, which included Time's Up, praised the donations but called on CBS to publicly disclose the results of the Moonves investigation. It was unclear if CBS would do so.

Some activists involved in the #MeToo movement have praised CBS for hiring outside legal firms to conduct the investigation, a decision that contrasted with NBC's handling of sexual misconduct allegations against Matt Lauer, who was fired last year as host of the "Today" show host. NBC's investigation, which was overseen by the company's general counsel, concluded that there was no culture of harassment at the news division.

A search for a new CEO is ongoing to replace interim CEO Joe Ianniello. Strauss Zelnick, filling Moonves' role as board chairman on an interim basis, said at a shareholders' meeting last week that a recruiting firm has been hired to conduct the search and that a decision will be made in due course.

Associated Press Technology Writer Mae Anderson contributed to this report.

In 2019, Mideast economic troubles loom as wars wind down

By **KARIN LAUB**, Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — As the Middle East ushers in 2019, the decade's ruinous conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Iraq seem to be winding down after exacting a painful price — many thousands killed, millions uprooted from their homes and entire cities reduced to rubble.

Yet the potential for unrest remains high, including in countries that escaped civil war after the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. Millions of young people in the region remain locked out of economic and political participation as authoritarian governments fail to tackle soaring youth unemployment and other deep-seated problems.

"I think 2019 is a very challenging year," said analyst Amer Sabaileh in Jordan, where weekly rallies against economic policies toppled a prime minister this year and now take aim at his successor.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump's policy of siding with one Middle East powerhouse, Saudi Arabia, against its main rival, Iran, has further heightened regional tensions. For now, Tehran seems determined to wait out Trump's presidency, sticking to its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers despite the U.S. withdrawal and restoration of heavy sanctions.

In a region where violent conflict has killed hundreds of thousands of people, the brutal slaying of one Saudi writer, Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, by Saudi agents has been one of the most significant events of 2018. The killing, for which Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was widely held responsible — including by the Republican-led U.S. Senate — forced a reckoning of Saudi Arabia's involvement in Yemen's civil war and a review of the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

Here's a look at the Middle East as it heads into 2019.

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CONFLICTS WINDING DOWN

Yemen's government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition, made some progress with the Iran-linked Houthi rebels toward a U.N.-sponsored peace deal last week, a first after four years of fighting killed at least 60,000 people and pushed the country to the brink of famine. A new round of talks is set for January, with expectations that U.S. pressure on Gulf Arab allies could lead to further de-escalation.

In Syria, President Bashar Assad, aided by Russia and Iran, crushed a 7-year-old rebellion and the opposition's dream of ousting him from power. The war is not over, with major fighting still ahead in the rebel-held north. Assad's inner circle and allied entrepreneurs stand to make a fortune from reconstruction, even if the West won't contribute in the absence of a political settlement.

In Iraq, it's been a year since the government declared victory over the Islamic State group, but challenges remain, including the rebuilding of devastated cities. Rioting against corruption and poor services in the oil-rich southern region of Basra signaled the urgency of addressing Iraq's economic problems.

In Libya, rival governments in the east and west have agreed to meet at a national conference in early 2019 to pave the way for a general election. Oil production remains below its pre-2011 levels, and lack of security still prevents major foreign investment or economic growth.

ECONOMIC TROUBLES AHEAD

In Iran, hit hard by renewed U.S. sanctions, the currency wildly fluctuated, but the Islamic Republic did not see the same widescale protests that opened the year.

While the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal ended billion-dollar deals for airplane and car manufacturers, the United States allowed many countries to continue importing Iranian oil for now. That led oil prices to plummet, straining the petrodollar economies of Gulf nations.

The boycott of Qatar by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates appeared no closer to ending, especially with a last-minute surprise by Doha of pulling Qatar from the Saudi-dominated OPEC oil cartel.

In Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country with 100 million people, job creation lags far behind an explosive population growth of more than 2 million per year. Investor confidence is improving, but inflation surpassed targets set by the International Monetary Fund.

In politically paralyzed Lebanon, decades of mismanagement and corruption are finally catching up, with a debt of \$84 billion heightening concerns of impending economic collapse.

"I wonder what will happen with the rising sense of hopelessness among broad populations," said Jon Alterman at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "Will people just put their heads down and be miserable? Or will a sense that there is no public outlet, no media outlet, lead to some sort of explosion, even if it's not specifically directed toward change?"

The destructive fallout from Arab Spring uprisings could serve as a deterrent to some.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu started the year with a gift from Trump, who recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and then moved the U.S. Embassy to the city in May. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas froze ties with the U.S. administration, accusing it of pro-Israel bias concerning the most sensitive issue of the conflict, which sputtered along in 2018.

