

Groton Daily Independent

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Jim Lane was doing some touch ups at the Groton Skating House as he refastened the rope lights under the counter.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

- 2- Skating Rink opens today
- 2- Groton Area Schedule of Events
- 2- GROW SD Supporting Homeless Count January 22, 2019
- 2- Help Wanted Ads
- 3- Hamlin wins double header games
- 4- GDILIVE: GBB Saturday
- 5- Efficient offense and potent defense leads NSU over UIU
- 6- Presentation College Fall Semester students recognized
- 6- Snow safety: NorthWestern Energy asks customers to clear utility meters of snow and ice and check outside furnace vents
- 7- Sen. Rounds' Weekly Column
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Skating Rink Hours

Open Monday - Thursday: 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday: 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday: 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Saturday, January 5, 2019

Robotics at Canton High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Boys Varsity Tournament @ Miller High School

11:00am: Basketball: Girls Varsity Classic vs. Wolsey-Wessington @ Redfield Jr-Sr High School

3:30pm: Basketball: Boys Varsity Classic vs. Viborg-Hurley @ Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls

Sunday, January 6, 2019

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

Monday, January 7, 2019

5:15pm: Boys Basketball at Webster Area High School (C game at 5:15 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity games)

6:00pm: Wrestling: Boys JH Tournament vs. TBA @ Groton Area High School

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

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

6:30pm: Girls Basketball vs. Waubay-Summit at Waubay.

Thursday, January 10, 2019

6:00pm: Girls Basketball at Sisseton

Friday, January 11, 2019

Debate Silver Bowl at Sioux Falls

5:15pm: Boys Basketball hosts Sisseton. (C game at 5:15 p.m. followed by junior varsity and varsity)

Saturday, January 12, 2019

Debate Silver Bowl at Sioux Falls

9:00am MT: Varsity Wrestling Tournament at Philip

10:00am: Basketball: Boys 7th/8th Jamboree vs. Leola-Frederick, Northwestern @ Groton Area School

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)

Front Porch Manager Wanted

Immediate opening for Restaurant General Manager at The Front Porch Bar & Grill in Langford SD. Hiring bonus available! Salary DOE. Must be 21 years old. Contact Suzie Easthouse at (605) 493-6570 or email resume by to langfordfrontporch@venture-comm.net. (1227.0111)

Hamlin wins in a double header

The Hamlin Chargers won both varsity games last night that were played at the Hamlin Education Center near Hayti.

Hamlin had jumped out to a 25-11 first quarter lead. The Tigers rallied in the second quarter and scored eight straight points to close to within five, 30-25 at half time. Groton Area closed to within two, 36-34, midway in the third quarter. Then technical fouls started to get thrown Groton's way. A pair of technical fouls sent Mitchell Noem to the free throw line where he made one of four technical shots. Hamlin took a 49-34 lead into the fourth quarter.

In the fourth quarter, the T-action continued as another set of technical fouls got called on Groton Area and this time, Noem made four of four shots. Later on, another technical foul was called on the Groton bench. Hamlin ended up scoring 25 straight points to take a 61-34 lead and they went on to win, 63-39.

With Coach Justin Hanson getting two technical fouls, he will be unable to coach today at the Pentagon in Sioux Falls where the boys will be playing Viborg-Hurley at 3:30 today. Hanson said in a message to the Independent, "I'm very embarrassed and regretful of my actions. I coach with a lot of compassion and unfortunately last night it got the best of me."

Diegel led all scorers with 19 points. Others adding to the Groton tally were Doeden with six, Cade Guthmiller and Brodyn DeHoet each had five and Austin Jones and Tristan Traphagen each had two points.

Connor Bawdon led the Chargers with 18 points followed by Mitchell Noem with 15, Nash Grantham and Devan Weelborg each had nine, Kyler Swenson had six, Caden Arnold four and Jackson Noem three.

Hamlin made 10 of 16 field goals in the first quarter for 63 percent while Groton made four of 12 for 33 percent. It was reversed in the second quarter with Groton Area making five of 11 shots for 45 percent while Hamlin cooled down to one of seven for 14 percent. In the third quarter, Groton Area was four of 12 for 33 percent and Hamlin was eight of 14 for 57 percent. In the fourth quarter, Groton Area was one of 10 for 10 percent and Hamlin was three of 11 for 27 percent.

Hamlin made 10 of 18 free throws for 56 percent off of Groton Area's 15 team fouls and Groton Area was four of eight for 50 percent off of Hamlin's 11 team fouls. The Tigers had 14 turnovers and the Chargers had 12.

Meanwhile in the first varsity game, Hamlin defeated the Lady Tigers, 51-15. Groton Area made six of 27 shots for 22 percent while Hamlin made 18 of 43 shots for 42 percent. The Chargers led at the quarterstops at 20-4, 36-8 and 44-12. Groton Area had 25 turnovers while Hamlin had eight.

Kaycie Hawkins and Gracie Traphagen led the Tigers with four points apiece while Eliza Wanner, Kenzie McInerney and Jennie Doeden each had two points and Maddie Bjerke made a free throw at the end.

Hamlin was led by Brynn Alfson with 12 points followed by Staci West with 10, Chloe Grantham with nine, Cami Stevenson had seven, Logan Keszler had six, Taryn Opdahl had four and Kylee Wadsworth had three points.

Groton Area was three of six from the line for 50 percent off of Hamlin's seven team fouls. Hamlin made 13 of 23 free throws for 57 percent off of Groton Area's 14 team fouls.

The Lady Tigers will be at the Redfield Classic today taking on Wolsey-Wessington at 11 a.m.

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It's Girls' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Wolsey-
Wessington**
VS



Groton Area Tigers

Saturday, Jan. 5, 2019

11:00 a.m.

At Redfield Classic

Sponsored by

Aberdeen
Chrysler Center

901 Auto Plaza Drive
Aberdeen, SD

800.874.9173

www.aberdeenchrysler.com

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Efficient offense and potent defense leads NSU over UIU

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team cruised to their first victory of 2019, defeating Upper Iowa 102-73 on the road. The 29-point victory over the Peacocks moves the Wolves to 10-3 overall and 6-1 in the league.

Five Wolves scored in double figures in the game, with 12 reaching the floor. Northern tallied 56 points in the first half and another 46 in the second, but most impressive was their defensive effort in the final 20 minutes. The Wolves held the Peacocks to just 25 points with a 32.1 field goal percentage and 23.1 3-point percentage.

As a team, NSU shot a season high 65.1 percent from the floor, as well as 55.6 percent from the arc and 90.9 percent from the foul line. Northern knocked down ten made 3-pointers, combining for 20 assists, four steals, and three blocks. They tallied 48 points in the paint, 41 points off the bench, 18 second chance points, 11 points off turnovers, and four fast break points. The Wolves blew out the Peacocks with 40 rebounds to Upper Iowa's 15.

Justin Decker led the team with a season high 18 points, and a game high four rebounds. The senior added two assists and one block, shooting 75.0 percent from the field. Mason Stark was second on the team and led the Wolves off the bench with a career high 17 points. Stark went 6-of-9 from the floor and 2-of-3 from the arc, adding three rebounds, two assists, and one steal.

Gabe King followed with 15 points of his own, shooting a team high 85.7 percent, while Ian Smith and Parker Fox notched 12 points apiece. Fox tallied a team high four rebounds and two blocks, as well as one assist, while King notched three rebounds and was perfect from the arc and foul line. Smith recorded a team high five assists, with one rebound and one steal.

Andrew Kallman and Bo Fries rounded out the starting five for NSU with nine and seven points respectively. Kallman hit a team high three made from beyond the arc, and dished out five assists. Fries notched four assists, two rebounds, and one steal for the Wolves.

Cole Dahl went a perfect 2-for-2 from the foul line and made two from beyond the arc, for eight team points. He added three rebounds and one steal in the win. Jordan Belka and Roko Dominovic were the final point scorers for NSU with two points each. Belka tallied three rebounds and one assist, while Logan LeGrand and Ethan Kranhold each grabbed a rebound as the final two Wolves to hit the floor.

Northern returns to the hardwood this evening versus Winona State. Tip-off is set for 5:30 p.m. on Saturday versus the Warriors.

Presentation College Fall Semester students recognized

Presentation College has announced the President and Dean Lists for the Fall 2018 semester. To qualify for the President's List, students must earn a 4.0 grade point average for the semester. Students maintaining a 3.5 grade point average or greater are included on the Dean's List.

Groton Area Students:

President's list: Jamie Krueger

Dean's List: Sean Schuring

Snow safety: NorthWestern Energy asks customers to clear utility meters of snow and ice and check outside furnace vents

South Dakota - Jan. 4, 2019 Due to the recent accumulation of snow in the NorthWestern Energy South Dakota service territory, utility officials encourage customers to check their business' and homes' natural gas and electric meters to ensure that the meters are not covered by snow or ice.

"Our northern South Dakota service territory is getting some relief from the weather right now, and we want customers to be aware of how accumulation around meters could affect the proper operation of the equipment," said Mike Williams – North Division Operations Manager. "Natural gas meters require open air in order to operate properly and safely, so when you clear snow from your property also remember to carefully clean snow and ice from your natural gas meter, and keep electric and gas meters free of ice build-up."

NorthWestern Energy asks customers to clear a path to the meters in the event a first responder needs emergency access to shutoff points.

Customers should also inspect their furnace's exhaust venting to make sure that it is clear of ice build-up and is not covered by snow. An outside vent that is blocked can prevent the natural flow of deadly carbon monoxide out of homes and other buildings.

Use caution around electric power lines when removing snow from roofs or knocking ice off eaves.

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Fixing Appropriations Process Must Be Top Priority in 2019

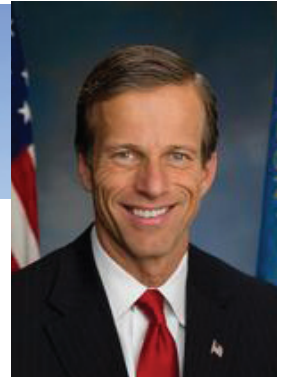
The American people expect results from the people they elect to Congress. This includes getting our appropriations work done on time. When we don't finalize the bills to fund the government before the end of the fiscal year, it becomes easier for different factions in the House and Senate to force a shut-down of the government over certain issues. This is what has happened with the current partial government shutdown over border security spending. While the majority of government services was funded for a full year on time, several agencies were not. They include a number of government agencies that South Dakotans utilize such as the Department of Homeland Security which processes H-2B visa applications, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

There is no question that we need increased border security. Last month, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Kevin McAleenan described the situation as a "border security and humanitarian crisis." CBP apprehensions are up 30 percent, including approximately 6,700 apprehensions of individuals with criminal history. There has also been a 50 percent increase in apprehensions of known gang members. Seizures of methamphetamines are up 75 percent since 2016. More than 60,000 migrants have arrived at our border each of the last three months and of those, 85 percent illegally crossed the border. The need for additional resources along the southern border is urgent.

I have always been an advocate for stronger border security because the primary responsibility of the federal government is the defense of our nation. Last congress, I introduced bipartisan legislation with Sen. Angus King (I-Maine) that authorized and appropriated \$25 billion in enhanced border security over 10 years. It received support from all but three Senate Democrats when it was brought to the floor. I also sponsored the WALL Act, which would fully fund the border wall and identified specific funding sources to pay for it.

Shutdowns are irresponsible and have a real impact on American families. Nobody wins in a shutdown. As we start the first session of the 116th Congress, I will work with any member—Republican or Democrat—to focus on a solution to finally get our appropriations work done in full and on time. That way, we can focus on other important issues before us, such as addressing trade disputes, lowering health care and prescription drug costs and continuing to grow our economy, among other things. The American people expect that of us. It's time to get results.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Principles and Priorities for a New Year

It's a new year, but I'm focused on the same principles and priorities that have always guided me during my service to the people of South Dakota: working hard, fighting for what matters, listening to my top advisers – you, the people of South Dakota – and never, ever forgetting where I come from. Because if there's one thing I'm committed to doing it's giving the issues that matter to our state and its people the national attention they deserve.

With the new year comes a new Congress – one that looks a little different than its predecessor. Democrats now control the majority in the House of Representatives, and while partisan differences are often laid bare throughout the 24-hour news cycle, a divided Congress doesn't have to mean gridlock. Just the opposite, actually. There are plenty of areas where we can find common ground and do the work the American people expect from their elected leaders.

If you look back at other periods of divided government over the last 20 or 30 years, Republicans and Democrats have been able to achieve big things together. For example, the 1986 Reagan tax reform, 1996 welfare reform, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, 2012 legislation to help working families by making the Bush tax cuts permanent, and a major reform of the VA in 2014 all occurred during divided governments. These are consequential issues that required compromise and hard work.

We could start this Congress by setting a good example and passing bipartisan legislation that ends the partial government shutdown and responsibly addresses the critical need for additional border security, which experts throughout the national security community say we need.

Border security is part of national security, and every member of Congress, Republican and Democrat, should take seriously our responsibility to protect our nation by ensuring that our borders are secure. Republicans and Democrats used to agree on this. In fact, just six short years ago, every Senate Democrat supported legislation requiring the completion of a 700-mile fence along our southern border. And less than one year ago, nearly every Senate Democrat supported \$25 billion in border security, which is nearly five times as much as the administration is now seeking.

So, what's changed between then and now? Many of the Democrats who supported previous efforts to secure our border are still serving in Congress, so I'm afraid it's the far-left wing of their party that's dragging them toward the dangerous idea that we don't need to secure our borders at all. Every nation needs to secure its borders, and the American people agree.

At the end of the day, any solution that makes it to the president's desk will require Democrat votes to get there. I'm hopeful they can negotiate in good faith, knowing that it's one of our most solemn duties to provide for the safety and security of our nation. Achieving that goal starts with a secure border, and we can take positive steps to help make it stronger, if only our Democrat colleagues come to the conclusion that it's a priority that must be addressed.

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Today in Weather History

January 5, 1994: A low-pressure system traveled from the Dakotas, across southern Minnesota, and to the Great Lakes Region, from the late morning of the 5th, through the early evening of the 7th. By the early evening hours on the 7th, up to three and one-half feet of snow had fallen along the higher terrain of Lake Superior. The storm also produced heavy snow across parts of central Minnesota. Six inches or more occurred across much of central Minnesota. In west central Minnesota, Wheaton and Artichoke Lake received 5 inches, with 6 inches at Browns Valley.

January 5, 2012: Numerous record high temperatures were broken across central and northeast South Dakota along with west central Minnesota throughout the week. Some of the records were broken by as much as 12 to 17 degrees and had been held for 80 to 90 years. Aberdeen surpassed their all-time record high for January by 3 degrees with 63 degrees on Thursday, January 5th. Kennebec tied their all-time record high for January with 70 degrees on January 5th. Click [HERE](#) other records.

1835 - It was a record cold morning in the eastern U.S. The mercury at the Yale Campus in New Haven CT plunged to 23 degrees below zero, and reached 40 below in the Berkshire Hills of Connecticut. (David Ludlum)

1884: One of only two days in history during which the temperature at Louisville, Kentucky, never rose above zero. The low was 20 degrees below with a high of 1 below zero.

1892: From the History of Fayetteville Georgia, "Another traumatic event occurred in Fayetteville on the evening of January 5, 1892, about six o'clock in the evening. A terrible tornado or cyclone struck the town of Fayetteville just as many had sat down for dinner. The storm killed three people and injured many more as its raging force destroyed numerous residences, outbuildings, and structures including the academy, as well as killing abundant livestock. The event was written about as far away as Savannah."

1904 - Bitterly cold air gripped the northeastern U.S. Morning lows of -42 degrees at Smethport PA and -34 at River Vale NJ established state records. (The Weather Channel)

1913 - The temperature at the east portal to Strawberry Tunnel reached 50 degrees below zero to tie the record established at Woodruff on February 6, 1899. (David Ludlum)

1962: Two tornadoes, about 100 yards apart and each making paths about 100 yards wide followed parallel paths from southeast to northwest through the edge of the Crestview, Florida's residential area. These tornadoes killed one and injured 30 others.

