



81st Annual

Carnival of Silver Skates

Sunday, January 27th—2:00 and 6:30
Groton Ice Rink—West Side of Groton, SD

Join us for a fun “Road Trip”!

Admission: 13 & older—\$3.00 / 6-12—\$2.00

Parking: Provided around the rink and on the ice or cozy up on the bleachers
(Ice parking begins at 10 am, then again at 4:30 pm)

**Check us out on Facebook at “Silver Skates”

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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- 2- Help Wanted Ads
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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

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

1:00pm: Basketball: Boys Varsity Classic vs. Little Wound @ Redfield Jr-Sr High 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)

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SDHSAA staff to recommend postponing 6-man football seasons

PIERRE – The Executive Staff of the SDHSAA will recommend postponing the addition of Six-Man Football for the 2019 & 2020 seasons at next week's regularly-scheduled Board of Directors Meeting in Pierre.

"When surveyed in 2017, over 40 schools from our membership indicated an interest in the addition of six-man football beginning with the 2019 season," noted John Krogstrand, Assistant Executive Director for the SDHSAA. "Over twenty school districts had serious conversations about going the six-man route for this coming fall. Despite that, only a handful have indicated a serious commitment to participating in six-man for the upcoming two seasons. We feel it is best to suspend the addition of a six-man football class for the time being, and continue with our current classification structure and regulations."

The SDHSAA Board of Directors voted in June of 2018 to begin offering six-man football as a sanctioned offering this coming fall.

A full agenda for the upcoming January meeting of the SDHSAA Board of Directors will be available later this week at SDHSAA.com.

Mustangs hold off Tiger rally

Jennie Doeden had a double-double night Tuesday with 19 points and 12 rebounds in Groton Area's 52-48 loss to the Waubay-Summit Mustangs. Twice during the game the Lady Tigers fell behind by 12 points, once at 24-12 and another time at 47-35 and both times, the Tigers rallied to come within five points. In fact, the second time, Groton Area trailed by just three, 50-47, and had a chance to either tie the game or to come within one.

The Mustangs led at the quarterstops at 11-8, 27-20 and 42-33.

Others adding to the Tiger tally were Gracie Traphagen with eight, Kaycie Hawkins and Alyssa Locke with six each, Eliza Wanner had five, Payton Maine three points and Miranda Hanson added a free throw.

The Tigers made 15 of 37 field goals 41 percent while Waubay-Summit made 18 of 55 shots for 33 percent. Groton Area made six of 12 free throws for 50 percent and Waubay-Summit made nine of 14 for 64 percent. The Tigers had 41 rebounds, three steals with Doeden having two, six assists with Hanson having two, 14 team fouls and 13 turnovers. Waubay-Summit had six turnovers.

The Mustangs were led by Zoey Wohlleber with 14 points followed by Alyssa Barse with 11, Victoria Zirbel had eight, Alexis Hopkins seven, Emily Ollerich five, Sammy Swanson four and Sunni O'Riley with three.

Waubay-Summit won the junior varsity game, 28-25. Allyssa Locke led the Tigers with 10 points followed by Gracie Traphagen with seven, Kenzie McInerney five and Maddie Bjerke added three points.

The varsity game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM.

Groton Coffee Cup League

Jan. 8 Team Standings: James Valley 10, Kens 10, Biker Chix 7, Ten Pins 5.

High Games: Mary Jane Jark 158, Sandi Bisedeau 152, Vickie Kramp 150.

High Series: Sandi Bistedeau 438, Mary Jane Jark 434, Vickie Kramp 416.

Conde National League

Jan. 7 Team Standings: Cubs 10, Mets 8, Pirates 6½, Tigers 5, Braves 4½, Giants 2.

Men's High Games: Troy Lindberg 208, Russ Bethke 197, Larry Frohling 194.

Men's High Series: Larry Frohling 530, Troy Lindberg 524, Lance Frohling 505.

Women's High Games: Michelle Johnson 199, Kira Cady 184, Vickie Kramp 177.

Women's High Series: Kira Cady 461, Mary Larson 456, Michelle Johnson 450.

Houseplants 101

By Melinda Myers

Lift your spirits and improve your indoor environment by taking part in the indoor gardening. An apartment or home filled with tropical, succulent and flowering plants can provide a peaceful garden season, improve air quality and create a peaceful environment to de-stress.

Though some may find indoor gardening a bit intimidating, don't let past failures in growing living greenery stop you from enjoying the many benefits. Knowing some basic and needed adjustments to the growing environment can turn past failures into success.

Water, humidity and light are key to growing healthy plants. When you match the plant to the growing media, you're sure to experience success.

Use a container with drainage holes to avoid overwatering that can lead to root rot. The pot should be no more than an inch or two larger in diameter than the plant's root system. A pot that is too large results in the soil staying too wet, increasing the chance of root rot.

Select a quality potting mix that holds moisture but drains well. Cacti and succulents prefer a fast-draining mix while tropicals and African violets prefer a mix that stays moist, not soggy.

Set your plant in a location that's free from drafts of hot and cold air, but in the bright light. An east- or west-facing window usually provides adequate light for most plants.

Keep cacti, succulents and other plants requiring high light within two feet of an east- or west-facing window. Pothos, philodendron, Chinese evergreens and those that tolerate low light can be placed near a north-facing window or up to six feet back or off to the side of an east- or west-facing window. Sheers, awnings and trees can impact the light reaching your plants. Adjust their location as needed.