Israel kept building settlements in the West Bank, the Islamic militant Hamas led mass border marches against a decade-old blockade of the Gaza Strip and lone Palestinian assailants carried out sporadic attacks against Israelis. Dozens were killed in 2018, the vast majority Palestinians.

A U.S. peace plan, promised by Trump since the beginning of his term, still hasn't materialized — to the relief of Abbas, who fears any proposal will at best offer a Palestinian mini-state in Gaza, with a small footprint in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

With Israeli elections to be held sometime in 2019, a peace plan that calls for even minimal concessions

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could tear apart Netanyahu's right-wing coalition. He might not get to run for re-election if a pair of corruption cases moves forward, after police recommended charges against him.

U.S. POLICY

The Trump administration's staunch support for Saudi Arabia is expected to continue despite the Khashoggi scandal, in part because the alliance with Riyadh serves as a means of pressuring Iran.

However, Washington lacks a clear Syria policy. Trump has wavered on whether he wants troops to stay in Syria, with what goal, and appears content to cede ground to the Russians.

In Afghanistan, the administration appointed a special envoy to negotiate a peaceful exit from America's longest war, but no clear pathway has emerged. Successive presidents have sought to wind down Washington's presence in Afghanistan, to no avail.

Associated Press writers Zeina Karam in Beirut, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Josef Ferman in Jerusalem, Hamza Hendawi in Cairo and Kathy Gannon in Islamabad contributed to this report.

Report: Russia still using social media to roil US politics

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia's sweeping political disinformation campaign on U.S. social media was more far-reaching than originally thought, with troll farms working to discourage black voters and "blur the lines between reality and fiction" to help elect Donald Trump in 2016, according to reports released Monday by the Senate intelligence committee.

And the campaign didn't end with Trump's ascent to the White House. Troll farms are still working to stoke racial and political passions in America at a time of high political discord.

The two studies are the most comprehensive picture yet of the Russian interference campaigns on American social media. They add to the portrait investigators have been building since 2017 on Russia's influence — though Trump has equivocated on whether the interference actually happened.

Facebook, Google and Twitter declined to comment on the specifics of the reports.

The reports were compiled by the cybersecurity firm New Knowledge and by the Computational Propaganda Research Project, a study by researchers at the University of Oxford and Graphika, a social media analysis firm.

The Oxford report details how Russians broke down their messages to different groups, including discouraging black voters from going to the polls and stoking anger on the right.

"These campaigns pushed a message that the best way to advance the cause of the African-American community was to boycott the election and focus on other issues instead," the researchers wrote.

At the same time, "Messaging to conservative and right-wing voters sought to do three things: repeat patriotic and anti-immigrant slogans; elicit outrage with posts about liberal appeasement of 'others' at the expense of US citizens, and encourage them to vote for Trump."

The report from New Knowledge says there are still some live accounts tied to the original Internet Research Agency, which was named in an indictment from special counsel Robert Mueller in February for an expansive social media campaign intended to influence the 2016 presidential election. Some of the accounts have a presence on smaller platforms as the major companies have tried to clean up after the Russian activity was discovered.

"With at least some of the Russian government's goals achieved in the face of little diplomatic or other pushback, it appears likely that the United States will continue to face Russian interference for the foreseeable future," the researchers wrote.

The New Knowledge report says that none of the social media companies turned over complete data sets to Congress and some of them "may have misrepresented or evaded" in testimony about the interference by either intentionally or unintentionally downplaying the scope of the problem.

The Senate panel has been investigating Russian interference on social media and beyond for almost

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two years. Intelligence committee Chairman Richard Burr said in a statement that the data shows how aggressively Russia tried to divide Americans by race, religion and ideology and erode trust in institutions.

"Most troublingly, it shows that these activities have not stopped," said Burr, a North Carolina Republican.

One major takeaway from both studies is the breadth of Russian interference that appeared on Instagram, which is owned by Facebook and was not frequently mentioned when its parent company testified on Capitol Hill. The study says that as attention was focused on Facebook and Twitter in 2017, the Russians shifted much of their activity to Instagram.

The New Knowledge study says that there were 187 million engagements with users on Instagram, while there were 77 million on Facebook.

"Instagram was a significant front in the IRA's influence operation, something that Facebook executives appear to have avoided mentioning in congressional testimony," the researchers wrote. They added that "our assessment is that Instagram is likely to be a key battleground on an ongoing basis."