1982 - A three day rainstorm in the San Francisco area finally came to an end. Marin County and Cruz County were drenched with up to 25 inches of rain, and the Sierra Nevada Range was buried under four to eight feet of snow. The storm claimed at least 36 lives, and caused more than 300 million dollars damage. (Storm Data)

1987 - A massive winter storm spread heavy snow from the southwestern U.S. into the Rockies. In Utah, the Alta ski resort reported a storm total of 42 inches of snow. Winds gusted to 64 mph at Albuquerque NM. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms helped produce heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Snow fell at the rate of four to five inches per hour, and snowfall totals ranged up to 69 inches at Highmarket NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A strong Pacific cold front produced heavy snow and high winds in Nevada. Winds gusted to 80 mph north of Reno, while up to two feet of snow blanketed the Lake Tahoe ski area. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Central Gulf Coast Region. New Orleans, LA, was drenched with 4.05 inches of rain in 24 hours. An overnight storm blanketed the mountains of northern Utah with up to eleven inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today

Tonight

Sunday

Sunday
Night

Monday



Mostly Sunny

High: 36 °F



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 17 °F



Cloudy then
Slight Chance
Wintry Mix

High: 33 °F



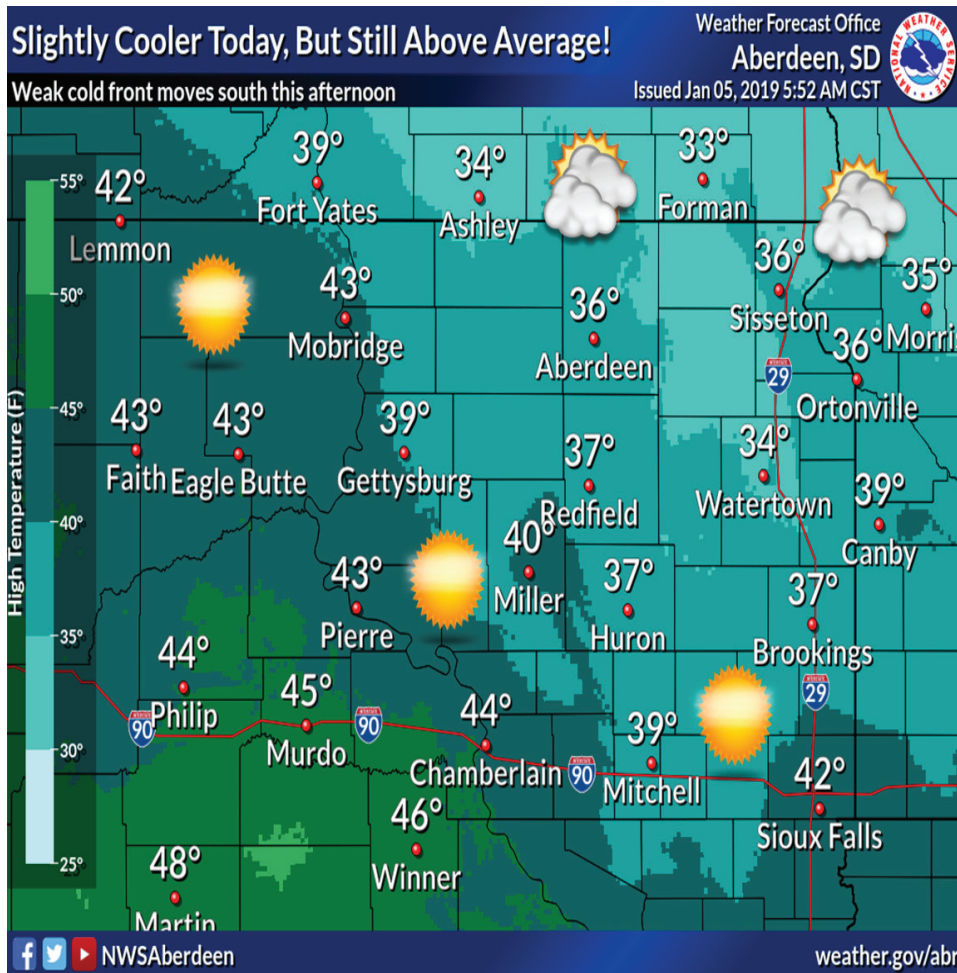
Chance Wintry
Mix then
Slight Chance
Snow

Low: 25 °F



Mostly Sunny

High: 38 °F



Published on: 01/05/2019 at 6:07AM

Another mild day is in store for today, although temps are forecast to be slightly cooler than what we had on Friday. A weak cold front will drop south into the region this afternoon, with increasing cloud cover from north to south this afternoon and evening. By later tonight, there may be some light fog across the region as clouds continue to increase.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 36 °F at 2:52 PM

Low Outside Temp: 22 °F at 8:11 AM

High Gust: 17 mph at 11:34 AM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 63° in 2012

Record Low: -32° in 1924

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 2°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.07

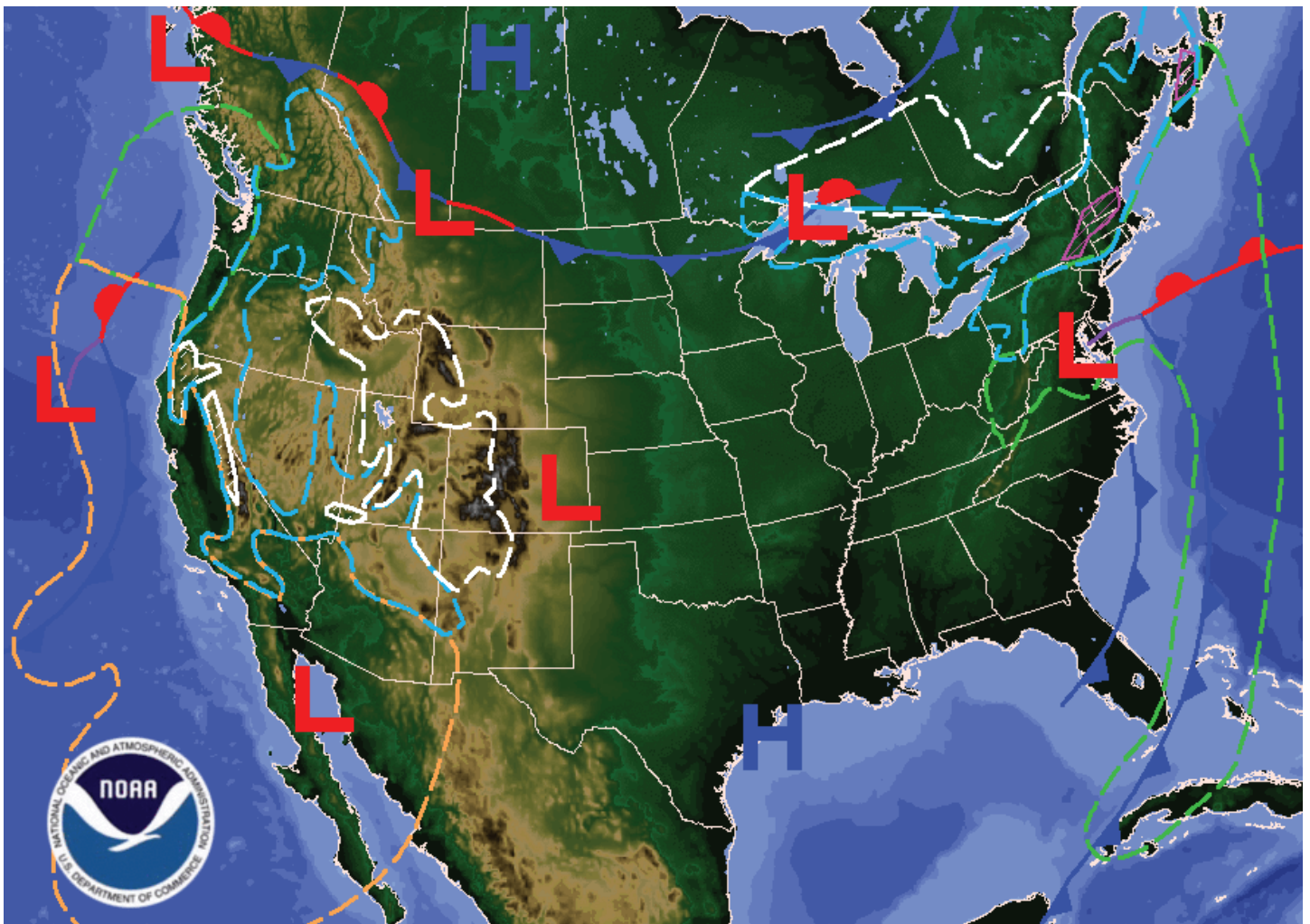
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.07

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:05 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Jan 05, 2019, issued 5:24 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Kebede/Oravec 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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HAS ANYONE HERE SEEN GOD?

A rather well to do person decided that he would visit a church in a ghetto to see how people on the other side of the street lived. On the bottom of the cover of the Sunday bulletin was a statement that shocked him: Not all who worship here are Christians. Do not leave your purse or any other personal belonging unattended.

It is tragic, but true that many who profess one thing do not practice what they preach. But, we who claim to be followers of Jesus are responsible for living as He lived by doing the things He did. We are to back up our beliefs with our behavior. It is not how we want to live that matters. It is how God expects us to live that makes the difference an obligation.

When the gears of a transmission turn inside of its transmission case, it will cause the crankshaft to turn, and the car will be ready to move when it is put in gear.

So it is with a Christian.

When our hearts are turned by the Holy Spirit to the things of God, we will be ready to serve the Lord. When this happens, others will see us move or live in agreement with His Word and His ways.

The life of the Christian is much more than churchgoing, Bible-reading, hymn-singing and tithe-giving. If we do all of those good things, we will still fall short of how God intends us to live: walk blamelessly and live righteously.

The Psalmist said that we are to be blameless in your walk...and do what is righteous. Being blameless means that when others look at us, they find no faults in the way we live because we walk in paths that are righteous.

Prayer: Sometimes, Lord, what You ask of us seems unreal. But, through Christ all things for God are possible. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 15:2a The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous

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2019 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)
- 6/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 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)
- 9/8/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main
- 11/9/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course 2019 Holiday Party
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

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News from the Associated Press

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 81, Edmunds Central 34
Aberdeen Roncalli 68, Redfield/Doland 45
Alcester-Hudson 41, Menno 38
Arlington 67, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 29
Bon Homme 59, Wagner 45
Brandon Valley 73, Brookings 48
Bridgewater-Emery 85, Freeman 46
Burke 54, Centerville 51
Castlewood 62, Wilmot 55
Crazy Horse 48, New Underwood 47
Crow Creek 64, McLaughlin 56
DeSmet 78, Dell Rapids St. Mary 75, 2OT
Dell Rapids 65, Chamberlain 45
Ethan 57, Wessington Springs 54
Faulkton 52, Hitchcock-Tulare 30
Hamlin 63, Groton Area 39
Hill City 64, Edgemont 47
Irene-Wakonda 64, Gayville-Volin 42
Jones County 80, Philip 38
Lake Preston 56, Estelline/Hendricks 42
Lemmon 47, Newell 45
Little Wound 58, Todd County 36
Northwestern 68, Florence/Henry 49
Potter County 64, Mobridge-Pollock 56
Rapid City Central 52, Aberdeen Central 34
Rapid City Stevens 60, Pierre 49
Sioux Falls Lincoln 68, St. Paul Central, Minn. 56
Sioux Falls Washington 58, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 54
Tea Area 78, Madison 43
Tiospa Zina Tribal 72, Britton-Hecla 48
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 65, Scotland 37
Vermillion 86, Parkston 59
Warner 59, Eureka/Bowdle 11
White River 79, St. Francis Indian 47
Big East Conference Tournament
Consolation Semifinal
Baltic 80, Garretson 66
McCook Central/Montrose 57, Chester 42
Semifinal
Parker 52, Flandreau 41
Sioux Valley 65, Beresford 56

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 56, Rapid City Central 40

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Brookings 54, Brandon Valley 48
Burke 57, Centerville 22
Crazy Horse 79, Takini 38
Crow Creek 88, McLaughlin 62
DeSmet 71, Dell Rapids St. Mary 21
Deuel 58, Webster 42
Dupree 71, Tiospaye Topa 54
Edmunds Central 54, Aberdeen Christian 27
Elk Point-Jefferson 40, St. Thomas More 38
Ethan 62, Wessington Springs 16
Faith 56, Bowman County, N.D. 43
Hamlin 51, Groton Area 15
Hill City 50, Edgemont 13
Irene-Wakonda 52, Gayville-Volin 15
Lemmon 54, Newell 51
Lennox 61, Platte-Geddes 27
McCook Central/Montrose 59, Beresford 49
Menno 47, Alcester-Hudson 46
New Underwood 64, Jones County 21
Rapid City Stevens 58, Pierre 38
Sully Buttes 57, Highmore-Harrold 31
Tiospa Zina Tribal 53, Britton-Hecla 28
Vermillion 63, Parkston 60
Wagner 50, Bon Homme 39
Waverly-South Shore 73, Leola/Frederick 28

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

Sioux Falls elderly dancing troupe takes final bow

By MAKENZIE L. HUBER, Argus Leader

STIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Eight women strutted into the room dressed in matching sequined hats and ties, turning the Luther Manor cafeteria into a stage.

The residents filling the space quieted, and nurses stopped in the hallway to watch.

The women danced to "My Kind of Town" by Frank Sinatra. Then they changed into technicolor gypsy outfits, polka dot dresses, checkered racing skirts and sequined Navy uniforms to accompany each classic song they performed.

They call themselves the "Dancing Divas."

Rhinestone "Diva" pins proclaim them as exclusive members of the performance group, with dancers ranging in age from 74 to 81 — though they danced with a skill belying their age.

Their performance at Luther Manor on Dec. 14 was their final show, a culmination of 11 years as a group performing at nursing homes within a 50-mile radius of Sioux Falls and a rigorous three-day-a-week training schedule.

The group was more than a hobby to group founder Joanna Salmon, 75. It was showcasing their skills as performers.

"If I do something, I expect it to be great," said Salmon, who choreographs the dances and picks out music. "It can't be garbage. If I do something for the public, I'm going to make it the best I can."

Performance is in Salmon's blood. She started performing as a child with her family. She was part of "The Browns," which included herself and nine brothers and sisters who performed at venues across the Midwest. When she was 13, she started teaching dance at her sister's studio until she was 31 and moved

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to Los Angeles with her husband.

When she moved back to Sioux Falls after 2005, she decided to start the "Dancing Divas." Salmon picked the original 15 from a line dancing class, the Argus Leader reported.

Melva Hilmo taught the line dancing class and is the youngest group member at 74 years old. She's committed to the group and has had a passion for dancing since she learned to dance around the kitchen table as a child.

"Even when I broke my foot, I came and supported the girls at the performances," Hilmo said.

Marilee Smith, 81, is the oldest dancer. The Dancing Divas group has let her enjoy dancing again. She would go jitterbugging with her husband when they were young, but he doesn't dance anymore.

"It's an important thing in my life right now," Smith said. "I'm going to miss it so much — the girls, and I'm just going to miss the performing too."

The three women's favorite part of the performance is interacting with audience members after the show.

Salmon remembers one performance when she spoke with a woman who was smiling throughout the whole show. When Salmon asked why she was smiling, she said it was because she'd be blind by the same time next year when the Dancing Divas would perform at the nursing home again. This was the last time she'd be able to see the group's flamboyant costumes and watch them dance.

While Frank Petereit isn't a dancer, he's also part of the group. The 88-year-old has been entertaining the audience with his harmonica, jokes and poetry while the divas change costumes for about two years.

"I enjoy doing something, and I enjoy playing the harmonica," Petereit said. "I'm honored to be part of the group. It's a blessing for me."

He's considering going solo now that the Dancing Divas are over.

Salmon doesn't have any plans just yet, but she's "going to do something."

Whatever it'll be next, dancing will always be part of her life, she said. Salmon has a 90-year-old sister who will still try to get up and dance whenever she hears a tune. She expects the same future for herself.

"I've spent my whole life dancing," Salmon said. "It is my life."

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

Rapid City woman competes on NBC's 'The Titan Games'

By TANYA MANUS, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The first time Kelsey Horton picked up a barbell, her only goal was to shed some post-pregnancy weight. Six years later, she's a powerhouse powerlifter who's competing on "The Titan Games," NBC's new series inspired by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

"The Titan Games," a 10-episode series, debuted Jan. 3. About 100,000 people worldwide applied to be on the show. Horton, 29, of Rapid City was one of 64 chosen by "The Rock" to compete. The series offers everyday men and women the opportunity to push themselves in extreme tests of strength, endurance and mental fortitude to win a grand prize of \$100,000, according to NBC.

The show was inspired by "The Rock" and his belief that everyone has the potential to be the best they can be, and by Johnson's desire to motivate people to achieve personal greatness. Horton's story — a nursing school student and new mom who became a competitive powerlifter — attracted the attention of the show's producers.

"A casting producer found me on Instagram and told me I should apply. That's what they were looking for, an everyday person who has an alter ego 'who's a beast in the gym,'" Horton said, laughing. "I was first contacted in March or April. I thought someone was pulling my leg."

After researching the inquiry to be sure it and the show were legitimate, Horton applied. In late May or early June, she got a call back and spent a weekend in Los Angeles getting medical clearance to compete and being tested to see how she looked on camera.

"They put you through the ringer and want to see you in person before they decide if they want you on the show," Horton told the Rapid City Journal .

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In late August, she was notified that she'd be competing on "The Titan Games." "My husband and kids heard me jumping and screaming. It was a pretty exciting phone call to get," Horton said.

Though the show starts airing in January, the competition was filmed in September. Horton's competitors are from all walks of life, she said, including a cancer survivor, a widowed single parent, former Olympians, former NFL players and members of the military who'd been deployed.

"They picked a wide variety of athletic people who had normal jobs and found time to excel in a certain type of fitness," Horton said. "I'm honored to be among them and represent South Dakota."

Horton mostly stuck with her typical workout routine to prepare for "The Titan Games."

"I usually go to the gym after my kids are asleep. I powerlift for 1-1/2 to two hours. For 'The Titan Games,' I didn't have any specific goals in mind; the producers didn't tell us what we'd be doing. I didn't change my training other than to add a little cardio, because it was the training I was doing before that got me on to this show," Horton said.

To prevent spoilers, Horton revealed little about the show's filming. She can't divulge which episode or episodes she'll be on, how many rounds of competition she was in, nor can Horton reveal who won.

"Going Hollywood" when the show was filmed was great fun, she said.

"I was in Los Angeles for close to two weeks. It was just amazing. There was hair and makeup for everything," Horton said. "There were costumes. They put us up in a really nice hotel. You got to feel that Hollywood glamour, which was amazing."

"The Titan Games" includes multiple events "almost too unbelievable to explain," Horton said. "There were so many intricacies to them, they were so multifaceted. The theatrics were crazy. There were pyrotechnics and the crowd was so loud. They had it on a speedway from dusk until dawn. It was just a blast."

"When I was out there, I gave 'The Rock' a hug and got my sweat on him," she said, laughing. "The experience felt like it went by in a flash. It was once in a lifetime."

Life, for now, has gone back to normal. She and her husband, Mark, have two children, Charlotte, 8, and Nolan, 3. Horton works as a nurse at Black Hills Surgical Hospital.

"You can't come back and be a Hollywood mom," Horton said, laughing.