The Russian activity went far beyond the three tech companies that provided information, reaching many smaller sites as well. The New Knowledge report details sophisticated attempts to infiltrate internet games, browser extensions and music apps. The Russians even used social media to encourage users of the game Pokemon Go — which was at peak popularity in the months before the 2016 presidential election — to use politically divisive usernames, for example.

The report discusses even more unconventional ways that the Russian accounts attempted to connect with Americans and recruit assets, such as merchandise with certain messages, specific follower requests, job offers and even help lines that could encourage people to unknowingly disclose sensitive information to Russia that could later be used against them.

The Russians' attempts to influence Americans on social media first became widely public in the fall of 2017. Several months later, Mueller's indictment laid out a vast, organized Russian effort to sway political opinion. While the social media companies had already detailed some of the efforts, the indictment tied actual people to the operation and named 13 Russians responsible.

Also notable is the study's finding that WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was favorably treated in posts aimed at both left-leaning and right-leaning users. The New Knowledge report says there were a number of posts expressing support for Assange and Wikileaks, including several in October 2016 just before WikiLeaks released hacked emails from Hillary Clinton's campaign.

The Oxford study notes that peaks in Internet Research Agency advertising and organic activity — or posts, shares and comments by users — often corresponded with important dates on the U.S. calendar, crises and international events.

The researchers from Oxford said that organic postings were much more far reaching than advertisements, despite Facebook's sole focus on ads when the company first announced it had been compromised in 2017.

Other findings in the studies:

— During the week of the presidential election, posts directed to right-leaning users aimed to generate anger and suspicion and hinted at voter fraud, while posts targeted to African-Americans largely ignored mentions of the election until the last minute.

— Establishment figures of both parties, especially Clinton, were universally panned. Even a tag targeted to feminists criticized Clinton and promoted her primary opponent, independent Bernie Sanders;

— Several posts promoted the Russian agenda in Syria and Syrian President Bashar Assad.

— IRA's posts focused on the United States started on Twitter as far back as 2013, and eventually evolved into the multi-platform strategy.

— Russian activity on Twitter was less organized around themes like race or partisanship but more driven by local and current events and made use of occasional pop culture references.

— Facebook posts linked to the IRA "reveal a nuanced and deep knowledge of American culture, media, and influencers in each community the IRA targeted." Certain memes appeared on pages targeted to younger people but not older people. "The IRA was fluent in American trolling culture," the researchers say.

Associated Press writer Matt O'Brien contributed to this report from Providence, Rhode Island.

AP sources: Trump plans to create US Space Command

By ZEKE MILLER and LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is expected to sign an executive order soon, possibly as early as Tuesday, creating a U.S. Space Command that will better organize and advance the military's vast operations in space, U.S. officials say.

Vice President Mike Pence will make the announcement Tuesday at the Kennedy Space Center, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, two U.S. officials said.

Trump's order is separate from his oft-stated goal of creating a "Space Force" as an independent armed service branch, but it's considered a step in that direction. The move will launch a long and complicated process, requiring the Defense Department to pull together various space units and agencies from across the military services into a more coordinated, independent organization.

The U.S. Air Force's existing Space Command would be a key component of the new joint entity, raising space to the same status as U.S. Cyber Command.

The U.S. officials said the order will be signed by the end of the year, but could happen as early as Tuesday. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

The move would actually recreate a U.S. Space Command, which existed from 1985 to 2002. It was disbanded in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks so U.S. Northern Command could be established, focusing on defense of the homeland.

Although Space Command went away, its functions did not. They were absorbed by U.S. Strategic Command, and the Air Force retained its lead role in space through Air Force Space Command.

The military has been trying for decades to reorganize and accelerate technological advances in space. Some blame the Air Force for underinvesting in space because it prefers spending on warplanes.

The key goal is to find more effective ways to defend U.S. interests in space, especially the constellations of satellites that U.S. ground, sea and air forces rely on for navigation, communications and surveillance. These roles make them increasingly tempting military targets as China and Russia work on ways to disrupt, disable and even destroy American satellites.

The military's role in space has been under scrutiny because the United States is increasingly reliant on orbiting satellites that are difficult to protect.

U.S. intelligence agencies reported earlier this year that Russia and China were pursuing "nondestructive and destructive" anti-satellite weapons for use during a future war. And there are growing worries about cyberattacks that could target satellite technology, potentially leaving troops in combat without electronic communications or navigation abilities.

For Trump, the economy is a potential 2020 storm cloud

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Forget Robert Mueller.

The greatest threat to President Donald Trump's re-election bid may not be the slew of investigations closing in on his Oval Office but a possible economic slowdown. And the president knows it.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell again Monday, the latest dip in the roller coaster markets amid the strain of Trump's trade war, rising interest rates and worries about a slowing global economy.

Trump, who has tied his political fortunes to the stock market in an unprecedented fashion, has nervously watched Wall Street, keeping an eye on the cable television ticker and barking at his aides for updates. And while he continues to talk up America's financial might, he has repeatedly and publicly rebuked the chairman of the Federal Reserve for interest rate increases he feels could slow down the economy.

Trump made his feelings clear again Monday, tweeting that "It is incredible that with a very strong dollar and virtually no inflation, the outside world blowing up around us, Paris is burning and China way down,

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the Fed is even considering yet another interest rate hike. Take the Victory!"

Throughout Trump's term, the economy has been strong. And while the president credits his aggressive tax-cut package and deregulation efforts, the gains in fact began under President Barack Obama.

Optimism about the economy has cooled somewhat this fall as Trump's trade fight with China rattled the markets.

Fond of citing job statistics and market reports, Trump has appeared highly attuned to the shift. After unnerving much of the global financial system by imposing tariffs, Trump seemed eager to ease anxiety recently, striking a trade truce with China after a dinner meeting during an international summit in Argentina. And when that move only briefly buoyed confidence, Trump set off on an erratic bout of tweeting that rocked the markets even more.

First Trump declared himself a "Tariff Man," promising to inflict as much economic pain as possible — a move that horrified investors. A day later he sought to minimize the anxieties, saying there were "very strong signals" that China was negotiating in good faith.

"Not to sound naive or anything, but I believe President Xi meant every word of what he said at our long and hopefully historic meeting," Trump tweeted.

Stocks fell again Monday as both the Dow and the S&P 500 are on pace for their worst December performance since 1931, when they were battered during the Great Depression. As investors turned to an upcoming meeting of the Federal Reserve, its chairman, Jerome Powell, has repeatedly been the target of Trump's wrath, as the Fed has been raising interest rates to make sure that the lowest unemployment in nearly five decades does not start pushing inflation higher. Arguing that the rate hikes hamper economic growth, Trump has openly questioned Powell's leadership.

"I think the Fed is making a mistake. They are so tight. I think the Fed has gone crazy," the president said in October.

No longer tweeting much about the stock market, Trump has criticized Powell privately as well and has told confidants that he understands that a recession would be perilous for a president who once mused about the Dow hitting 30,000. (Its record was 26,828 in October.) Although Trump is not seriously considering making a change at the Fed, he has repeatedly insisted that his businessman background allows him to understand the economy more than Powell, according to four White House aides and outside advisers who were not authorized to discuss private conversations and who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"He thinks his legacy is going to be the guy who rebuilt and revived the U.S. economy. He's totally focused on that," said Stephen Moore, a former Trump campaign adviser and visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation. "He understands that if the economy remains strong, he'll be re-elected. He's completely focused on the economy. He does follow the stock market, he does follow the stock reports, he does follow the jobs report."

Democrats considering challenging Trump in 2020 have begun putting forward their own economic plans. But a senior White House official said Trump remains confident in the economy, citing low unemployment numbers, GDP growth and growth in manufacturing jobs, among other indicators.

The official, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly, said Trump is watching the indicators closely and is regularly briefed by Larry Kudlow, the director of the National Economic Council; Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary; and Kevin Hassett, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

"The American economy is booming," Kudlow told The Associated Press. "While economies around the world are struggling, our economic fundamentals are incredibly strong."

Trump is right to worry about how an economic slowdown could affect his presidency. Bill Clinton aide James Carville's famous mantra during the 1992 presidential campaign was: "It's the economy, stupid." And the nation's financial health is often key to a president's re-election chances.

The last two presidents who failed to be re-elected, Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush, were primarily done in by faltering economies, said presidential historian Douglas Brinkley.

"It's hard to convince the public to give you another chance if the economy is not doing well," said Brinkley, a professor at Rice University. He suggested that even voters who do not like Trump's personal behavior "tolerate him because they think he is good for Wall Street and jobs. If there is an economic downturn,

that is going to take a devastating effect on him.”

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GOP waits on Trump as clock ticks toward partial shutdown

By LISA MASCARO, MATTHEW DALY and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fight over President Donald Trump’s \$5 billion wall funds deepened Monday, threatening a partial government shutdown in a standoff that has become increasingly common in Washington.

It wasn’t always like this, with Congress and the White House at a crisis over government funding. The House and Senate used to pass annual appropriation bills, and the president signed them into law. But in recent years the shutdown scenario has become so routine that it raises the question: Have shutdowns as a negotiating tool lost their punch?