Through her own passion for powerlifting and her appearance on "The Titan Games," Horton hopes to raise awareness locally about powerlifting and inspire more people to get involved.

"In powerlifting, you don't have to eat a certain way. You just get in the gym, get under a barbell and lift," Horton said. "Literally anyone can do it. There's no special skill needed to bend over and lift up a barbell."

When Horton started powerlifting, she and her husband were recently married, had a baby and she was in nursing school. Finding excuses not to exercise was easy, Horton said. A former classmate who is a powerlifter agreed to be Horton's workout buddy.

"We trained together for over two years and hardly ever missed a day. I credit him for teaching me the ropes. Without him, I wouldn't have known what I was doing," Horton said.

She entered powerlifting competitions in Arizona, New Mexico and Virginia. Horton also became the first certified powerlifting referee in South Dakota through the United States Powerlifting Association. She's trying to organize a powerlifting competition in the Black Hills next year.

"Competing got me hooked. It's empowering — if I can deadlift 300 pounds, what else can I do? Powerlifting is always keeping me wanting to go back for more," Horton said. "I'm training to get stronger. I feel like my goals are more meaningful now... versus running or being on a stair climber for endless hours."

"I guess my goal now is to get a barbell in as many hands as I can, because I love it and I feel like other people would too if they were exposed to it," Horton said.

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

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SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

21-29-35-54-60, Mega Ball: 15, Megaplier: 4

(twenty-one, twenty-nine, thirty-five, fifty-four, sixty; Mega Ball: fifteen; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$69 million

Organizers raise \$162K from big donors for Noem inaugural

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Organizers of Gov.-elect Kristi Noem's inaugural celebration have raised at least \$162,500 from roughly 30 large donors — including major health systems, big energy companies and state industry groups — for the ceremonies and festivities.

Top-tier donations to the city of Pierre's inaugural committee include \$12,500 from Avera Health, \$10,000 from biofuels producer POET and \$10,000 from Keystone XL oil pipeline developer TransCanada, according to a list of sponsors provided by the city. The incoming Republican governor will be sworn in to office Saturday, followed by events that include a ball in the Capitol rotunda and another at a Pierre event center.

The celebration's estimated budget is \$150,000 and is funded by the donations and ticket sales, city spokeswoman Brooke Bohnenkamp said in an email. More than 1,200 tickets have been sold so far. Inaugural Chair Matt Judson said the group doesn't consult with the governor-elect or any elected officials about donors to ask for support.

Noem spokeswoman Kristin Wileman said in a statement that the inaugural committee finished most of the fundraising before voters chose Noem as governor in November.

After taking her oath of office, Noem will give an inaugural address. She's set to discuss her plan to tackle the challenges ahead for South Dakota's next generation, Wileman said. The ceremony and a receiving line afterward are free and open to the public.

"The time with my family over the holidays was rejuvenating. It was also a good time to reflect on life's blessings and the responsibilities that are ahead of me," Noem said in the statement. "I'm ready to get to work for the people of South Dakota."

State legislators and other officials will also be sworn in Saturday.

Among the dozen sponsors that gave \$5,000 are pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, Dakotas-based Sanford Health, Xcel Energy and clean energy company Avangrid Renewables. The seven companies that gave at least \$10,000 include T. Denny Sanford's First Premier Bank, Florida-based NextEra Energy, gas and electric utility Black Hills Energy, and BNSF Railway.

BNSF spokeswoman Amy McBeth said donating to the inauguration helps give support to an event many people attend, and the company looks forward to working with Noem. The railroad has about 900 miles of track and roughly 600 employees in South Dakota.

"We support officeholders who recognize the importance of a strong rail network," said McBeth, noting that the company provides similar support in other states.

For Dennis Daugaard's inauguration in 2015, organizers received \$80,000 in sponsorships, while ticket sales covered the remainder of the roughly \$102,000 celebration, Bohnenkamp said. Most of the 17 corporate sponsors from 2015 also contributed to this year's inauguration.

Judson, who helped lead planning for the 2015 inauguration, said preparations for the upcoming celebration have been in the works for roughly a year.

"For the city of Pierre, it's a chance to welcome citizens from all across our great state," he said.

A four-term congresswoman, Noem is trading Washington for Pierre once she's sworn in. Noem will be South Dakota's first female governor, a milestone she called a "unique honor" but one that she didn't emphasize during her campaign.

"I was raised in a family that didn't have boy chores or girl chores. There was just work to get done, and we'd be measured by the results," Noem said. "That's always been my approach to every job I've had."

Investors, farmers guessing as shutdown delays crop reports

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Friday that it must delay the release of key crop reports due to the partial government shutdown, leaving investors and farmers without vital information during an already tumultuous time for agricultural markets.

The USDA had planned to release the closely watched reports Jan. 11 but said that even if the shutdown ended immediately, the agency's staff wouldn't have time to release the reports as scheduled. Congressional leaders met with President Donald Trump on Friday but there were no indications the shutdown would end soon.

"The longer it goes on, the more distorted our reference points get," said grain market analyst Todd Hultman, of Omaha, Nebraska-based agriculture market data provider DTN. "It's a lot of guesswork."

The reports detail the size of the 2018 harvests of corn, soybean, wheat and other crops and give an early estimate for what farmers will plant in the upcoming season. Depending on the estimates, the price of the commodities can rise or fall as they show the current supply and forecast how many acres will be devoted to different crops in the coming months.

The government shutdown has now forced the delay of such reports for two weeks, and uncertainty about the commodity supply will only grow as more time elapses, Hultman said. USDA reports provide the foundation for understanding the U.S. agricultural industry, and because they also estimate farm production in other countries, they are essential for understanding global crop markets.

Although the government is still releasing some information, such as the Labor Department's monthly jobs report, the USDA hasn't released key reports since Dec. 22. This includes the closely watched World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report and information about specific crops, such as winter wheat and canola seedings.

The lack of information comes amid the uncertainty of trade with China, where tariffs led to an abrupt drop in U.S. agricultural exports to the country. There were indications that China was beginning to resume at least limited purchases of U.S. crops, but because of the government shutdown it's unclear what's happening.

"We certainly don't want to be in the dark and miss any big changes like that," Hultman said.

University of Illinois professor Todd Hubbs, who studies agricultural commodity markets, said he finds the report delays especially frustrating because he thinks they could confirm a belief that the U.S. soybean crop was smaller than earlier forecast. If true, that information would mean a smaller supply and could raise soybean prices, helping farmers who have struggled with low prices worsened by the trade dispute with China.

Until the USDA releases its information, investors and farmers can't be certain about where they stand, he said.

"Those kinds of numbers are fundamental," Hubbs said. "When the USDA produces the numbers, they are the numbers. They move markets."

Follow Scott McFetridge on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/smcfetridge>

Train-van collision in Bon Homme County kills woman

SCOTLAND, S.D. (AP) — A collision involving a train and a van in Bon Homme County killed a 21-year-old woman.

The Highway Patrol says the van the woman was driving collided with a BNSF Railway train at a crossing on state Highway 25 near Scotland about 9:30 p.m. Thursday.

The woman died at the scene. She was not immediately identified.

No one on the train was hurt.

North Dakota residents ignore law making car-idling illegal

By JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — When the winds howl and the bone-numbing cold sets in, scores of North Dakotans willingly become lawbreakers by warming up their vehicles without being in them, ignoring a potential \$1,500 state fine and 30 days in jail.

"It's ineffective. The people ignore it. Let's get rid of it," said Republican Rep. Daniel Johnston, who is sponsoring a bill that would make it legal for people to leave their vehicles running unattended, amending a statute that has been on the books since the 1940s that no one can remember being enforced.

"Simply put, the law goes against the will of the people," Johnston told the House Transportation Committee Friday. "The citizenry of North Dakota recognizes this is a bad law."

Others don't even realize it's on the books, he said.

Donnell Preskey, executive director of the North Dakota Sheriffs and Deputies Association, told the panel that her group supports amending the law. No one spoke against it.

North Dakota's law was put on the books nearly 75 years ago as a deterrent against automobile theft. Several states in recent years have enacted anti-idling laws in an effort to improve air quality.

National Conference of State Legislatures data shows nine states have laws to curb vehicle idling and another 14 limit idling for certain vehicles, such as state-owned vehicles and school buses.

The group said idling wastes about 6 billion gallons of fuel annually, and 18 states have grants, loans, tax credits to encourage idle reduction.

Even environmental group Sierra Club is not standing in the way of the effort to make idling legal. Wayne Schafer, the group's North Dakota spokesman, said banning idling vehicles is futile in North Dakota, where it's considered a necessary evil because of brutal winter weather.

"It's so engrained in our culture and people will never change their habits even if they know it's against the law," Schafer said. "It's part of winter in North Dakota, and people want to get into a warm car, so what do you do?"

Schafer said his group will not take a position on the proposed legislation.

Bismarck Police Chief Dave Draovitch, who has spent nearly three decades with the department, said idling vehicles that are left unattended is not something that officers enforce.

"If we ever wrote a citation for it, I'd be surprised," Draovitch said.

Still, police departments across the state often issue public service announcements reminding residents to lock their vehicles.

"We'd rather have vehicles locked," Draovitch said, adding that leaving vehicles running while unoccupied creates a golden opportunity for thieves.

Fargo police spokeswoman Jessica Schindeldecker said most vehicles stolen in North Dakota's biggest city occur in the winter, and most are because they are left idling with the doors unlocked.

Schindeldecker did not know if anyone had ever been cited for leaving a vehicle idling, but she said officers sometimes "chat with the owner, and tell them they just want them to stop doing it."

Jennifer Wagner of Minot had her vehicle stolen years ago after leaving it running to drop off some items at her church. She now owns a business with her husband that installs remote starters that allow a driver to preheat a vehicle before getting into it.

North Dakota's current law is "dumb," Wagner said.

Most remote starters are equipped with anti-theft systems that won't allow the vehicle to be opened or driven without a key, she said.

"Most people probably don't even know about the law, and even if they do they don't care and are willing to take the risk," she said.

Her business, Too Dark Motorsports, is one of dozens in the state that sells and installs remote starters, which are often booked two to three weeks out in the winter, she said.

Wagner said she and other North Dakotans don't buy the argument that vehicles warm up quicker while being driven. About 30 people set up appointments one day last week when a dangerous cold snap hit the region.

"No one wants to get in a frozen car in North Dakota and let it warm up," she said. "No one."

Man facing 16 charges in police standoff

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man accused of firing numerous shots during a four-hour standoff with police is facing 16 charges.

Thirty-year-old Jordan Wounded Face appeared in court via video from the Pennington County Jail Thursday when a \$250,000 cash bond was set. The Pennington County State's Attorney's Office charged Wounded Face with seven counts of firing a gun at an occupied structure or vehicle, seven counts of recklessly firing a gun, aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer and an inhaling charge.

Court documents say the defendant's mother called police New Year's Day, saying she may have heard gunshots. Wounded Face is accused of firing a gun after officers responded to the home.

The Rapid City Journal says Wounded Face eventually surrendered after gas cartridges were deployed into the home.

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

Police: 3 dead, 4 injured in bowling alley shooting

By SOPHIA ROSENBAUM

A late-night fight at a suburban Los Angeles bowling alley turned deadly late Friday night, killing three men and injuring four.

Police in the coastal city of Torrance responded to calls of "shots fired" at the Gable House Bowl shortly before midnight.

Multiple victims were found with gunshot wounds inside Gable House Bowl, which is described on its website as a gaming venue that offers bowling, laser tag and an arcade.

Police said three men died at the scene and four male victims were injured, two of whom were transported to a hospital for unknown injuries. The other two injured sought their own medical attention.

Authorities have not released details about what led to the shooting, but witnesses said it stemmed from a fight between two large groups of people at the bowling alley.

Wes Hamad, a 29-year-old Torrance resident, was at the bowling alley with his 13-year-old niece and cousin when he saw a "huge fight" break out. Hamad said the brawl, which lasted about five minutes, blocked the entrance of Gable House Bowl and devolved into "complete chaos."

"I grabbed my niece and started running toward the far end of the bowling alley," he said. "As we were running, we heard 15 shots."

As he was leaving, Hamad said he saw a woman weeping over a man who was had multiple gunshot wounds in his head and neck.

Damone Thomas was in the karaoke section of Gable House Bowl, a regular stop for him and his friends after work on Fridays, when people ran in saying there was a shooting. The 30-year-old Los Angeles resident said his friend flipped over one of the tables to shield them as they heard gunshots.

Thomas said he didn't feel scared because he was "just trying to survive." But when he was driving back home, he said he realized how traumatic the situation was and said he hasn't been able to fall asleep.

"Closing my eyes, all I can see is the women against the wall crying, not knowing what to do," he said.

Both Thomas and Hamad said they had never witnessed any violence there in the past, but Hamad said he had stopped going for a while because he heard someone with a gun was recently seen there.

"I definitely won't be going back anymore," he added.

Wall debate obscures other struggles at the border

By COLLEEN LONG and ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — In Washington, it's all about the wall. At the border, it's only part of the story.

Border authorities are struggling with outdated facilities ill-equipped to handle the growing increase in family migrants, resulting in immigrants being released onto the streets every day. The immigration court system is so clogged that some wait years for their cases to be resolved, and lacks funding to pay for basic things like in-person translators. An increase in sick children arriving at the border is putting a strain on medical resources.

But the Washington debate has focused almost exclusively on the \$5 billion in wall spending that President Donald Trump wants. Other proposals being discussed keep the rest of the Homeland Security department funding at existing levels.

"The wall is a tool. Unfortunately even if it's implemented across the border it isn't a solution to all the problems," said Victor M. Manjarrez, a former Border Patrol chief with more than 20 years of experience, now a professor at the University of Texas-El Paso.

Trump has suggested migrants won't bother to come if he gets his way, making other immigration issues less problematic. Walls and fencing currently blanket about one-third of the border — mostly built under President George W. Bush — and the president wants to extend and fortify them. But contracting, designing and building new wall systems complete with updated technology could take years.

Trump met Friday with Congressional leaders who said the president threatened the shutdown could go on for "years." Trump later said he'd considered using executive authority to get a wall built on the border.

"You can call it a barrier, you can call it whatever you want," Trump said a day earlier, flanked by immigration union heads. "But essentially we need protection in our country. We're going to make it good. The people of our country want it."

Meanwhile, the House passed a bill Thursday evening to fund the government without the \$5 billion, with new Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi calling the wall an "immorality."

The debate overlooks major bottlenecks in the immigration system as more families and children traveling alone turn themselves in to authorities to seek asylum, instead of trying to elude capture as almost everyone did just a few years ago. In some cases, migrants are climbing existing border fence and seeking out agents to surrender.

The backlog in immigration courts has more than doubled to 1.1 million cases since shortly before Trump took office, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. Families and children now account for about six of 10 Border Patrol arrests, but there are only about 3,300 family detention beds and the number of unaccompanied children in government care has soared under Trump.

Border crossers are stuck in short-term holding cells for days and there has been a spike in sick migrant children, including two who died in custody.

In addition, the wall will do little to address the issue of visa overstays — when immigrants come to the country legally and remain here after their papers expire. Authorities say there were nearly 740,000 overstays during a recent 12-month period.

And border agents continue to struggle with growing numbers children and families. Officials say they are stopping about 2,000 people a day, more than 60 percent children and families, higher than during many periods under President Barack Obama. They referred 451 cases to a medical provider from Dec. 22 to Dec. 30, more than half children.

David Aguilar, the Border Patrol chief from 2004 to 2010 and a former acting Customs and Border Protec-

tion commissioner, said agencies that oversee long-term immigration custody need more funding to immediately step in after the Border Patrol makes an arrest. He says the agency is "overwhelmed" in dealing with all the children and families coming across the border now, much different from 1990s and 2000s.

"The demographics and the flows that are crossing the southern border are very different from the demographics and flows when we built the original walls ... back in 2006 and 2008," he said.

Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan, testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee last month, said stations were not built to manage the crush of families coming over. The wall was important, he said, but so were these other issues. He said they needed budgeting for medical care and mental health care for children in their facilities.

Trump has significantly increased the number of immigration judges but, A. Ashley Tabaddor, president of the National Association of Immigration Judges, said it came without enough support staff. About a week before the shutdown, judges were told the courts ran out of money for many in-person translators and that, as a result, it would have to reach them telephonically. A hearing that might last three minutes would last 20 minutes.

The shutdown is already having an impact on the immigration system. E-Verify, the online government system where employees can confirm eligibility of their employees to work legally in the U.S. is down.

Courts were only functioning for those who were detained. Other cases will be reset for a date once funding resumes, according to the website for the courts, which are overseen by the Department of Justice.

Immigration lawyers said that will only worsen the already overwhelming backlog. Immigration attorney Jeremy McKinney said he expects cases in Charlotte, North Carolina will be moved to 2020 because this year's docket is already full.

"The situation is a lose-lose," he said.

In contrast, the funding problems have only minimally affected the U.S. government agency tasked with reviewing immigrants' applications for green cards and other benefits. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which is a fee-based agency, said its offices are open and immigrants should attend appointments as expected.

Long reported from Washington, DC. Associated Press Writer Amy Taxin in Santa Ana, Calif. contributed to this report.

New House Dems get early political lesson

By LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The education of the star-studded class of House freshmen has begun.

Lesson one: Speaking with the bluntness of a candidate can produce swift and uncomfortable results.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib learned that before lunch Friday, when her profane remarks the night before vowing to impeach President Donald Trump drew almost no support, and plenty of pushback, from members of her party.

"It's been pretty intense," Tlaib, D-Mich., told The Associated Press in a brief hallway interview Friday as she reported to the House to face her colleagues.

Hours after Tlaib was sworn in as part of the history-making class of freshmen that helped flip the House to Democratic control, she ran afoul of the widespread sense among her colleagues that they should focus for now on health care and other policies rather than impeachment — at least until special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation concludes.