Monday brought few signs of progress. A partial shutdown that could occur at midnight Friday risks disrupting government operations and leaving hundreds of thousands of federal employees furloughed or working without pay over the holiday season. Costs would be likely in the billions of dollars.

Trump was meeting with his team and getting regular updates, said White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders. Trump was also tweeting Monday to keep up the pressure.

Exiting a Senate Republican leadership meeting late Monday, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota said, “It looks like it probably is going to have to build for a few days here before there’s a solution.”

The president is insisting on \$5 billion for the wall along the southern border with Mexico, but he does not have the votes from the Republican-led Congress to support it. Democrats are offering to continue funding at current levels, \$1.3 billion, not for the wall but for fencing and other border security.

It’s unclear how many House Republicans, with just a few weeks left in the majority before relinquishing power to House Democrats, will even show up mid-week for possible votes. Speaker Paul Ryan’s office had no update. Many Republicans say it’s up to Trump and Democrats to cut a deal.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Trump talk most days, but the senator’s spokesman would not confirm if they spoke Monday about a plan. McConnell opened the chamber hoping for a “bipartisan collaborative spirit” that would enable Congress to finish its work.

“We need to make a substantial investment in the integrity of our border,” McConnell said. “And we need to close out the year’s appropriation process.”

Meanwhile more than 800,000 government workers are preparing for the uncertainty ahead.

The dispute could affect nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks and forests.

About half the workers would be forced to continue working without immediate pay. Others would be sent home. Congress often approves their pay retroactively, even if they were ordered to stay home.

“Our members are asking how they are supposed to pay for rent, food, and gas if they are required to work without a paycheck,” said a statement from J. David Cox, Sr., president of the American Federation of Government Employees, the large federal worker union. “The holiday season makes these inquiries especially heart-wrenching.”

Many agencies, including the Pentagon and the departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, are already funded for the year and will continue to operate as usual, regardless of whether Congress and the president reach agreement this week.

Congress already approved funding this year for about 75 percent of the government’s discretionary account for the budget year that began Oct. 1.

The U.S. Postal Service, busy delivering packages for the holiday season, wouldn’t be affected by any government shutdown because it’s an independent agency.

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Trump said last week he would be "proud" to have a shutdown to get Congress to approve a \$5 billion down payment to fulfill his campaign promise to build a border wall.

During his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump promised that Mexico would pay for the wall. Mexico has refused.

Democratic leaders Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, in a meeting last week at the White House, suggested keeping funding at its current level, \$1.3 billion, for improved fencing. Trump had neither accepted nor rejected the Democrats' offer, telling them he would take a look.

Schumer said Monday he had yet to hear from Trump. Speaking on the Senate floor, Schumer warned that "going along with the Trump shutdown is a futile act" because House Democrats would quickly approve government funding in January.

"President Trump still doesn't have a plan to keep the government open," Schumer said Monday. "No treat or temper tantrum will get the president his wall."

One option for lawmakers would be to provide stopgap funding for a few weeks, until the new Congress convenes Jan. 3, when Pelosi is poised to become House speaker.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, who is in line to become the No. 3 Republican in the Senate, suggested a stopgap bill could be one way to resolve the issue or a longer-term bill that includes money for border security.

GOP leaders, though, were frustrated as the clock ticked away. Leaving the weekly leadership meeting, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., said any planning was a "very closely held thing. That's why we should never let this happen. We should pass the bills the way we're supposed to pass them."

Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman in Washington contributed to this report.

AP Coach of the Year: Notre Dame's Kelly wins for 2nd time

By RALPH D. RUSSO, AP College Football Writer

Notre Dame's Brian Kelly is The Associated Press college football Coach of the Year and the third coach to win the award twice since it was established in 1998.

Kelly received 16 of 58 first-place votes from AP college football poll voters and 81 total points. Alabama's Nick Saban was second with 16 first-place votes and 66 points and Central Florida first-year coach Josh Heupel was third with 33 points (five first-place votes).

Twelve coaches received at least one first-place vote and eight received at least three for the award announced Monday. Washington State's Mike Leach finished fourth with 26 points (three first-place votes) and Syracuse's Dino Babers was fifth with 25 (five first-place votes).

Kelly joins Saban and TCU's Gary Patterson as two-time winners. Kelly was also coach of the year in 2012.

As he did in 2012, Kelly has guided the Fighting Irish to a 12-0 season and a chance to compete for the national championship. Notre Dame played Alabama in the BCS championship game after the 2012 season and lost 42-14. The third-ranked Irish will face No. 2 Clemson in the Cotton Bowl on Dec. 29 in their first College Football Playoff appearance.

This undefeated season for Notre Dame seems very different than that one and it comes just two seasons after Notre Dame finished 4-8. Kelly overhauled his staff and his approach after that debacle, bringing in new coordinators on both sides of the ball. He made a concerted effort to be more involved with all aspects of the team.

"I think I'm a better leader of our program," Kelly told AP. "The organization has gotten so much bigger. The ability to create the right energy and day-to-day culture is difficult. I think I've gotten a lot better a leading that large group on a day-to-day basis."

Kelly is 81-34 in nine seasons at Notre Dame and he credited his players for helping him improve as a coach.

"Sitting them down and listening to them is similar to any good business or CEO sitting down and listening to his employees and getting feedback from them as well. I think where I made some real strides was

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spending more time with our players and getting feedback from them," Kelly said.

The Irish rebounded to 10-3 last season and entered this season with similar expectations. After a 3-0 start, Kelly made the pivotal move of switching quarterback from senior Brandon Wimbush to junior Ian Book.

While the move might have seemed bold at the time, it wasn't necessarily to Kelly.

"It felt like the right thing to do," Kelly said. "You know where it felt risky was the first quarter of Wake Forest when we weren't moving the ball effectively. But at the time in making the decision I didn't feel risky. It felt like it was the right thing to do based on the information that I had. Clearly if you don't play well the next week and things don't go well it becomes an issue. Not only risky, but could become a huge problem."

The Irish offense took off. Matched with a solid defense, Notre Dame completed a perfect regular season.

Kentucky's Mark Stoops, UAB's Bill Clark and Oklahoma's Lincoln Riley each received three first-place votes. Clemson's Dabo Swinney, Army's Jeff Monken, Northwestern's Pat Fitzgerald and Florida's Dan Mullen each received one.

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <https://podcastone.com/AP-Top-25-College-Football-Podcast>

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/Collegefootball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

After the Fed's likely rate hike this week, all bets are off

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Having raised interest rates with steady regularity in recent months, the Federal Reserve may embrace a new message this week: Flexibility.

On Wednesday, the Fed is set to announce its fourth rate hike of the year. But after this week, no one is sure what it will do. Neither, most likely, is the Fed itself.

A confluence of factors — a global slowdown, a U.S.-China trade war, still-mild inflation, stomach-churning drops in stock prices — may have left Fed officials weighing a shift in policy. Many analysts think the Fed will signal Wednesday that it's considering whether to slow or suspend its rate hikes in 2019 to avoid weakening the economy too much. And some predict that the rate increases, which began three years ago, will end altogether next year.

Wall Street plunged again on Monday, pushing stocks to their lowest levels in more than a year. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 507 points after a 496-point drop on Friday as investors appeared to be losing confidence in the U.S. economy's growth prospects as global growth has shown more signs of weakness.

In September, Fed officials collectively forecast that they would raise rates three times in 2019. But this week, in the view of many analysts, the central bank could indicate that no more than two rate hikes are likely next year.

Yet the overarching message — in a statement after its latest policy meeting, in updated forecasts for the economy and interest rates and in a news conference by Chairman Jerome Powell — may be that the Fed plans to suit its rate policy to the latest economic data. In Fed parlance, it will be "data-dependent."

The idea, some analysts say, is that the Fed may want to pause in its credit-tightening to assess how the economy fares in the coming months in light of the headwinds it faces. Contributing to this view was a speech Powell gave last month in which he suggested that rates appear to be just below the level the Fed calls "neutral," where they're believed to neither stimulate growth nor impede it. Powell's observation suggested that the Fed might be poised to soon slow or halt its rate hikes.

For now, most U.S. economic barometers are still showing strength. The unemployment rate is 3.7 percent, a 49-year low. The economy is thought to have grown close to 3 percent this year, its best performance in more than a decade. Consumers, the main driver of the economy, are spending freely.

In such an environment, the Fed would normally keep gradually raising rates to make sure the economy

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didn't overheat and ignite inflation. But this time, risks to the economy appear to be rising. From China to Europe, major economies are weakening. President Donald Trump's trade conflict with Beijing could, over time, undermine the world's two largest economies.

There are also fears that the brisk pace of U.S. growth this year reflected something of a sugar high, with the economy artificially pumped up by tax cuts and a boost in government spending. The benefit of that stimulus will likely fade in 2019, slowing growth to a more modest pace.