"We're gonna impeach the motherf---er," Tlaib exclaimed during a party Thursday night hosted by the liberal activist group MoveOn, according to video and comments on Twitter.

It was a striking coda to the Democrats' heady ascendance to the House majority Thursday, sparking unusually public corrections from House veterans.

"I disagree with what she said," said House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., during a CNN interview. His committee would be the one to begin impeachment proceedings.

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"It is too early to talk about that intelligently," Nadler said. "We have to follow the facts."

Newcomers routinely stumble as they learn how things are done on Capitol Hill. But Tlaib and her classmates have been celebrated in magazine profiles for their independence and their promises to stand up to the powers that be. By rebuking one, the more seasoned Democrats were effectively warning the others.

"I think some of our new members probably don't realize that you are always on, that when you are a member of Congress, there's always someone listening," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill. She said she hopes Tlaib's remarks aren't news for long.

More than Tlaib's profanity, it was her vow to impeach Trump that drew her colleagues' disapproval.

Tlaib's defiance flew in the face of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's warning to focus on policies the candidates had promised ahead of the Nov. 6 elections. The timing also chafed, just hours before congressional leaders were headed to the White House to try to resolve the standoff over the border wall Trump is demanding in exchange for reopening the government. Republicans pounced, using the occasion to question the Democrats' true priorities and Pelosi's leadership.

With a tight smile, Pelosi rejected Tlaib's profanity and her impeachment vow.

"That is not the position of the House Democratic caucus," Pelosi said on MSNBC of Tlaib's comments. "I don't think we should make a big deal of it."

Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., served up a reminder to the new members that seniority rules in Congress.

"She's a freshman. It's her first day here," Connolly said of Tlaib. "She went in front of an enthusiastic crowd of her supporters and it was red meat for them. She yielded to that temptation."

"I'm sure upon reflection," Connolly suggested, "she might choose other words to describe her feelings."

Talk of impeachment remains in the air, fueled by a handful of Democrats on Pelosi's left flank who are pressuring her to more aggressively pursue the issue. But such proceedings appear unlikely for now. Even if the House advances any articles of impeachment, a two-thirds-majority vote to convict Trump in the Republican-controlled Senate and remove him from office would seem out of the question, barring astonishing new revelations.

Tlaib wasn't the only freshman who got a lesson in how one comment can upend Capitol Hill.

Some of Tlaib's classmates were pursued for reaction — standard results when a political ally says something that raises eyebrows.

"I am not talking about those things," laughed Rep. Abigail Spanberger, D-Va., when asked Friday to respond to Tlaib's remarks.

She said she was elected because she talked about preserving health care. "I'm not going to tell anyone else what to do, but certainly, I think, it would behoove all of us to really be working for the people who need" Congress' help.

Associated Press Writers Alan Fram and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

Talks to resume after Trump says shutdown could last 'years'

By CATHERINE LUCEY, LISA MASCARO and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House officials and congressional staffers will continue negotiations Saturday over the government shutdown, even after President Donald Trump declared he could keep it going for "months or even years."

Trump met Friday with congressional leaders from both parties as the shutdown hit the two-week mark amid an impasse over his demand for billions of dollars for a border wall with Mexico. Democrats emerged from the meeting, which both sides said was contentious at times, to report little if any progress.

Trump has designated Vice President Mike Pence, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and adviser Jared Kushner to work with a congressional delegation at a meeting set for 11 a.m. Saturday.

Trump is framing the upcoming weekend talks as progress, while Democrats are emphasizing families

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unable to pay bills.

The standoff has prompted economic jitters and anxiety among some in Trump's own party. But he appeared Friday in the Rose Garden to frame the weekend talks as progress, while making clear he would not reopen the government.

"We won't be opening until it's solved," Trump said. "I don't call it a shutdown. I call it doing what you have to do for the benefit and the safety of our country."

Trump said he could declare a national emergency to build the wall without congressional approval, but would first try a "negotiated process." Trump previously described the situation at the border as a "national emergency" before he dispatched active-duty troops in what critics described as a pre-election stunt.

Trump also said the hundreds of thousands of federal workers who are furloughed or working without pay would want him to "keep going" and fight for border security. Asked how people would manage without a financial safety net, he declared, "The safety net is going to be having a strong border because we're going to be safe."

Democrats called on Trump to reopen the government while negotiations continue. Senate Democratic Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "It's very hard to see how progress will be made unless they open up the government."

Friday's White House meeting with Trump included eight congressional leaders — the top two Democrats and Republicans of both chambers. People familiar with the session but not authorized to speak publicly described Trump as holding forth at length on a range of subjects but said he made clear he was firm in his demand for \$5.6 billion in wall funding and in rejecting the Democrats' request to reopen the government.

Trump confirmed that he privately told Democrats the shutdown could drag on for months or years, though he said he hoped it wouldn't last that long. Said Trump, "I hope it doesn't go on even beyond a few more days."

House Democrats muscled through legislation Thursday night to fund the government but not Trump's proposed wall. However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said those measures are non-starters on his side of the Capitol without the president's support.

A variety of strategies are being floated inside and outside the White House, among them trading wall funding for a deal on immigrants brought to the country as young people and now here illegally, or using a national emergency declaration to build the wall. While Trump made clear during his press conference that talk on DACA (the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program) would have to wait and that he was trying to negotiate with Congress on the wall, the conversations underscored rising Republican anxiety about just how to exit the shutdown.

Some GOP senators up for re-election in 2020, including Cory Gardner of Colorado and Susan Collins of Maine, have voiced discomfort with the shutdown in recent days.

But with staff level talks there is always an open question of whether Trump's aides are fully empowered to negotiate for the president. Earlier this week, he rejected his own administration's offer to accept \$2.5 billion for the wall. That proposal was made when Pence and other top officials met with Schumer at the start of the shutdown.

During his free-wheeling session with reporters, Trump also wrongly claimed that he'd never called for the wall to be concrete. Trump did so repeatedly during his campaign, describing a wall of pre-cast concrete sections that would be higher than the walls of many of his rally venues. He repeated that promise just days ago.

"An all concrete Wall was NEVER ABANDONED, as has been reported by the media. Some areas will be all concrete but the experts at Border Patrol prefer a Wall that is see through (thereby making it possible to see what is happening on both sides). Makes sense to me!" he tweeted Dec. 31.

Trump was joined by Pence in the Rose Garden, as well as House Republican leaders Kevin McCarthy and Steve Scalise. McConnell, who went back to the Capitol, unaware of the press conference, said it was encouraging that the White House officials and the congressional contingent would meet over the weekend "to see if they can reach an agreement and then punt it back to us for final sign off."

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Schumer said that if McConnell and Senate Republicans stay on the sidelines, "Trump can keep the government shut down for a long time."

"The president needs an intervention," Schumer said. "And Senate Republicans are just the right ones to intervene."

Adding to national unease about the shutdown are economic jitters as analysts warn of the risks of closures that are disrupting government operations across multiple departments and agencies at a time of other uncertainties in the stock market and foreign trade.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Mary Clare Jalonick, Laurie Kellman, Kevin Freking, Matthew Daly, Deb Riechmann and Eileen Putman contributed to this report.

Democrats take power in House; impeachment talk flares

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, LISA MASCARO and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had only been in office for a few hours when a handful of Democrats defied her persistent calls not to begin the new Congress by talking about impeachment.

Just after Pelosi was sworn in Thursday, longtime Democratic Reps. Brad Sherman of California and Al Green of Texas introduced articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump. That evening, newly elected Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan riled up a supportive crowd by calling the president a profanity and predicting that he will be removed from office.

Tension over impeachment is likely to be a persistent thorn for Pelosi, who will have to balance between a small, vocal group of the most liberal members of her caucus, who want to see Trump removed immediately, and the majority of her members who want to wait for special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation to finish. Pelosi purposely avoided — and encouraged most fellow Democrats to avoid — any talk of impeachment during the election, believing there could be backlash from voters.

While eager to paint impeachment as the Democrats' only agenda, Trump has also expressed some worry both publicly and privately at the prospect. He has told confidants that he finds the impeachment talk somewhat unnerving, according to an outside adviser who spoke to him in recent days.

The president, who has long fashioned himself as the ultimate winner, told the confidant that he worried that impeachment, even if he retained office, would be a stain on his legacy. And while he thought the impeachment would rally his own base in the 2020 election it could hurt his standing with foreign leaders as he negotiates trade deals, according to the adviser.

While many Democrats might favor impeachment, those calling for it now are largely outliers. Most Democratic lawmakers listened to Pelosi and campaigned on kitchen table issues such as health care and jobs and prefer to keep them at the forefront of the party's focus.

Still, it will be hard for Pelosi to quiet some on her left flank who see their new majority as a direct challenge to Trump.

"Impeachment is on the table," Sherman said. "You can't take it off the table."

Tlaib, who represents a liberal district in Detroit, exclaimed at an event late Thursday that Democrats were going to "impeach the mother-----." She didn't back down Friday, tweeting that "I will always speak truth to power." She added the hashtag, "#unapologeticallyMe."

Her spokesman, Denzel McCampbell, said in a statement that Tlaib, one of only two Muslim women in Congress, "was elected to shake up Washington" and will not stay silent.

"The congresswoman absolutely believes he needs to be impeached. She ran and won by making this very clear to the voters in her district," McCampbell said.

Pelosi said Friday at an MSNBC town hall said she wouldn't censor her colleagues, and that Tlaib's language was no worse than things Trump has said.

Still, Pelosi said she didn't like the language and wouldn't use it. She said, as she has many times before, that the House shouldn't move to impeach Trump without more facts and that she believes impeachment is divisive.

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The prospect of that division delights Republicans, who have used impeachment calls to fire up their base of voters. Trump immediately seized on the topic, asking in a tweet Friday, "How do you impeach a president who has won perhaps the greatest election of all time, done nothing wrong."

Speaking later Friday to reporters in the Rose Garden, Trump said he thought Tlaib's comments were "disgraceful" and she "dishonored herself."

At a meeting at the White House Friday on the government shutdown, Trump opened his remarks with his concerns about impeachment, according to a White House official and a tweet from Pelosi's spokesman Drew Hammill.

Trump said that Pelosi assured him during the meeting that "we're not looking to impeach you," and that he replied "that's good, Nancy, that's good."

Hammill later tweeted a slightly different recap: "Speaker Pelosi made clear that today's meeting was about re-opening government, not impeachment."

There has been some discussion in Trump's orbit about how to deal with a possible impeachment effort. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who led impeachment efforts against President Bill Clinton two decades ago, encouraged conservatives to foster what he believes would be counter-productive impeachment talk among Democrats. The 1998 battle backfired on Republicans, who were seen as overreaching while Clinton's poll numbers rose.

"Make it the speaker's problem, make her deal with the nutty wing of her party," Gingrich said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

Top Democrats have so far supported Pelosi's cautious approach to impeachment, with House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler also saying that it is a divisive, even traumatic, process that should only be done with Republican support. Both Nadler and Pelosi were in Congress during Clinton's impeachment.

Sherman and Green forced votes to impeach Trump in 2017 and 2018, but the Republican House blocked those resolutions twice, with the help of many Democrats who said the effort was premature.

Even if the House should approve articles of impeachment — very unlikely at present — a two-thirds-majority vote to convict Trump in the Republican-led Senate and remove him from office would seem out of the question, barring new revelations or a dramatic decline in the president's political support.

Many Democrats on Friday distanced themselves from Tlaib's words. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said he doesn't think "comments like these particularly help." House Oversight and Reform Committee Chairman Elijah Cummings, D-Md., said the comments were "inappropriate" and go against efforts to reclaim civility.

Other Democrats were more forgiving, even if they disagreed.

"I think some of our new members probably don't realize that you are always on, that when you are a member of Congress, there's always someone listening," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill.

Virginia Rep. Gerry Connolly said the comments were just "red meat" for Tlaib's supporters.

"I think it's a forgivable sin, an outburst of exuberance with her and her supporters, and I think we all need to move on," he said. "It doesn't reflect the caucus, and I'm sure upon reflection, she might choose other words to describe her feelings."

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Deb Riechmann, Alan Fram, Kevin Freking and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

Jailed American spent years collecting Russian contacts

By LYNN BERRY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. corporate security executive and former Marine who has been jailed in Moscow on spying charges has spent more than a decade cultivating friends and contacts in Russia, both virtual and real.

Paul Whelan sought out friends throughout the country, most often through a social networking site that is similar to Facebook and popular largely in Russia. Several told The Associated Press that the American

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never seemed sinister, merely someone who was interested in Russia and wanted to be pen pals.

"I know him as a friendly, polite, educated, and easygoing guy," said one of his contacts, who, like the other Russians interviewed for this story, spoke on condition of anonymity because of Whelan's legal troubles.

Whelan was arrested Dec. 28 while on a two-week visit to the country and has been charged with espionage. The Russian government has so far given no details about the allegations against him, but a close look at his social media history suggests why he might have come to the attention of the Russian security services, regardless of his motives.

He has collected dozens of contacts on the social media site, nearly all of them men, many of whom have at least some connection to the military.

His family back home says he was nothing more than a tourist. In a Washington Post op-ed published Friday, his twin brother, David, urged the U.S. government to pressure Russia to release him.

"Paul is a kind and considerate brother, son and uncle, and a generous and loyal friend," he wrote. "He travels as often as he can, both for work and pleasure. He is many things to many people, but he is not a spy."

Whelan, 48, could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted of spying. He is also a citizen of Britain, Canada and Ireland, which brings international pressure on Russia from several fronts. He was born in Canada to British parents, but grew up in Michigan, where he now lives.

His family said he was in Moscow over the holidays for the wedding of a fellow former Marine and had planned to travel to St. Petersburg before flying home this weekend. Instead he's in Lefortovo, a notorious prison run by the KGB in Soviet times and still used for foreigners accused of spying.

Whelan has been visiting Russia since at least 2007, when he took advantage of a military program for Marines deployed in Iraq that gave them 15 days of leave and paid for the travel.

Even before then, he had begun developing a network of contacts throughout Russia. Some said they met him online in 2006 and became "pen pals," trading practice in English for Russian. Whelan seemed fascinated with Russia and its culture, they said.

For nearly a decade, he has had an account on VKontakte, which means In Contact. Of his 58 friends at the time of his arrest, 54 were men. Many attended universities affiliated with the military, civil aviation or technical studies. Many share his interest in sports and firearms.

"We was guys with guns," wrote another of his friends, who said he was a student working nights as a security guard when he first met Whelan online.

Both men, who live in separate Russian cities far from Moscow, said they first met Whelan in person in 2008 when he traveled around the country to meet some of his new friends. Others said they have only communicated online.

Whelan's brother said it would not be surprising to find Russian soldiers among his contacts.

"I'm pretty sure that some of the people he knows through social media are probably Russian soldiers because there are a lot of Russian soldiers and he probably knows one," David Whelan said in an interview.

One of Paul Whelan's friends on VKontakte said he believed the arrest was a mistake because a true spy would never act as openly as he did. He said Whelan gave him his home address and they exchanged Christmas cards.

Former CIA officers also have expressed doubts that Whelan was working for U.S. intelligence. They note that the CIA would be unlikely to use someone in Russia without diplomatic immunity and leave them vulnerable to arrest.

Whelan's Marine record also would likely prevent U.S. intelligence from hiring him. He began active duty with the Marines in 2003 and was deployed twice to Iraq, rising to staff sergeant. But his military career ended with a court martial in 2008, when he was convicted on charges that included attempted larceny and dereliction of duty.

Court documents released by the military show he was accused of attempting to steal more than \$10,000 while on duty in Iraq, where he worked as a clerk, in September 2006. He was also convicted of using a false social security number and profile for a military computer system to grade his own examinations,

and of writing 10 bad checks totaling around \$6,000.

He was dropped two grades in rank and given a bad conduct discharge from the Marine Corps.

"This guy is not an intel asset," said Malcom Nance, a veteran intelligence officer. "He's not the type of person you would use as an asset. There is no way."

Nance said he suspects Russian intelligence officers have been watching Whelan for years, wondering if they could use him in some way and maybe trying to flip him.

A member of Russia's parliament suggested Friday that once the investigation into Whelan was completed, he could be swapped for Maria Butina, a Russian woman jailed in the U.S. since July. She pleaded guilty last month to conspiring to act as a foreign agent by trying to infiltrate conservative circles and the National Rifle Association to influence U.S. politics.

However, she has been cooperating with federal prosecutors and is unlikely to spend too much time behind bars. Federal sentencing guidelines call for no jail time to six months.

After his discharge, Whelan returned to his job in the temporary staffing company Kelly Services, based in Troy, Michigan, where he had worked since 2001 in the IT department until taking the leave of military absence. He was Kelly's head of global security and investigations until 2016.

Early the following year, Whelan joined auto parts supplier BorgWarner as global security director. BorgWarner, based in Auburn Hills, Michigan, has facilities around the world but none in Russia and he never traveled to the country for business, company spokeswoman Kathy Graham said.

Associated Press writer Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

New hearts forge new friendship for transplant recipients

By AMANDA SEITZ, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A suburban Detroit woman and South Side Chicago man are recovering in a Chicago hospital following rare triple transplant surgeries that gave them the healthy heart, liver and kidney each needed — and a new friendship they never expected.

University of Chicago Medicine doctors announced Friday that they successfully completed the triple organ transplants on Sarah McPharlin, a 29-year-old woman of Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan, and Daru Smith, a 29-year-old father from Chicago's South Side, within 30 hours of one another.

McPharlin had two transplants canceled earlier in the year, pushing her surgery back.

"Maybe because it's only luck that both of those transplants were supposed to be at the same time," Nir Uriel, the director of heart failure, transplant and mechanical circulatory support for the hospital, said at a news conference Friday. University of Chicago Medicine has performed the most heart-liver-kidney transplants in the world.