"Uncertainties about how the economy will perform next year have ballooned," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at SS Economics. "I think 2019 could be a difficult year for the Fed."

Sohn is forecasting that after expanding nearly 3 percent this year, the economy will grow closer to a middling 2 percent in 2019. As a result, like many economists, he predicts that the Fed will raise rates only twice next year.

David Jones, an economist and author of several books on the Fed, goes further. He foresees just one rate increase in 2019.

"The Fed is going to be much more cautious about rate hikes next year as the economy slows significantly," Jones said. "The Fed will truly be data dependent as economic forecasting gets much murkier."

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, is more hopeful about growth in 2019 because he thinks the stimulus from tax cuts and government spending increases won't yet fade significantly. As a result, Zandi doesn't expect the Fed to slow its credit tightening much next year. But by 2020, Zandi foresees a sharp drop in economic momentum and a rising risk of a recession.

"While the Fed will probably signal this week that they only expect two rate hikes next year, I think their forecast will be wrong and they will end up raising rates three times," Zandi said. "I think the economy will remain strong enough that unemployment will fall further and wage pressures will rise."

Lawrence White, an economics professor at New York University's Stern School, said he expects the Fed to remain mindful of the mistakes of the 1970s, when officials allowed inflation to erupt, requiring sharply higher interest rates and a painful recession to root out.

"We have not had such low unemployment in almost 50 years," White said. "The Fed has to be cautious."

Economists appear unified, though, in the view that whatever the Fed does, it won't be influenced by the attacks Trump has made on the central bank and on Powell personally since the stock market began tumbling this fall. In a highly unusual move for a president, Trump has publicly called the Fed and its string of rate hikes this year "my biggest threat."

On Monday, Trump reiterated his view via Twitter. "It is incredible that with a very strong dollar and virtually no inflation, the outside world blowing up around us," Trump tweeted, "the Fed is even considering yet another interest rate hike."

Powell, who was Trump's hand-picked choice to be chairman, has stressed that the Fed will pursue its mandate of managing rates to maximize employment and stabilize prices, regardless of any outside criticism.

"This is a Fed that has gone through some pretty heavy criticism during the financial crisis, and they kept doing what they needed to do," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton. "At this stage of the game, the president's criticism is just noise."

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 18, the 352nd day of 2018. There are 13 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 18, 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

On this date:

In 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1892, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ballet "The Nutcracker" publicly premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia;

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although now considered a classic, it received a generally negative reception from critics.

In 1916, during World War I, the 10-month Battle of Verdun ended with French troops succeeding in repulsing a major German offensive.

In 1917, Congress passed the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors" and sent it to the states for ratification.

In 1940, Adolf Hitler signed a secret directive ordering preparations for a Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. (Operation Barbarossa was launched in June 1941.)

In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the government's wartime evacuation of people of Japanese descent from the West Coast while at the same time ruling that "concededly loyal" Americans of Japanese ancestry could not continue to be detained.

In 1957, the Shippingport Atomic Power Station in Pennsylvania, the first nuclear facility to generate electricity in the United States, went on line. (It was taken out of service in 1982.)

In 1972, the United States began heavy bombing of North Vietnamese targets during the Vietnam War. (The bombardment ended 11 days later.)

In 1987, Ivan F. Boesky was sentenced to three years in prison for his role in a major Wall Street insider-trading scandal. (Boesky served about two years of his sentence.)

In 1992, Kim Young-sam was elected South Korea's first civilian president in three decades.

In 1998, the House debated articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton. South Carolina carried out the nation's 500th execution since capital punishment resumed in 1977.

In 2000, The Electoral College cast its ballots, with President-elect George W. Bush receiving the expected 271; Al Gore, however, received 266, one fewer than expected, because of a District of Columbia Democrat who'd left her ballot blank to protest the district's lack of representation in Congress.

Ten years ago: A U.N. court in Tanzania convicted a former Rwandan army colonel, Theoneste Bagosora, of genocide and crimes against humanity for masterminding the killings of more than half a million people in a 100-day slaughter in 1994. (Bagosora was sentenced to life in prison, but had his sentence reduced in 2011 to 35 years.) W. Mark Felt, the former FBI second-in-command who'd revealed himself as "Deep Throat" three decades after the Watergate scandal, died in Santa Rosa, Calif., at age 95. "Star Trek" actress Majel Barrett Roddenberry, widow of series creator Gene Roddenberry, died in Los Angeles at age 76.