Just eight minutes after a medical team finished Smith's liver transplant on Dec. 20, hospital staff learned that donor organs were available for McPharlin. Smith, who finished surgery that day, became only the 16th person in the U.S. to undergo a heart-liver-kidney transplant and hours later on Dec. 21 McPharlin became the 17th. Each surgery required a 22-person team, with some staffers working on both patients. The hospital also performed five other organ transplants during that time period.

Smith and McPharlin, who had her first heart transplant at the age of 12, arrived at the Chicago hospital in November. But neither knew they were both seeking a triple transplant when they first met during pre-therapy sessions ahead of surgery. The sessions were quiet and patients didn't share details about their transplants. But McPharlin's mother, who quit her job as a school teacher in Michigan to be with her daughter for treatment, pried out of Smith that he was awaiting the same organs as McPharlin.

"It's been mind-blowing and amazing, having someone go through the process with me, gave me more motivation," Smith, a truck driver, said during a video interview at the hospital Friday.

The pair, who are recovering on the same hospital floor, share walks and give each other high-fives when they pass one another in the hallways. Their families are already planning a dinner together in the city once the two are released and feeling better. Nurses say they notice a difference in recovery for

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the two compared to other transplant patients, because they have gone through the same unusual and debilitating surgery together.

McPharlin and Smith notice too.

"It was so cool to know we would be able to see each other progress together," McPharlin, an occupational therapist, said Friday. "It was really cool to see how Daru was getting up in the hall and I knew eventually, or pretty soon, I would be doing the same."

Stocks swing to huge gains after jobs report, trade talks

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Global stocks soared Friday and reversed the big losses they suffered just a day earlier. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rallied 746 points in the latest twist in a wild three months for markets.

Hopes for progress in the U.S.-China trade dispute, a strong report on the U.S. jobs market and encouraging comments from the head of the U.S. central bank about its interest rate policy all combined to cheer investors.

China's Commerce Ministry said trade talks will be held Monday and Tuesday in Beijing, and investors will again look for signs the world's largest economic powers are resolving their dispute. The tensions have dragged on for nearly a year, slowing business and dragging down stock indexes worldwide.

Meanwhile the Labor Department said U.S. employers added 312,000 jobs last month, a far stronger result than experts had anticipated. U.S. stocks have tumbled since October as investors worried that the economy might slow down dramatically because of challenges including the trade dispute and rising interest rates.

The stock market's plunge also threatened to shake up the confidence and the spending plans of businesses and consumers. Some analysts said investors were acting as if a recession was on the horizon, despite a lack of evidence that the U.S. economy is struggling.

"It's hard to square recession worries with the strongest job growth we've seen in years," said Alec Young, managing director of global markets research for FTSE Russell.

Stocks rose even further after Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said the central bank will be flexible in deciding if and when it raises interest rates. He added that the Fed is open to making changes in the way it shrinks its giant portfolio of bonds, which affects rates on long-term loans such as mortgages.

Until recently, the Fed had suggested it planned to raise short-term interest rates three times this year and next, and Powell said the Fed's balance sheet was shrinking "on auto-pilot." Wall Street feared that the Fed might be moving too fast in raising borrowing costs, said Phil Orlando, chief equity market strategist at Federated Investors.

The Fed's interest-rate and bond portfolio policies "were at the top of the list of things we were concerned about, which is why the statement Powell made today is so supportive of the market," Orlando said. "The Fed understands that what they attempted to communicate last month was inartful, that they didn't get the right message across, and Powell tried to reset."

The S&P 500 index climbed 84.05 points, or 3.4 percent, to 2,531.94, more than wiping out Thursday's loss. The Dow rose 3.3 percent to 23,433.16 after gaining 832 during the afternoon. The Nasdaq composite jumped 275.35 points, or 4.3 percent, to 6,738.86.

About 90 percent of the stocks on the New York Stock Exchange traded higher.

Stocks sank Thursday after Apple said iPhone sales in China are falling, partly because of the trade fight, and a survey suggested U.S. factories grew at a weaker pace. Technology companies took their biggest losses in seven years.

The U.S. and China have raised tariffs on billions of dollars of each other's goods in a fight over issues including Beijing's technology policy. Last month, President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed to 90-day ceasefire as a step toward defusing tensions, but that failed to calm the stock market.

Technology companies, banks, health care and industrial companies all made strong gains. Most of the companies in those industries stand to do better in times of faster economic growth.

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Smaller and more U.S.-focused companies did even better than larger multinationals. The Russell 2000 index surged 49.92 points, or 3.8 percent, to 1,380.75. Smaller companies have fallen further than larger ones in the last few months as investors got nervous about how the U.S. economy will perform in 2019 and 2020.

Stocks have whipsawed between huge gains and losses for the last few weeks after their big December plunge. Katie Nixon, the chief investment officer for Northern Trust Wealth Management, said investors will continue to react to the health of the economy, and to concerns about high levels of corporate debt as interest rates rise.

"We don't expect that this will be the end to the volatility," she said. "There's mounting evidence we're going to see a slowdown," albeit not a severe one.

Bond prices also changed course and moved sharply lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.66 percent after it plunged to 2.55 percent Thursday, its lowest in almost a year. That helps banks, as higher interest rates allow them to make bigger profits on mortgages and other loans.

European shares also overcome losses from a day earlier, with Germany's DAX gaining 3.4 percent and France's CAC 40 rising 2.7 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 advanced 2.2 percent.

In Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 2.2 percent. South Korea's Kospi added 0.8 percent. Japan's Nikkei 225 index fell 2.3 percent on its first day of trading in 2019 as technology and electronics makers slumped on Apple's report that Chinese iPhone sales were slipping.

U.S. crude oil added 1.8 percent to \$47.96 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, was up 2 percent to \$57.06 per barrel in London.

The dollar strengthened. It rose to 108.51 yen from 107.77 yen. The euro rose to \$1.14 from \$1.1391. The British pound moved up to \$1.2740 from \$1.2630.

Wholesale gasoline dipped 0.1 percent to \$1.35 a gallon and heating oil added 1.6 percent to \$1.77 a gallon. Natural gas rose 3.4 percent to \$3.04 per 1,000 cubic feet.

In other trading, gold fell 0.7 percent to \$1,285.80 an ounce and silver slipped 0.1 percent to \$15.79 an ounce. Copper rose 3.1 percent to \$2.65 a pound.

Stan Choe contributed to this story from New York. Annabelle Liang contributed from Singapore.

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

5 children heading to Disney killed in fiery Florida crash

By TERRY SPENCER and FREIDA FRISARO, Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A church van packed with children was headed to Walt Disney World when it got caught in a fiery pileup involving two 18-wheelers. Seven people, including five of the youngsters, died in the crash.

On Friday, investigators tried to determine what triggered the accident, which happened outside Gainesville in clear weather on a straight, flat stretch of Interstate 75, a busy highway that connects Florida to the rest of the South.

Two vehicles traveling north — a tractor-trailer and a car — smashed into each other and then burst through a metal guardrail, slamming into another semitrailer and the southbound van carrying the children. Diesel fuel leaked, and the mass erupted into a fireball, the Florida Highway Patrol said.

A fifth car, unable to avoid the chaos, sped through and hit people who were thrown from the van, the highway patrol said. Five of the children from a Pentecostal church in Marksville, Louisiana, and the two truck drivers died. At least eight others were injured, some seriously.

"It is a heartbreaking event," Lt. Patrick Riordan said Friday. He did not identify the church involved, but a member of the Avoyelles House of Mercy told The Gainesville Sun on Friday that her church was stunned. The children ranged in age from 9 to 14.

"It's unbelievable. Everybody is in shock. We lost five of our children," church member Maxine Doughty

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said. "We had our Last Supper Sunday, and the pastor said to live our lives like each day is the last day."

Church officials did not immediately respond to phone calls.

In a statement posted on the United Pentecostal Church International's Facebook page, Louisiana district superintendent Kevin Cox said a pregnant woman injured in the crash and her unborn child had been stabilized. Cox also said church pastor Eric Descant's 50-year-old wife, Karen, was critically injured and his granddaughter was among the children killed.

The highway patrol says a truck driven by Steve Holland, 59, of West Palm Beach, was traveling north in the far-right lane when his truck suddenly veered left and collided with a car driven by Robyn Rattray, 41, of Gainesville.

Both the truck and car went out of control and through the center divider, where Holland's truck plowed into the church van, driven by Amy Joffiron, 49, causing it to flip several times and eject some of the nine children on board. The highway patrol said it is unknown if any were wearing seatbelts.

Holland's truck then struck a truck driven by Douglas Bolkema, 49, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, who was also traveling south. Both trucks and Rattray's car caught fire, and a fifth vehicle hit at least one of the ejected van passengers.

Rattray and Joffiron suffered serious injuries, as did the four surviving children, who were also ages 9 to 14. They remain hospitalized, as did Karen Descant.

Authorities identified the dead children as Joel Cloud and Jeremiah Warren, both 14; Cara Descant, 13; Briena Descant, 10; and Cierra Bordelan, 9. The relationship between the Descant girls and the pastor was not immediately available.

Court records show Holland received numerous tickets between 2000 and 2014 in Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Virginia for violations such as speeding, driving an unsafe vehicle, driving an overloaded vehicle and not carrying proof of insurance. Bolkema received a ticket in 1997 for following too closely.

Vinnie DeVita said he was driving south and narrowly escaped the crash. He saw it in the rearview mirror, immediately behind him, according to a report by Orlando television station WKMG .

"If I had stepped on the brake when I heard the noise, undoubtedly, I would have been in that accident," DeVita said. "And then within probably 15 to 20 seconds of it all, it exploded. I mean, just a ball of flames."

The highway is a busy transportation corridor. Its lanes fill daily with semis that barrel among other vehicles filled with tourists heading to and from Orlando, Tampa and South Florida.

The National Transportation Safety Board would normally send a team to help with the investigation, but cannot because of the federal government shutdown. Riordan said that will not impede the highway patrol's efforts, which could take months.

Florida Department of Transportation spokesman Troy Roberts said the agency is investigating whether the guardrail should have stopped the northbound crash from crossing the highway or whether the crash was too severe.

"The guardrails are there to stop as much as they can, but there are some things they cannot," Roberts said.

It was the worst accident on I-75 in Alachua County since January 2012, when 11 people died in a chain-reaction crash attributed to heavy fog and smoke on the road. Officials were criticized for not closing the road because of the conditions. They later installed cameras, sensors and large electronic signs to help prevent similar crashes.

Frisaro contributed from Miami. Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale also contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the injured pregnant woman did not give birth to the baby, as previously indicated in a statement from Cox.

Navy SEAL pleads not guilty to killing captured ISIS teen

By JULIE WATSON, Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A decorated Navy SEAL pleaded not guilty Friday to charges of premeditated murder and other crimes in the stabbing death of a teenage Islamic State prisoner in Iraq last year and the shooting of unarmed Iraqi civilians.

Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher will stand trial Feb. 19 before a jury that will be one-third enlisted personnel. Gallagher has been jailed since his arrest on Sept. 11, and a judge said he will determine next week whether the 19-year Navy veteran should be released before trial.

The case is unusual because of the seriousness of the allegations against an elite special warfare operator and because prosecutors' case includes the accounts of fellow Navy SEALs, an extremely tight-knit group even by military standards.

At Friday's arraignment, prosecutors handed over 1,700 pages of documents, including text messages they say show Gallagher trying to intimidate witnesses. They say the information shows why he should not be released.

His attorney, Phil Stackhouse, dismissed the documents as "hearsay and double hearsay statements." He said Gallagher is being falsely accused by disgruntled SEALs who wanted to get rid of a demanding platoon leader and that several of the government's witnesses have now indicated they don't clearly remember what happened.

"He didn't murder anyone," Stackhouse told reporters outside the courtroom. "He didn't shoot at innocent people in the street."

Stackhouse told the judge that his client was venting when he sent text messages to friends that called the SEALs who reported the allegations liars and that since then he has learned coping skills after getting treatment for a traumatic brain injury last summer.

Stackhouse suggested Gallagher be released with a protective order to stay away from witnesses.

Navy prosecutors have painted a picture of a highly trained fighter and medic going off the rails on his eighth deployment, indiscriminately shooting at Iraqi civilians and stabbing to death a captured Islamic State fighter estimated to be 15 years old, then posing with the corpse, including at his re-enlistment ceremony.

Defense attorney Colby Vokey said about 20 bodies were within sight at the ceremony in a war zone.

Gallagher, who was awarded the Bronze Star twice, showed little emotion as he sat in the courtroom in a Navy dress uniform covered in medals. The judge asked defense attorneys to describe the awards at the start of the court-martial. If convicted, Gallagher faces a life sentence.

At a two-day preliminary hearing at the Navy base in November, investigators said Gallagher stabbed the teen in the neck and body with a knife after he was handed over to the SEALs in the Iraqi city of Mosul to be treated for wounds sustained by the Iraqi Army and its prisoners during an airstrike in May 2017.

Naval Criminal Investigative Service Special Agent Joe Warpinski told the court that a SEAL medic told him he believed he had just stabilized the teen when Gallagher "walked up without saying anything at all" and started stabbing him.

Afterward, prosecutors say he took photos of himself with the corpse, holding up his knife in one hand and propping up the body by holding the head with his other hand and bragged, "I got this one with my knife, with my hunting knife."

Warpinski, who spoke to nine members of SEAL Team 7, said he was told Gallagher would fire into crowds of Iraqis. He is accused of shooting an elderly man carting a water jug in Mosul in June 2017 and a girl walking along a riverbank in the same area a month later.

Prosecutors also have accused Gallagher's platoon commander, Navy Lt. Jacob Portier, of not acting on the allegations. His attorney, Jeremiah Sullivan, said Portier was the first to report them to superiors and did so as soon as he learned of them. His arraignment has not been scheduled yet.

Several SEALs testified for the defense Friday that Gallagher had an outstanding reputation and they would want him with them on the battlefield. None had served under him or was on the 2017 deployment with him.

Defense attorneys said they plan to call fellow SEALs on that deployment to testify at the trial.

Kevin Hart says he's considering Oscar hosting gig again

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Prodded by Ellen DeGeneres, comic Kevin Hart says he'll reconsider his decision to step down as host of the Academy Awards.

Hart had backed away two days after being named host last month when some homophobic tweets he had made a decade ago resurfaced. But DeGeneres urged him to host the show during an interview that aired Friday on her talk show.

The motion picture Academy has not named a replacement host for its Feb. 24 awards show.

"You have grown," DeGeneres told him. "You have apologized. You're apologizing again right now. You've done it. Don't let these people win. Host the Oscars."

She applied subtle pressure by saying after one commercial break, "We're back with this year's Oscars host, Kevin Hart."

Hart told her that "you have put a lot of things on my mind" and that he would think about their conversation.

The LGBTQ watchdog organization GLAAD on Friday reiterated its position that Hart not step down as host but instead use the platform to "send an unequivocal message of acceptance to LGBTQ youth."

If there's a campaign to get him back, it couldn't have started more slickly: on the hugely successful talk show run by one of Hollywood's most prominent gay celebrities, who hosted the Oscars herself in 2007.

DeGeneres said she called the Academy this week to urge that Hart be brought back, and was told that officials would be "thrilled" if he did. An Academy representative did not immediately return messages for comment.

Hart wrote homophobic remarks on Twitter mostly between 2009-2011, including one where he said: "Yo if my son comes home & try's 2 play with my daughters doll house I'm going 2 break it over his head & say n my voice 'stop that's gay.'" It was later deleted. He has also made anti-gay comments in his standup in the past.

Hart told her that when his old messages resurfaced, "what was once the brightest light ever just got real dark." He initially said he wouldn't apologize because he had addressed the issue several times. But given an ultimatum to apologize, he did so and stepped down.

Hart said it was hard for him because he considered it an attack when his tweets resurfaced a day after he got the Oscars gig.

"That's an attempt to end me," he said. "That's not an attack to just stop the Oscars ... Somebody has to take a stand against the ... trolls."

DeGeneres received some resistance on social media, with some commenters saying that Hart's homophobic jokes were a legitimate issue for discussion, and it wasn't a case of people maliciously trying to hurt him.

In a column posted Friday in the trade publication Variety, Caroline Framke argued that Hart hadn't proven that he'd learned much.

"If he gets the job back, it won't be because he's convinced his detractors that he actually cares about gay people," Framke wrote. "It'll be because he spun a story about vicious trolls going after him for no good reason. It might be a compelling enough angle to convince DeGeneres and her audience, but even if it manages to sway the Academy, it still won't actually be true."

DeGeneres responded to critics on Twitter: "I believe in forgiveness. I believe in second chances."

The Oscars are looking for something to juice Hollywood's biggest night, after the ceremony drew its smallest audience ever in 2018.

Outgoing US Interior secretary defends legacy as he leaves

By **MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press**

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — As former U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke exits Washington chased by ethics investigations and criticism of his actions favoring industry, he told The Associated Press he's lived up to the conservation ideals of Theodore Roosevelt and insisted the myriad allegations against him will be proven untrue.

The former Montana congressman also said he quit President Donald Trump's cabinet on his own terms, despite indications he was pressured by the White House to resign effective Wednesday.

During almost two years overseeing an agency responsible for managing 500 million acres of public lands, Zinke's broad rollbacks of restrictions on oil and gas drilling were cheered by industry. But they brought a scathing backlash from environmental groups and Democratic lawmakers who accused him of putting corporate profits ahead of preservation.

In his first interview since stepping down, Zinke said the changes he instituted meshed with Roosevelt's belief in balance between nature and industry. He added that they were needed in part to unfetter energy companies bound by unreasonable curbs on drilling that were largely imposed under former President Barack Obama.

"Teddy Roosevelt said conservation is as much development as it is preservation," Zinke said, referencing a 1910 speech by the Republican president. "Much of our work returned the American conservation ethic to best science, best practices ... rather than an elitist view of non-management that lets nature take its course."

Zinke mentioned Roosevelt often during his almost two-year tenure, and historian Patricia Limerick said it's accurate that the former president talked of development as a component of conservation. But Limerick noted Zinke's recommendations to Trump to reduce the size of national monuments in the West and elsewhere was in direct contrast to Roosevelt's embrace of the law that allowed their creation, the Antiquities Act of 1906.

"You don't get to call yourself a follower of Roosevelt if you're really chiseling away at one of his principal heritages," said Limerick, who chairs the board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado, where she's a history professor.

House Democrats plan to put Zinke's policies under the spotlight with oversight hearings beginning next month, said Adam Sarvana, a spokesman for Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona, the Democrat in line to lead the House Natural Resources Committee.

The hearings initially will focus on policy changes such as "giveaways" to the oil and gas industry under the leadership of Zinke, Sarvana said. He added they later could be expanded to include the various ethics investigations pending against Zinke, a former Navy SEAL and avowed Trump loyalist.

The investigations have ranged from a probe into a land deal involving Zinke and the chairman of energy services giant Halliburton, to questions about his decision to reject a casino in Connecticut sought by two tribes.

During his interview with the AP, Zinke denied a Washington Post report that Interior Department investigators believe he may have lied to them, which has reportedly prompted an examination of potential criminal violations by the U.S. Justice Department's public integrity section.

Several other investigations into Zinke concluded with no findings of wrongdoing. In one case he was faulted by investigators for violating a department policy by allowing his wife to ride in government vehicles with him. That report also said the Interior Department spent more than \$25,000 to provide security for the couple during a vacation to Turkey and Greece.

For the energy industry, Zinke brought relief from rules imposed under Obama that were meant to limit drilling in sensitive wildlife habitat, curb emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon monoxide and protect water supplies.

Despite the Democrats' newfound power in Washington after taking control of the House of Representatives, industry representatives said Zinke's impact will be lasting. That's because they involved agency

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regulations rather than congressional action and came at the order of Trump, said Dan Naatz, vice president of government relations for the Independent Petroleum Association of America.

"Although Secretary Zinke was effective at what he was doing, the policy really came from the president," Naatz said.

Until Trump nominates and the Senate confirms a permanent replacement, Zinke's shoes will be filled on an acting basis by his deputy, David Bernhardt, a former lobbyist for the oil and gas industry. Left-leaning groups that campaigned against Zinke already have turned their attention to Bernhardt with claims that his prior work leaves him compromised.

"David Bernhardt is too conflicted to serve him in any position, whether it's deputy, acting or full Interior secretary," said Aaron Weiss with the Center for Western Priorities. Weiss also suggested the pending investigations against Zinke are likely to continue and said the former secretary "can't make his trouble go away by simply walking away."

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, who chairs the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said Zinke worked closely with western states and respected their priorities. Barrasso said it was important for the next secretary to likewise pursue Trump's American "energy dominance" agenda while following sound environmental practices.

In his resignation letter, Zinke said he was compelled to stop down because the political attacks against him had created a distraction from Trump's drive to boost U.S. energy production.

He told the AP that the allegations fit into a "playbook" used by the administration's critics to stifle Trump's energy agenda, smear Zinke's name and undercut any future bid he might make for public office. He said he won't run for Montana governor in 2020, but did not rule out a future run.

In the weeks leading up to his resignation, the White House concluded Zinke was likely the Cabinet member most vulnerable to investigations led by newly empowered Democrats in Congress, according to an administration official not authorized to publicly discuss personnel matters who spoke on condition of anonymity.

In Zinke's telling of events, Trump remained fully supportive to the end and it was the secretary himself who made the decision to go.

His departure comes amid a partial government shutdown in which Zinke ordered many national parks to stay open, saying visitors shouldn't be penalized for the political feud centered on Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico.

With reports of overflowing trash bins spurring calls for the parks to be closed until the shutdown ends, Zinke offered some parting advice as he prepared to head back to his hometown of Whitefish, Montana, just outside Glacier National Park: "I would encourage everyone that visits their parks to help pitch in, grab a trash bag and take some trash out with you," he said. "Pack it in, pack it out."

Follow Matthew Brown at <https://twitter.com/matthewbrownap> .

Powell says he would reject any Trump request to resign

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said Friday that he will not resign if asked to do so by President Donald Trump, and that he is prepared to be patient in deciding when to raise interest rates again.

Both of those messages cheered stock market investors who had been worried about Trump's repeated attacks on his hand-picked choice to lead the nation's central bank and also the Fed's seemingly inexorable march to higher rates.

"There is no pre-set path for policy," Powell said during an appearance at a conference of economists in Atlanta. "With the muted inflation readings we have seen coming in, we will be patient as we watch to see how the economy evolves."

Private economists viewed Powell's comments as a strong signal that the Fed, which in December had

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projected another two rate hikes in 2019, may end up deciding to pause hikes for several months.

"With Chairman Powell's remarks today, I would say they will do just one hike or maybe no hikes this year," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at SS Economics. "Powell is definitely trying to calm the markets."

Wall Street, which opened sharply higher after a report showing 312,000 jobs gained in December, surged even higher during Powell's appearance. The Dow Jones industrial average finished the day up 746 points or 3.3 percent.

Powell called the jobs report "very strong" and said he was also encouraged by the rise in the labor force participation rate and gains in wages, which he said "for me at this time does not raise concerns about too high inflation."

Trump has complained that the Fed has pushed rates higher despite the fact that there is no evidence that inflation was getting out of control.

The president's attacks had become so intense that they had raised concerns that he might be considering firing Powell, a development which could send the market into a tailspin.

Trump would appear to be on shaky legal ground if he tried to fire Powell. Under the law that governs the Federal Reserve, a president can only remove a Fed chairman for cause. Courts in cases that involved other agencies have interpreted that language to not cover policy differences.

Asked if he would resign if Trump asked him to do so, Powell responded with a short "no."

Powell's willingness to be flexible on interest rates was welcome news to investors, many of whom worried that Fed chair risked cutting off the current economic expansion by continuing to raise interest rates despite signs the U.S. economy was cooling off a little.

On Friday, Powell said, "We are always prepared to shift the stance of policy and to shift it significantly if necessary" to meet the goals of maximum employment and stable prices.

Powell gave as an example the fact that in 2016, when Janet Yellen was Fed chair, the central bank began the year with a projection that it would raise rates four times that year but ended up raising rates only once because the economy hit a soft-patch.

Appearing on a panel with his two predecessors — Yellen and Ben Bernanke — Powell also said that the Fed could alter its approach to trimming its huge balance sheet if it determines such a change is needed.

The pace of Fed rate hikes and the lowering of the balance sheet, which tends to put upward pressure on interest rates, had both been concerns of investors in recent months. The stock market has seen stomach-churning declines since October, a development that Trump has blamed on the Fed's continued rate hikes, although the president's trade dispute with China as well as concerns about global economic growth also played a part in the market volatility.

The Fed had increased the size of its balance sheet four-fold to a record \$4.5 trillion in an effort to push long-term interest rates lower. But it has been gradually reversing that stance over the past year, although the balance sheet still remains above \$4 trillion. But some investors have worried that that process could push long-term rates higher at a time when the economy was slowing.

Powell on Friday stressed that the Fed was prepared to adjust the pace at which it trimmed the balance sheet if necessary to support economic growth.

While Trump has sent out a number of tweets criticizing Powell and calling the Fed the biggest threat to the economy, Powell said that he had not received any direct pressure from the White House. Asked if he had had any face-to-face meetings with Trump, Powell said he had not although he said previous Fed leaders have had discussions from time to time with previous presidents.

Asked if any future meeting with Trump was scheduled, Powell said, "I have no news on that. Nothing is scheduled."

Trump says shutdown could last for 'months or even years'

By CATHERINE LUCEY, LISA MASCARO and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump declared Friday he could keep parts of the government shut down for "months or even years" as he and Democratic leaders failed in a second closed-door meeting to resolve his demand for billions of dollars for a border wall with Mexico. They did agree to a new round of weekend talks between staff members and White House officials.

Trump met in the White House Situation Room with congressional leaders from both parties as the shutdown hit the two-week mark amid an impasse over his wall demands. Democrats emerged from the roughly two-hour meeting, which both sides said was contentious at times, to report little if any progress.

The standoff also prompted economic jitters and anxiety among some in Trump's own party. But he appeared in the Rose Garden to frame the upcoming weekend talks as progress, while making clear he would not reopen the government.

"We won't be opening until it's solved," Trump said. "I don't call it a shutdown. I call it doing what you have to do for the benefit and the safety of our country."

Trump said he could declare a national emergency to build the wall without congressional approval, but would first try a "negotiated process." Trump previously described the situation at the border as a "national emergency" before he dispatched active-duty troops in what critics described as a pre-election stunt.

Trump also said the hundreds of thousands of federal workers who are furloughed or working without pay would want him to "keep going" and fight for border security. Asked how people would manage without a financial safety net, he declared: "The safety net is going to be having a strong border because we're going to be safe."

Democrats, on the other hand, spoke of families unable to pay bills and called on Trump to reopen the government while negotiations continue. Senate Democratic Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "It's very hard to see how progress will be made unless they open up the government."

Friday's White House meeting with Trump included eight congressional leaders — the top two Democrats and Republicans of both chambers. People familiar with the session but not authorized to speak publicly described Trump as holding forth at length on a range of subjects but said he made clear he was firm in his demand for \$5.6 billion in wall funding and in rejecting the Democrats' request to reopen the government.

Trump confirmed that he privately told Democrats the shutdown could drag on for months or years, though he said he hoped it wouldn't last that long. Said Trump: "I hope it doesn't go on even beyond a few more days."

House Democrats muscled through legislation Thursday night to fund the government but not Trump's proposed wall. However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said those measures are non-starters on his side of the Capitol without the president's support.

A variety of strategies are being floated inside and outside the White House, among them trading wall funding for a deal on immigrants brought to the country as young people and now here illegally, or using a national emergency declaration to build the wall. While Trump made clear during his press conference that talk on DACA (the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program) would have to wait and that he was trying to negotiate with Congress on the wall, the conversations underscored rising Republican anxiety about just how to exit the shutdown.

Seeking to ease concerns, the White House sought to frame the weekend talks as a step forward, as did McConnell, who described plans for a "working group," though people familiar with the meeting said that phrase never actually came up. Trump designated Vice President Mike Pence, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and adviser Jared Kushner to work with a congressional delegation over the weekend. That meeting is set for 11 a.m. Saturday, the White House said.

Some GOP senators up for re-election in 2020 voiced discomfort with the shutdown in recent days, including Cory Gardner of Colorado and Susan Collins of Maine, putting additional pressure on Republicans.

But with staff level talks there is always an open question of whether Trump's aides are fully empowered to negotiate for the president. Earlier this week, he rejected his own administration's offer to accept \$2.5 billion for the wall. That proposal was made when Pence and other top officials met at the start of the

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shutdown with Schumer.

During his free-wheeling session with reporters, Trump also wrongly claimed that he'd never called for the wall to be concrete. Trump did so repeatedly during his campaign, describing a wall of pre-cast concrete sections that would be higher than the walls of many of his rally venues. He repeated that promise just days ago.

"An all concrete Wall was NEVER ABANDONED, as has been reported by the media. Some areas will be all concrete but the experts at Border Patrol prefer a Wall that is see through (thereby making it possible to see what is happening on both sides). Makes sense to me!," he tweeted on Dec. 31.

Trump was joined by Pence in the Rose Garden, as well as House Republican leaders Kevin McCarthy and Steve Scalise. McConnell, who went back to the Capitol, unaware of the press conference, said it was encouraging that the White House officials and the congressional contingent would meet over the weekend "to see if they can reach an agreement and then punt it back to us for final sign off."

Schumer said that if McConnell and Senate Republicans stay on the sidelines, "Trump can keep the government shut down for a long time."

"The president needs an intervention," Schumer said. "And Senate Republicans are just the right ones to intervene."

Adding to national unease about the shutdown are economic jitters as analysts warn of the risks of closures that are disrupting government operations across multiple departments and agencies at a time of other uncertainties in the stock market and foreign trade.

In their first votes of the new Congress, House Democrats approved bills Thursday night to re-open government at previously agreed upon levels. Several Republicans crossed over to join them.

White House and Department of Homeland Security officials have spent recent days trying to make both a public and private case that the situation at the border has reached a crisis point. Polls show a majority of Americans oppose the border wall, although Republicans strongly support it.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Mary Clare Jalonick, Laurie Kellman, Kevin Freking, Matthew Daly, Deb Riechmann and Eileen Putman contributed.

AP-NORC Poll: Immigration among the top concerns in 2019

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and HANNAH FINGERHUT, Associated Press

As much of the U.S. government remains shut down over President Donald Trump's insistence on funding for his border wall, nearly half of Americans identify immigration as a top issue for the government to work on this year.

An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted shortly before the shutdown began finds that both Republicans and Democrats are far more likely to include immigration in their list of top issues facing the country this year compared with a year ago.

Overall, 49 percent mentioned immigration in an open-ended question as one of the top five problems they hoped the government addresses in 2019. By contrast, 27 percent mentioned immigration in December 2017.

Partisan divides on the best solutions remain deep. Republicans continue to be more likely to cite immigration as a top issue than Democrats, an indication of the GOP's greater intensity on the issue. But it's an increasingly important issue to members of both parties.

The poll found that 65 percent of Republicans say immigration is one of the top five problems facing the country, up from 42 percent in 2017. Among Democrats, 37 percent cite immigration as a top issue, compared with just 2 in 10 a year ago.

Roughly two-thirds of those who named immigration as a top priority express little confidence in the government to make progress this year, including a third who say they are "not at all" confident. About a third say they are at least moderately confident in the government to make progress on immigration. This follows a year of intermittent deadlocked negotiations and standoffs between Trump and Democrats

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in Congress.

Although both Democrats and Republicans are increasingly likely to name immigration-related issues as top priorities for the government, other polls show that their opinions on the issue diverge dramatically. For example, a December poll by CNN found that 78 percent of Republicans and just 8 percent of Democrats supported building a border wall.

And with their party still in control of the White House and the Senate, Republicans are more optimistic about the government making progress on immigration this year. Among those who prioritize immigration, Republicans are more than three times as likely as Democrats to express some confidence that the government will make progress. That includes David Hoyt, a 77-year-old retired school superintendent and registered Republican in eastern Iowa.

"We waste too many resources with illegal aliens," Hoyt said. "If people want to come here, let's have them do it legally. I don't understand why people don't understand the word 'illegal.'"

Hoyt says he's also focused on the economy, and its healthy state is why he's satisfied with the country's direction and Trump's performance.

"People are busy," Hoyt said. "I can tell the economy from the number of semis on the highway, and it's loaded."

Chris Butino, 31, is a Democrat and a firefighter in Cortland, New York, who's been disappointed by Trump's rhetoric and actions on immigration, especially against refugees. Trump has sharply curtailed the number of refugees accepted by the U.S. and taken steps to limit who can claim asylum as more migrants from Central America try to do so at the Mexican border.

"We're America — we're the wealthiest nation in the world in terms of resources, and saying we're not going to take in the poor, huddled masses," Butino said. "We can maintain our own safety, but we can also be generous."

The economy remains a top priority for Americans, with 62 percent citing related issues, including mentions of jobs, unemployment, taxes and trade.

Nearly half of Americans also identify health care as one of the top five issues facing the country, unchanged from one year ago. A traditionally Democratic issue, health care is named by Democrats more than Republicans (56 percent versus 43 percent).

There was a sharp rise in environmental and climate issues after a year of wildfires and hurricanes, a change that is largely driven by Democrats. Overall, about a quarter of Americans mention the environment as a top issue. About 4 in 10 Democrats include the environment as a priority, compared with just 8 percent of Republicans. The share of Democrats naming the environment has grown 11 percentage points since a year ago.

The poll was conducted in December before the stock market gyrations and government shutdown. Gil Parks, a retired CPA who's become a rancher in Texas, is fine with the shutdown.

"It's only 25 percent of the government," he said.

Parks, a 59-year-old Republican, is optimistic the country could be in for a long stretch of economic growth, in part because of the partisan acrimony fueling the shutdown.

"If you look back in history, the economy did best when government couldn't get in the way," he said.

With Democrats assuming control of the House of Representatives, the inevitable gridlock could preserve the economic expansion, Parks argued.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to be optimistic, but feelings about the country are mixed even within the GOP. Six in 10 Americans are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country as a whole, including 79 percent of Democrats and 42 percent of Republicans. Among Republicans, that's a slight increase from 33 percent who were dissatisfied with the state of the country in October. Still, Republicans are far more likely than Democrats today to say they're satisfied with the way things are going in the country, 39 percent to 9 percent.

The unhappiness on both sides of the aisle is palpable to John Rossetti, a 47-year-old code enforcement officer in Youngstown, Ohio.

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"There's a really different, negative environment," Rossetti said. "Everywhere you go, it's there — just a very negative atmosphere."

Rossetti describes himself as a moderate to conservative Democrat who didn't support Trump in 2016 but was rooting for him to succeed. Now he's disillusioned and pessimistic about the future, and he's not alone. Americans are more likely to think things in the country will get worse in the next year than that they will get better, 42 percent to 32 percent.

More Americans do think 2019 will be a better year for them personally than think it will get worse, 37 percent to 18 percent, but another 45 percent say there won't be much difference.

Rossetti has only had two small raises in the past 12 years he's worked for Youngstown, yet his health insurance premiums keep rising.

"I don't think I'm doing better," Rossetti said. "I feel like I'm doing what I need to do to stay afloat."