Five years ago: A presidential advisory panel released a report recommending sweeping changes to government surveillance programs, including limiting the bulk collection of Americans' phone records by stripping the National Security Agency of its ability to store that data in its own facilities. Ronnie Biggs, 84, known for his role in Britain's 1963 Great Train Robbery, died in London.

One year ago: An Amtrak train making the first-ever run along a faster route hurtled off an overpass south of Seattle and spilled some of its cars onto the highway below; three people were killed and dozens were hurt. (Investigators found that the train was traveling 80 mph in a 30 mph zone.) A fire and blackout at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the world's busiest, forced the cancellation of more than 1,500 flights just days before the start of the Christmas rush; airlines said some of the grounded travelers would have to wait days before there would be available seats on flights. The Los Angeles Lakers retired numbers 8 and 24, both of the jersey numbers worn by Kobe Bryant, the leading scorer in franchise history.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Cicely Tyson is 94. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is 91. Actor Roger Mosley is 80. Rock singer-musician Keith Richards is 75. Writer-director Alan Rudolph is 75. Movie producer-director Steven Spielberg is 72. Blues artist Ron Piazza is 71. Movie director Gillian Armstrong is 68. Movie reviewer Leonard Maltin is 68. Rock musician Elliot Easton is 65. Actor Ray Liotta is 64. Comedian Ron White is 62. R&B singer Angie Stone is 57. Actor Brad Pitt is 55. Professional wrestler-turned-actor "Stone Cold" Steve Austin is 54. Actor Shawn Christian is 53. Actress Rachel Griffiths is 50. Singer Alejandro Sanz is 50. Actor Casper Van Dien is 50. Country/rap singer Cowboy Troy is 48. Rapper DMX is 48. International Tennis Hall of Famer Arantxa Sanchez Vicario is 47. DJ Lethal (Limp Bizkit) is 46. Pop singer Sia is 43. Country singer Randy Houser is 42. Actor Josh Dallas is 40. Actress Katie Holmes is 40. Actor Ravi Patel is 40. Singer Christina Aguilera is 38. Christian rock musician Dave Luetkenhoelter (Kutless) is

36. Actress Ashley Benson is 29. Actress-singer Bridgit Mendler is 26. Actress Isabella Cramp is 14.

Thought for Today: "It's a complex fate, being an American." — Henry James, American author (1843-1916).

Asian shares slip as traders ready for Fed rate hike

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian stocks fell on Tuesday, tracking losses on Wall Street as traders braced for an interest rate hike by Federal Reserve.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index was 1.2 percent lower at 21,242.66 and the Kospi in South Korea dropped less than 0.1 percent to 2,070.54. Hong Kong's Hang Seng eased 0.3 percent to 26,022.16. The Shanghai Composite index dropped 0.6 percent to 2,583.51. Australia's S&P ASX 200 was down 0.9 percent at 5,609.00. Shares were lower in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

WALL STREET: On Monday, broad selling knocked U.S. indexes to their lowest levels in over a year. Investors sold almost everything, from technology and retail stocks to steadier high-dividend companies. Less than 40 of the 500 stocks comprising the S&P 500 finished the day higher. The benchmark index gave up 2.1 percent to 2,545.94, its lowest level since Oct. 9, 2017. The Dow Jones Industrial Average skidded 2.1 percent to 23,592.98 and the Nasdaq composite was down 2.3 percent at 6,753.73. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks lost 2.3 percent to 1,378.14.

FED MEETING: The Federal Open Market Committee begins a two-day meeting on Tuesday. It is expected to raise its short-term interest rate by a modest quarter-point, to a range of 2.25 percent to 2.5 percent a day later. The rate is used as a benchmark for many consumer and business loans. Investors fear more monetary tightening would weigh on U.S. growth, and eventually, the global economy, that is already expected to slow in 2019 because of trade tensions. President Donald Trump tweeted that it was "incredible" the Fed was considering another rate hike, with "a very strong dollar and virtually no inflation." The central bank forecasts three more rate hikes in 2019.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "Despite Donald Trump's recent overture, the Fed looks set to hike rates again on Wednesday with market players anxious to see if the economy can handle more policy tightening given expectations for slowing growth," ING economists Nicholas Mapa and Prakash Sakpal said in a commentary.

ENERGY: Oil prices fell on worries about oversupply and softening growth in China, which could hit demand. Benchmark U.S. crude shed 49 cents to \$49.39 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract dropped \$1.32 to \$49.88 in New York on Monday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gave up 59 cents to \$59.02 a barrel. It lost 67 cents to settle at \$59.61 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar weakened to 112.61 yen from 112.83 yen in late trading Monday. The euro rose to \$1.1353 from \$1.1349.

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