The AP-NORC poll of 1,067 adults was conducted Dec. 13-16 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

High court to take new look at partisan electoral districts

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is plunging back into the issue of whether electoral districts can be too partisan.

Disputes have arisen in cases involving North Carolina's heavily Republican congressional map and a Democratic congressional district in Maryland, and the justices said Friday they will hear arguments in March.

The high court could come out with the first limits on partisan politics in the drawing of electoral districts, but also could ultimately decide that federal judges have no role in trying to police political mapmaking.

The court took up the issue of partisan gerrymandering last term in cases from Wisconsin and the same Maryland district, but the justices failed to reach a decision on limiting political line-drawing for political gain.

Justice Anthony Kennedy had said he was open to limits. He has since retired, and Justice Brett Kavanaugh has taken Kennedy's seat. He has no judicial record on the issue.

The court again has taken one case in which Democrats are accused of unfairly limiting Republicans' political power and one in which Republicans are the alleged culprits. The court also has the entire North Carolina congressional map before it, but only the one Maryland district.

In both cases, however, lower courts have found that the party in charge of redistricting — Republicans in North Carolina, Democrats in Maryland — egregiously violated the rights of voters in the other party.

The North Carolina map was redrawn in 2016 because federal courts determined two districts originally drawn in 2011 were illegal because of excessive racial bias.

In November, Republicans won at least nine of the 13 seats in North Carolina's congressional delegation and appeared to have won a 10th seat, in keeping with how many they held before the 2016 remapping. But state election officials have so far declined to certify the results in the 9th District in south-central North Carolina because of allegations of absentee ballot fraud.

A key Republican in the North Carolina redistricting process, state Rep. David Lewis, has said that he drew 10 Republican districts because he did not "believe it's possible to draw a map with 11 Republicans and two Democrats."

In January, a three-judge court found that the map violated the Constitution and ordered the state to come up with a new plan quickly, in time for the 2018 elections. But the Supreme Court delayed enforcement of the court order, mainly because the justices already were considering the partisan districting cases from Maryland and Wisconsin.

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When those cases did not settle the issue, the high court ordered the three judges to take a new look at their earlier decision. They reaffirmed the ruling in August, but also concluded there wasn't enough time to put new districts in place for 2018.

Common Cause, the watchdog group that supports limits on partisan line-drawing, is leading the challenge to the North Carolina districts. "Whether it is Democrats or Republicans manipulating the election maps, gerrymanders cheat voters out of true representation," Common Cause president Karen Hobert Flynn said in a statement. "The Supreme Court has the opportunity to set a clear standard that will restore a meaningful vote to millions of Americans disenfranchised by gerrymanders in Maryland, North Carolina and across the country."

Bill D'Elia, a spokesman for North Carolina Republican state Senate leader Phil Berger, said Friday that Democrats have been looking for much of this decade to find judges who will redraw maps that will boost their candidates. "We hope the Supreme Court finally puts this nonsense to rest and that Democrats go back to the old-fashioned way of winning elections: convincing people to vote for them," D'Elia said in an email.

In Maryland, Democratic Rep. David Trone was sworn into office Thursday to represent a district that runs from the Washington suburbs to the rural northwest corner of the state. Democrats who controlled the redistricting process overhauled the district in 2011, turning what had been a reliably Republican stronghold into a Democratic district.

Several Republican voters sued over the new district's boundaries, claiming it unfairly favored Democrats. A day after the November elections, a three-judge panel agreed with the Republicans who sued and ordered Maryland officials to draw a new congressional redistricting plan that isn't tainted by partisan gerrymandering.

Judge Paul Niemeyer of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit said in his opinion for the panel that the Maryland congressional map removed roughly 66,000 Republican voters from the district and added around 24,000 Democratic voters, "bringing about the single greatest alteration of voter makeup in any district in the Nation following the 2010 census."

Trone is not a party to the case, but he filed a legal brief in which he said he "is no fan of partisan gerrymandering, but that does not mean it is a terminal disease, much less one that the judiciary can or should cure."

Associated Press writer Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

US employers went on a surprising hiring spree in December

By JOSH BOAK, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers went on a hiring spree in December, adding a surprising 312,000 jobs and providing a dose of reassurance about the economy after a turbulent few months on Wall Street.

The job gains reported Friday by the Labor Department came despite a trade war with China, a global slowdown and a partial government shutdown now entering its third week.

The nation's unemployment rate rose slightly to 3.9 percent last month, but that, too, was considered a positive sign, reflecting an increase in Americans beginning to look for work. And average hourly pay improved 3.2 percent from a year ago.

Stocks surged on the news, along with word that the U.S. and China will hold trade talks next week and comments from Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell that the Fed will be flexible in judging whether to raise interest rates further. The Dow Jones industrial average shot up 747 points, or 3.3 percent.

President Donald Trump called the job growth "GREAT" on Twitter.

The torrid hiring in December far outstripped the 180,000 jobs investors had been anticipating and could help ease fears that the economy's expansion — now in the middle of its 10th year — may be coming to an end.

"The labor market is very strong even though the economy appears to be slowing," said Eric Winograd,

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senior U.S. economist at the investment management firm AllianceBernstein. "Those two things cannot coexist for very long. Either weakening demand will lead firms to dial back the pace of hiring or the robust pace of hiring will lead firms to ramp back up production."

In recent weeks, financial markets have plunged amid concerns that the U.S. could be in a recession by 2020. The Dow suffered its worst December since the middle of the Depression in 1931.

Major companies such as Apple say their sales are being jeopardized by the tariff war between Washington and Beijing, and an important gauge of U.S. manufacturing posted its steepest decline in a decade Thursday.

China, the world's second-largest economy, is also mired in a slowdown, its consumers losing much of their appetite for real estate, iPhones, Ford vehicles and jewelry from Tiffany & Co.

The U.S. government shutdown and Trump's attacks on the Fed and its chairman over the central bank's rate increases have also worried investors, though Powell may have eased some of those concerns Friday when he stressed that he would not resign if the president told him to do so.

The strong job growth suggests employers believe U.S. consumer spending will stay robust.

Health care and education added 82,000 jobs last month, the largest jump in nearly nine years. Restaurants and drinking places posted a net gain of 40,700 jobs. Builders added 38,000 construction jobs, while manufacturers increased their payrolls by 32,000 workers.

Businesses are still searching for more workers.

Fresh Coat Painters, based in Cincinnati, plans to nearly double the 300 employees who paint homes and businesses as it expands this year across this country. The franchiser is also launching an apprenticeship program to attract workers, in addition to providing higher pay and benefits.

Tara Riley, president of Fresh Coat, said that franchise owners are having to actively search for workers instead of simply posting ads.

"We realized it was a mindset change: You have to be recruiting, rather than hiring," Riley said.

Still, Kevin Hassett, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, cautioned on Thursday that the jobs report for January could be weak if the shutdown continues. Job totals could be lowered by hundreds of thousands of government employees being temporarily put out of work.

"So when we see the January jobs number, it could be a big negative," Hassett said.

In 2018, employers added 2.6 million jobs, or an average of nearly 220,000 a month, according to the Labor Department.

At some point, even if the economy remains healthy, monthly job gains will likely downshift to a more gradual pace. This is because there is a dwindling pool of unemployed people. There were 6.3 million people looking for a job in December, down from 6.5 million a year ago.

"People should not get used to numbers like the one we saw this month," said Martha Gimbel, director of economic research at the jobs site Indeed. "Eventually, job growth is going to start slowing down. When that happens, we shouldn't panic."

American held for spying is also British, Irish, Canadian

By JIM HEINTZ and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The American former Marine who is being held in Moscow on spying charges also holds British, Irish and Canadian citizenship, officials said. Britain's foreign secretary charged Friday that Russia is trying to use him as a pawn in its geopolitical games.

The news that Paul Whelan holds citizenship in four countries brings international pressure on Russia from several fronts. Britain, Ireland, and Canada have asked that their diplomats be allowed to visit him as well as the U.S. ambassador.

Whelan, the 48-year-old global security director for a U.S. auto parts company, was arrested Dec. 28 in Moscow. At the time, he was identified only as an American.

Russian authorities have released no information about the charges against Whelan, who could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted of spying. Russian media reported Thursday that Whelan had been

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formally indicted for spying. The Interfax news agency said he denied the allegation.

Whelan's family says he was in Russia to attend a friend's wedding. A Russian lawmaker, meanwhile, hinted Friday that the detainee could possibly be swapped for a Russian woman in the United States who has pleaded guilty to trying to influence U.S. politics.

Relations between Moscow and London have hit a low point in the wake of Britain's allegations that Russian military intelligence agents were behind the nerve-agent poisoning of a Russian former double agent and his daughter in the British city of Salisbury in March.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said his government was helping Whelan.

"We are giving him every support we that we can, but we don't agree with individuals being used in diplomatic chess games," Hunt said Friday on Sky News. "We are extremely worried about him and his family."

U.S. Ambassador Jon Huntsman Jr. met with Whelan earlier this week at Lefortovo Prison in Moscow.

"He has British citizenship. The British side has sent a request for a consular visit. Work on it is in progress," the Russian state news agency Tass cited Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying.

Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs on Friday confirmed that Whelan also holds Irish citizenship and said it is requesting consular access, while Global Affairs Canada confirmed that it is providing consular assistance to Whelan and is asking Russian authorities for more information on his case.

Whelan's twin brother David said in a statement for the family that they were "very pleased to know that staff of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow have been given consular access to Paul and confirmed that he is safe."

He said the family's "focus remains on ensuring that Paul is safe, well treated, has a good lawyer, and is coming home." He urged both the U.S. Congress and the U.S. State Department to help get his brother freed.

Whelan's arrest came two weeks after Russian gun-rights activist Maria Butina pleaded guilty in the United States to conspiring to act as a foreign agent by trying to infiltrate conservative circles and the National Rifle Association to influence U.S. politics.

Butina has become a cause celebre for Russia — her face is the profile picture on the Foreign Ministry's Facebook page — and the timing of Whelan's arrest has led to suggestions that he is being seen as a potential swap for her.

A top member of Russia's parliament, foreign affairs committee deputy head Dmitry Novikov, on Friday appeared to suggest that was a possibility once the investigation into Whelan was completed.

"I think that we have to give our special services the opportunity to finalize things with the detainees. Then we will see," he said, according to the Interfax news agency.

U.K.-Russian relations were sharply damaged by the Salisbury nerve agent poisoning in March, for which Russia has angrily denied involvement.

The two Russian suspects identified by British authorities, who were spotted on security cameras in Salisbury on the day that former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and Yulia Skripal were poisoned, claim they were businessmen on a short holiday to see the city's famed cathedral.

Britain expelled 23 Russian diplomats in the case, and Russia sent home the same number. Many British allies made similar expulsions, with more than 150 Russian diplomats kicked out overall.

Whelan, a former staff sergeant with the Marines in Iraq, has visited Russia since at least 2007. He is the global security director for the Auburn Hills, Michigan-based BorgWarner, an auto parts supplier.

Katz reported from London. Rob Gillies in Toronto also contributed.

What to watch for at this Sunday's Golden Globes

By JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Dramatic period pieces will vie for the top comedy-musical awards and song-stuffed movies are poised to dominate the dramatic categories. Welcome to the 76th annual Golden Globes.

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Category confusion often reigns at the Globes. Remember when laughers like "The Martian" and "Get Out" competed as comedies? But the Globes, reliably the frothiest, quirkiest and most entertaining stop in the awards-season march to the Academy Awards, might feel especially upside down this year.

The night, to be broadcast live Sunday on NBC, may ultimately belong to Bradley Cooper's "A Star Is Born" revival. It's the favorite for best picture (drama), best actress (Lady Gaga), best song ("Shallow") and best actor (Bradley Cooper). The film's stiffest competition may come from another music movie: the Freddie Mercury biopic "Bohemian Rhapsody," whose star, Rami Malek, some believe could pull off the acting upset over Cooper.

Despite their copious tuneage, the campaigns of both "A Star Is Born" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" elected for the more serious dramatic category. For "A Star Is Born," it's a kind of power move to firmly establish itself as the Oscar front runner many believe it is.

Oscar voting, as it turns out this year, commences Monday, the morning after the Golden Globes. If "A Star Is Born" runs away with the Globes, it will enter the nominations period of the Academy Awards as the favorite by a wide margin.

With "A Star Is Born" (along with "Black Panther," "If Beale Street Could Talk" and "BlacKkKlansman") up for best picture as a drama, that's left a few humor-tinged movies many would peg as dramas — "The Favourite," "Green Book" and "Vice" — to give the comedy/musical side of the Globes a bit more heft than usual.

Of those, "Vice" comes in with the most nominations of any film (six), but the chances of "The Favourite" are probably the best on Sunday. "The Favourite," Yorgos Lanthimos' triangular power struggle in Queen Anne's court, is the most decorated film of the bunch in an awards season that, despite any other fluctuations, has been rigid in its acclaim for the powerhouse trio of Olivia Colman, Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone.

Emily Blunt, nominated twice this year by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (best actress for "Mary Poppins Returns" and best supporting actress for "A Quiet Place") could give Colman — named the lead of "The Favourite" — a run for her money. But Colman's tragicomic performance as Queen Anne has made her the definite front-runner and potentially Lady Gaga's stiffest competition come the Oscars when the two best-actress contenders will presumably go head to head.

The awards season of "Green Book" has been marred by backlash, so Peter Farrelly's 1960s road trip tale probably has the most to gain from a strong showing at the Globes. The film's best actor (comedy) contender, Viggo Mortensen, may not be able to challenge Christian Bale's Dick Cheney, but the HFPA — which overlooked Mahershala Ali for "Moonlight" — may right that wrong with an award for his supporting performance in "Green Book."

But if the lines of comedy, musical and drama are particularly blurred at this year's Globes, they are even more so between film and television.

There are as many movie stars nominated in the TV categories as there are in the film ones. Among them: Julia Roberts ("Homecoming"), Jim Carrey ("Kidding"), Amy Adams (up for both "Vice" and "Sharp Objects") Michael Douglas ("The Kominsky Method"), Benedict Cumberbatch ("Patrick Melrose"), Penelope Cruz ("The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story"), Patricia Arquette ("Escape at Dannemora"), Hugh Grant ("A Very English Scandal") and Laura Dern ("The Tale").

Their shows and others ("The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," "Barry," "Bodyguard," "Killing Eve") will be in the mix, and the victors may well muddy another awards show boundary: that between host and winner. Sandra Oh, the star of "Killing Eve," is favored to win best actress in a drama series, potentially giving her a welcome respite from hosting duties alongside Andy Samberg.

Oh and Samberg will have the challenge of marshalling a broadcast that last year fell 11 percent in viewership for NBC. That ceremony, when women attendees wore black, was atypically solemn for the Globes, and rife with protest, coming as the first major awards show of the post-Harvey Weinstein #MeToo era.

But for a Globes full of head-scratchers, Samberg and Oh — each hailing from different realms of comedy and drama — are a fittingly, charmingly incongruous pair.

This story has been corrected to show that this is the 76th edition of the Globes, not the 71st.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Wisconsin's ousted Gov. Scott Walker says he may run again

By SCOTT BAUER, Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Ousted Republican Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker said Friday that he would be interested in running for public office again, maybe even for governor in four years.

Walker spoke to The Associated Press from the vacated governor's mansion as he prepares to be replaced Monday by Democratic Gov.-elect Tony Evers. Walker, a presidential candidate in the 2016 race, served two terms as governor before Evers narrowly defeated him in November.

Walker's immediate plans are to hit the speaking circuit, advocating for conservative proposals and talking up the conservative agenda he enacted in Wisconsin. Walker said he also sees himself as President Donald Trump's chief advocate in Wisconsin — comments that came just days after fellow Republican Mitt Romney, also a former governor, penned a scathing op-ed questioning Trump's character.

Walker, who said he hadn't read Romney's column, defended Trump's record and said no other Republican could defeat him in the presidential primary in 2020.

"Donald Trump, I believe, will be the nominee," Walker said.

When Walker dropped out of the presidential race in 2015, he urged others to join him and unite to defeat Trump. He later endorsed Texas Sen. Ted Cruz before finally backing Trump after his nomination was all but certain.

Walker acknowledged there are a "few things" he wishes Trump had done differently, pointing to "tweets and words" the president has used. But he praised Trump's judicial appointments, his signing of the new tax law and his trade agreements that Walker said have helped Wisconsin's dairy and manufacturing industries.

"I'm old school," Walker said. "I believe that actions speak louder than words. Are there tweets or words occasionally that I wish he would do differently? Absolutely. I think even some of his most ardent supporters would say that."

Walker said his wife, Tonette, has encouraged him not to rule out another run for office — but he did foreclose any longshot challenge to Trump in 2020.

"No, no, no," he said. "As much as my wife encouraged me to say, 'someday run,' that would not be a position she would encourage me to run for right now."

Walker, who has been in elected office for 25 years, is planning to hit the national speaking circuit to advocate for taking power out of the federal government and giving it to the states. But the 51-year-old said he has to decide whether elected office, including in the U.S. Senate, might be the best place for him to make the argument.

"It may be, in the end, I'm better equipped to make those changes become a reality not in elected office," he said. "But I certainly wouldn't rule it out."

As for a future run at the governor's office, Walker said: "If Republicans are going to make the case, it's probably worth, at least for governor, having a new face, a new name on the ballot for that. But you never rule anything out."

Evers' spokeswoman Carrie Lynch declined to comment. But Wisconsin Democratic Party spokeswoman Courtney Beyer said Walker "clearly doesn't know what to do with himself now that he's out of a job." She said voters who elected Evers were "eager to turn the page on the politics of the past and ... Scott Walker would be wise to listen."

Walker is considering running to replace Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson in 2022. Johnson, who is in his second term, has said he won't run for a third time. Walker said he was looking at the experience of other former governors who have gone on to serve in the Senate.

"They'll tell you often they're frustrated," Walker said. "To me, I wouldn't want to go somewhere and be frustrated just for the sake of a title. I want to be able to get something done."

Follow Scott Bauer on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sbauerAP>

Unpaid bills, leftovers, downtime: Workers cope in shutdown

By **CLAUDIA LAUER** and **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**, Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — As the government's partial shutdown pushed toward a third week, hundreds of thousands of federal workers are feeling the financial pinch.

They're calling mortgage companies, hoping for a break, and weighing the risks of letting other bills go unpaid. They're reheating leftovers and turning down the thermostat to save a few bucks. They're looking into applying for loans or unemployment insurance.

Their worries go beyond household budgets. Some are stressed about the unfinished work piling up in their absence while President Donald Trump and Congress clash over a plan for reopening the government. For many furloughed federal employees, the worst part is the uncertainty over how long the shutdown will last. A look at some of their worries:

SAVING RECEIPTS

This is Nora Brooks' favorite time of the year. Not because of the holidays, but because of her job. The 61-year-old Philadelphia native is a customer service representative for the Internal Revenue Service. She loves helping taxpayers navigate the IRS, including getting their refunds.

"I get to be the person that explains to you what you have to do to make it better," Brooks said.

At 11:30 p.m. Dec. 21, Brooks entered into the system one last concern from a taxpayer whose refund had been held up. "I didn't want the shutdown to further delay this taxpayer I made a commitment to," she said.

For the past 13 days, she's been furloughed, worrying about whether she'll need to seek a second job. The agency requires pre-approval to avoid conflicts of interest, but there's no one in the office to sign off.

She stayed up until 3 a.m. Wednesday figuring out which bills needed to be paid and which could wait. The agency gave employees a letter explaining the furlough to creditors, but "it means absolutely nothing to them," she said.

So Brooks' recent purchases sit in bags, receipts on top, in case she needs money for the electric bill. The thermostat is turned down; she dons a hoodie inside. She spent her health savings account instead of letting it carry over because the reimbursement could pay bills.

"You try not to freak out, but I don't have any control over what's going to happen next month. I'm second guessing. Should I have had a whole nest egg? Well, no, my pay doesn't allow for that," she said.

RAIDING THE FREEZER

Rebecca Maclean, a housing program specialist for the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Pittsburgh, received her last pre-shutdown paycheck over the weekend. She and her husband used it to make their monthly mortgage payment and cover some Christmas expenses for their three children.

Maclean, 41, said her family is trying to cut back on expenses. They stayed home for a movie night instead of going to a theater. Instead of takeout dinners, they eat leftovers and call it the "Freezer Baking Challenge."

The family's financial outlook isn't dire yet — her husband, Dan Thompson, owns a knife-making business and works as an elected constable. But they recently sat down to prioritize which bills must be paid and which can be late without dinging their credit.

"We're fine for now," she said. "Missing two paychecks in January might be a little hairy."

Maclean, a local shop steward for the American Federation of Government Employees union, said she's frustrated that federal employees are being used "as a bargaining chip."

"I don't know why they want to use 800,000 government employees to make a point," she said.

FILLING THE DOWNTIME

In a coffee shop offering free drinks to furloughed workers, Amanda Wagner enjoyed a perk of the downtime from the shutdown: She spent a leisurely Thursday morning assembling a digital photo album

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of her two young children.

Wagner, 37, and 36-year-old husband Nelson are both federal employees. She's a branch chief for the Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington. He works for the Justice Department. Neither will draw a paycheck until the government reopens.

"The uncertainty is scary," she said.

For now, Wagner isn't worried about covering their biggest monthly expenses: the mortgage on their Takoma Park, Maryland, home; child care for their two kids; and credit card bills. Her children's daycare centers are allowing parents to defer payments during the shutdown.

She knows some colleagues face tougher choices, such as whether to borrow money from family.

"Frankly, I think it's going to affect us if it lasts much longer. Then I think we will have some cash-flow issues," she said.

A silver lining: The family is catching up on household projects. They built a bed for their daughter, who just grew out of her crib.

LIVING PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK

Single parent Leisyka Parrott, a Bureau of Land Management employee in Arcata, California, waited until the weekend before Christmas to shop for her 13-year-old son. Her furlough had a sobering effect on their holiday celebration.

"I definitely went really light on it this year," Parrott said. "I explained to my son that our financial future is uncertain."

Parrott, 47, a union steward for the National Federation of Federal Employees, isn't taking it for granted that she and other furloughed workers will get back pay, as they did after previous government shutdowns.

"It's scary," she said. "I do live paycheck to paycheck."

Gas isn't cheap, so Parrott stays home as much as she can. With rent and car payments, she doesn't have much wiggle room in her family budget.

"I already live pretty frugally," she said.

She's reluctant to borrow money from a federal employee credit union but says she might explore that if the shutdown extends into next week.

STILL GOING TO WORK

Mike Gayzagian, a Transportation Security Administration officer at Boston's Logan Airport, got his last pre-shutdown paycheck last week and continues to report to work, as all TSA officers have since the government closed.

The 49-year-old said worrying about finances has made it difficult to concentrate on keeping airports safe.

"It's a bizarre situation to be in, where you know you have to go to work but you're not getting paid," said Gayzagian, who has worked for the TSA for more than a decade and recently became acting president of Local 2617 of the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents TSA workers in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

The Watertown, Massachusetts, resident says he and his wife, who works for a bank, have January's rent covered, but they've already started looking to defer other bills on their two-bedroom apartment.

"As a federal employee, we're not supposed to be political," Gayzagian said. "This is not our fight, but we're being used as pawns."

He's also concerned about the effect frequent shutdowns could have on government service.

"People can't work in an industry that's at risk of shutting down once or twice a year," he said.

WORRYING OVER CONTRACTOR PAY

Federal contractor Chris Erickson says he'll run out of vacation days if the shutdown continues.

The father of three from Salt Lake City will then crack into his savings, and he'll likely postpone a 14th wedding anniversary trip with his wife to a cabin.

Erickson said he likely won't get the chance for reimbursement for the lost days because he's a contractor.

"It feels like contractors are forgotten in the mix," he said. "Congress issues back pay for the government employees, and long-term contractors are ignored."

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Erickson, 36, could probably find another job, but the software engineer says he believes in the work he does for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: designing software to help governments and private companies work together to better protect endangered species during construction projects.

Erickson blames the shutdown on Trump and his demand for a border wall.

"One can argue over the merits of border security," he said. "But if you really think about it, walls are pretty ineffective."

Erickson called Washington's political divide depressing.

"We've moved to the point where we no longer see the person who has a different set of views as different," he said. "We see them as evil."

Kunzelman reported from Silver Spring, Maryland. Associated Press reporters Philip Marcelo in Watertown, Massachusetts, and Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia, contributed to this report.

Tropical storm's rain, surging seas strike Thai beaches

By **SUMETH PANPETCH, Associated Press**

NAKHON SI THAMMARAT, Thailand (AP) — Rain, wind and surging seawater from a tropical storm buffeted coastal villages and world-famous tourist resorts on southern Thailand's east coast on Friday, knocking down trees and utility poles and flooding roads.

One person was reported dead and another missing after a fishing boat with a crew of six capsized in high waves, but there were no reports of major damage by nightfall. It appeared that Tropical Storm Pabuk caused aggravation during the country's high tourist season but less damage than had been feared.

Airlines and boat operators suspended operations for safety reasons and tourists were forced to change travel plans.

Beaches were closed, but even with the bad weather approaching, tourists on the popular island of Koh Samui in the Gulf of Thailand continued to patronize bars and restaurants catering to them.

That was good fortune for the tourism industry, whose safety problems were highlighted last July when 47 Chinese tourists drowned after their boat sank in rough seas near the popular resort of Phuket.

Ahead of this week's storm, more than 6,100 people in four provinces were evacuated, according to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation.

The Meteorological Department said the storm had maximum sustained winds of 65 kilometers (40 miles) per hour at late afternoon, down from 75 kph (47 mph) when it hit land shortly after noon.

It continued to warn of strong winds and waves 3-5 meters (10 to 16 feet) high in the Gulf of Thailand and 2-3 meters (6 to 10 feet) in the Andaman Sea. It advised all ships to stay ashore through Saturday and warned of possible storm surges on the Gulf coast.

"We can expect heavy rain and downpours, flooding and flash floods in the area throughout the night," department Director-General Phuwieng Prakhammintara said.

Evacuation efforts were especially intense in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, about 800 kilometers (480 miles) south of Bangkok, where authorities sent trucks through flooded streets with downed power lines, urging people in danger zones to leave.

"You cannot stay here. It's too dangerous," they repeated from truck-mounted loudspeakers.

Koh Samui appeared to have been spared much of the brunt of the storm.

Rain there stopped by Friday evening, said Joe Kieta, and American visitor, "so it seems like the worst is past us."

Kieta, editor of California's Fresno Bee newspaper, said in an email that roads on the island had light debris, his hotel's beach area was closed and guests were discouraged from going out.

Southern Thailand also has popular resort destinations on its west coast on the Andaman Sea, and they now await the storm.

The navy said Thailand's sole aircraft carrier, the HTMS Chakri Naruebet, was on standby at its base east of Bangkok, prepared to sail to help with relief efforts at a moment's notice.

PTT Exploration and Production Public Co. Ltd. said it inspected its offshore gas platforms in the Gulf of Thailand and plans to resume production on Sunday. It said all staff were safe.

There had been fears that the storm would be the worst to hit Thailand since 1989, when Typhoon Gay left more than 400 people dead. A tropical storm in 1962 killed more than 900 people in the south.

Rhodes scholar and 'Dreamer' fears he can't return to US

By PHILIP MARCELO, Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — He became the first "Dreamer" to win the prestigious Rhodes scholarship, but for recent Harvard University graduate Jin Park, the joy of that achievement has given way to uncertainty.

The 22-year-old, who lives in New York City, risks not being allowed back in the country if he enrolls at the University of Oxford in England in the fall.

President Donald Trump's administration rescinded the option for overseas travel for those with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status, or DACA, when he moved to phase out the Obama-era program in 2017.

But travel abroad, which was allowed under limited circumstances such as academic study during the Obama administration, should still be permitted because the federal courts have upheld the program for now, argue Park and his supporters.

"If I leave, there's a very real possibility that I won't be able to come back. That's the biggest fear for sure," said Park, whose family came to the U.S. from South Korea when he was 7 years old. "I haven't really thought about what that's going to mean if I'm not allowed back."

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, which administers DACA, didn't respond to emails seeking comment.

DACA recipients, commonly called "Dreamers" because of never-passed proposals in Congress called the DREAM Act, are protected from deportation because they were brought into the country illegally at a young age.

Discussing the risks has been a delicate topic to broach with his parents, who cried out of joy when he won the scholarship, Park said.

"I've been avoiding that question," he said days after graduating from Harvard last month. "This was especially meaningful for them. It was like a validation of the sacrifices they've made for me."

Nearly 700,000 individuals are currently on DACA, which was created in 2012 and can be renewed every two years. To qualify, immigrants must have entered the country by 2007 and been under age 16 when they arrived.

The Trump administration issued an order winding down the program in 2017, but federal judges in New York, California and Washington, D.C., ruled against those efforts last year and have effectively kept the program running.

The administration, which is now seeking a Supreme Court review of those rulings, said last February it would honor travel requests approved before it moved to end DACA, but is also warning recipients that going abroad without so-called "advance parole" approval "automatically terminates your deferred action under DACA."

Past Rhodes scholars and other Rhodes Trust supporters are volunteering their private counsel to Park in the meantime, but it's a "matter of American law and not anything the Rhodes Trust can resolve alone," said Elliot Gerson, the British organization's American secretary. "Our hope is for federal action," he added.

"The government should enforce the law as it currently stands, to allow Jin to fulfil his scholarly work," said Kristian Ramos, a spokesman for Define American, an immigrant advocacy organization that supported Park in his Rhodes scholarship bid.

Park could turn down the scholarship but has decided against that route. He wants to continue to be a voice in the immigration debate and believes the benefits of going to Oxford outweigh the risks.

"I'm looking forward to having that unstructured time to think about these broader questions of who belongs in America and the value judgments we make about others," he said.

Park has been a vocal advocate for DACA recipients since he was in high school. In 2015, he founded

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Higher Dreams, a nonprofit organization that helps students without permanent immigration status navigate the college application process.

With the backing of Harvard, Park applied for the Rhodes scholarship last year as part of a broader effort to underscore how DACA recipients didn't qualify for the venerated award and others like it. The scholarship was created in 1902 by British businessmen and politician Cecil Rhodes and provides all expenses for at least two years of study at Oxford.

Park's application — like a number of others in recent years — was rejected, but the message was received. The Rhodes organization changed its policy effective this year. Park re-applied and was accepted.

Gerson said the change reflects the organization's efforts to expand eligibility. Legal permanent residents and residents of U.S. territories like Puerto Rico have also been allowed to apply in recent years.

At Oxford, Park hopes to study migration and political theory as he weighs his future.

The molecular and cell biology major has also applied to medical school, but he hasn't ruled out working in city government, where he believes he can make an impact on immigration policy "no matter who is in the White House."

And regardless what happens next, Park has the conviction of knowing where home is.

"For me, I think of Queens, New York," he said. "Whatever happens, I'm always going to know that fact. Even if I have to spend the rest of my life convincing the administration, or whoever comes next."

Follow Philip Marcelo at twitter.com/philmarcelo.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Jan. 5, the fifth day of 2019. There are 360 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 5, 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed assistance to countries to help them resist Communist aggression in what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.

On this date:

In 1066, Edward the Confessor, King of England, died after a reign of nearly 24 years.

In 1589, Catherine de Medici (MEHD'-uh-chee) of France died at age 69.

In 1781, a British naval expedition led by Benedict Arnold burned Richmond, Virginia.

In 1895, French Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, convicted of treason, was publicly stripped of his rank. (He was ultimately vindicated.)

In 1925, Democrat Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming took office as America's first female governor, succeeding her late husband, William, following a special election.

In 1933, the 30th president of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, died in Northampton, Massachusetts, at age 60. Construction began on the Golden Gate Bridge. (Work was completed four years later.)

In 1943, educator and scientist George Washington Carver died in Tuskegee, Alabama, at about age 80.

In 1953, Samuel Beckett's two-act tragicomedy "Waiting for Godot," considered a classic of the Theater of the Absurd, premiered in Paris.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan announced he was nominating Elizabeth Dole to succeed Drew Lewis as secretary of transportation; Dole became the first woman to head a Cabinet department in Reagan's administration, and the first to head the DOT.

In 1993, the state of Washington executed Westley Allan Dodd, an admitted child sex killer, in America's first legal hanging since 1965.

In 1994, Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, former speaker of the House of Representatives, died in Boston at age 81.

In 1998, Sonny Bono, the 1960s pop star-turned-politician, was killed when he struck a tree while skiing at the Heavenly Ski Resort on the Nevada-California state line; he was 62.

Ten years ago: President-elect Barack Obama met with congressional leaders, declaring the national

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economy was "bad and getting worse" and predicting lawmakers would approve a mammoth revitalization package within two weeks of his taking office. Former Attorney General Griffin B. Bell died in Atlanta at age 90. Retired Lt. Gen. Harry W.O. Kinnard, a paratroop officer who'd suggested the famously defiant answer "Nuts!" to a German demand for surrender during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, died in Arlington, Va., at age 93.

Five years ago: The Iraqi military tried to dislodge al-Qaida militants in Sunni-dominated Anbar province, unleashing airstrikes and besieging the regional capital. Acting with a court order, the family of Jahi (juh-HY') McMath, a 13-year-old California girl declared brain dead after a tonsillectomy, removed her from a California hospital to be cared for elsewhere. (Following several years of being on life support, Jahi died June 22, 2018, following surgery.)

One year ago: "Fire and Fury" by Michael Wolff, a book in which former aide Steve Bannon was quoted as expressing doubts about President Donald Trump's competence, was released; Trump had said on the eve of publication that the book was full of "lies, misrepresentations and sources that don't exist." New York City officials said the city had ended 2017 with 290 murders, the fewest on record in the modern era; the number of shootings and overall crimes had also declined. Actor Jerry Van Dyke died in Arkansas at the age of 86. Astronaut John Young, who walked on the moon and later commanded the first space shuttle flight, died at his Houston home; he was 87.

Today's Birthdays: Former Vice President Walter F. Mondale is 91. Actor Robert Duvall is 88. Juan Carlos, former King of Spain, is 81. Singer-musician Athol Guy (The Seekers) is 79. Former talk show host Charlie Rose is 77. Actress-director Diane Keaton is 73. Actor Ted Lange (lanj) is 71. Rhythm-and-blues musician George "Funky" Brown (Kool and the Gang) is 70. Rock musician Chris Stein (Blondie) is 69. Former CIA Director George Tenet is 66. Actress Pamela Sue Martin is 66. Actor Clancy Brown is 60. Singer Iris Dement is 58. Actress Suzy Amis is 57. Actor Ricky Paull (correct) Goldin is 54. Actor Vinnie Jones is 54. Rock musician Kate Schellenbach (Luscious Jackson) is 53. Actor Joe Flanigan is 52. Dancer-choreographer Carrie Ann Inaba is 51. Rock musician Troy Van Leeuwen (Queens of the Stone Age) is 51. Actress Heather Paige Kent is 50. Rock singer Marilyn Manson is 50. Actor Shea Whigham is 50. Actor Derek Cecil is 46. Actress-comedian Jessica Chaffin is 45. Actor Bradley Cooper is 44. Actress January Jones is 41. Actress Brooklyn Sudano is 38. Actor Franz Drameh is 26.

Thought for Today: "It is the job that is never started that takes longest to finish." — J.R.R. Tolkien, English author (1892-1973).