Always water thoroughly and pour off the excess water that collects in the saucer. Allow the top few inches of soil to dry before watering drought tolerant plants like cactus. Water tropical and flowering plants that prefer moist conditions when the top few inches of soil are barely moist, like a sponge that has been wrung out.

Reduce maintenance and improve plant health with gravel trays. Fill a tray or saucer with pebbles. Allow excess water to collect in the tray. The pebbles keep the pot elevated above the water to avoid root rot. As the water evaporates it increases the humidity around the plant.

When pest problems occur, consider an organic approach safe for people, pets and plants. Manage fungus gnats, those tiny fruit fly like insects found flitting around the house, with a naturally occurring bacteria, *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*, found in Summit Mosquito Bits (SummitResponsibleSolutions.com). Just sprinkle on the soil surface and repeat as needed until these pests disappear.

Mites, aphids, scale and mealybugs can be controlled with an organic horticulture oil like Summit Year-Round Spray Oil. This product coats the pests and kills all stages from egg to adult. Repeat as needed to control any that were missed. Once the pests are managed, check the growing conditions and make needed adjustments to the growing environment.

The more plants you grow, the easier it becomes and soon enough you may find yourself immersed in a tropical or desert paradise inside the comfort of your own home.



Succulents should be kept within two feet of an east- or west-facing window and grown in a fast-draining potting mix.

(Photo credit: Melinda Myers, LLC)

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by Summit for her expertise to write this article. Myers's web site is www.melindamyers.com.

Noem 2019 State of the State Address

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem gave the following address yesterday at 1pm:

Lieutenant Governor Rhoden, Mr. Speaker, members of the legislature, Chief Justice Gilbertson, Justices of the Supreme Court, constitutional officers and fellow South Dakotans. Thank you very much for giving me the challenge and the distinct honor of being your Governor.

It is my privilege today to offer thoughts on the state of our state.

By nearly every standard of comparison, South Dakota is in good shape. But in order to preserve and extend this prosperity forward for today's working families and to the next generation, we must come together on solutions to the problems on the near and distant horizons.

Just how good do we have it here in South Dakota? Well, let's compare to a few other states. Illinois is forecasting a \$1.2 billion annual deficit and their pensions are only 40% funded. Connecticut's economy has been shrinking for a decade and their revenue growth has stalled out. New Jersey has yearly budget deficits as far as the eye can see.

Meanwhile, in South Dakota, thanks to the leadership of Governor Dennis Daugaard and many in the legislature, we have rid our state of an annual structural deficit. We rely solely on the ongoing revenue stream to cover ongoing expenses. Our state pension plan is fully funded. And we have a Triple A credit rating - the highest rating given. I'm grateful for the voice of fiscal responsibility Governor Daugaard has maintained over the last eight years. I know he isn't here today, but could you please join me in thanking Governor Daugaard and past legislators for their fiscal discipline and incredible leadership.

As our state's new Governor, I'm committed to maintaining the fiscal integrity for which our state has become known. We will work hard to maintain that Triple A credit rating. We won't spend money we don't yet have. We won't needlessly grow the government. We won't raise taxes.

If we stopped right there, those promises to the people of South Dakota would put us lightyears ahead of many other states. Fiscal discipline isn't common elsewhere, but in our state it's not optional. It's the foundation. It's what sets us apart with rating agencies and why our state makes list after list for being a great place to open a business, raise a family or retire.

Fiscal discipline will be the foundation of my governorship but we aren't going to stop there.

As I mentioned in my inaugural address last Saturday, I want to be a Governor who improves South Dakota not only for today, but also for the next generation. Growing up, my mom and dad worked hard to build a farm large enough for all of their kids to stay if they wanted to. My dad didn't make it to see today, but his dream did. As much as he wanted us to carry on our family farm and ranch, what he really wanted was to give the next generation an opportunity to thrive. That dream is also my vision for South Dakota. The next generation is watching us and we must do everything we can to strengthen our state so it's a place where they can one day launch their careers and raise their families. I hope you all will join me in this effort.

Over the past few weeks, my team and I have talked with every agency and department in state government. We have heard about the challenges and opportunities facing our state. This information transfer,

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though, was really the capstone of a two-year-long job interview for being our state's chief executive. And over the last two years, I was able to do a lot of listening with a lot of South Dakotans.

I heard story after story from South Dakota families about the love they have for our state. They love our culture, our wide open spaces, they love their towns and their churches. I do too. But many families are struggling to get ahead. Parents lie awake at night and wonder if they are a medical emergency away from financial disaster. Or if they'll ever be able to put money into a savings account for a new home.

With those stories of South Dakotans and the struggles that they face in mind, I want to share with you a handful of proposals that I believe will set up the next generation for success.

Expanding Rural Broadband

For so many in South Dakota, our rural way of life keeps us connected to the land our grandfathers and grandmothers once farmed and to the close-knit communities we call home. But in the quiet moments, I think we would all acknowledge the world our kids will inherit will be a much different one than what we've experienced. Their world will be one in which both access and ease in a digital, connected world is a basic requirement for making a living. For being engaged in society, and keeping their households running and their kids educated.

I've heard it said that 65% of children in elementary school today will work in jobs that don't exist yet. These jobs of the future – the jobs our children will depend on to support families of their own – will almost certainly require access to technology, particularly the Internet. And we must make those investments now. Raising the next generation with tools, such as broadband, is our responsibility as parents and citizens.

Internet access is taken for granted in urban settings but that's not the case in rural areas. This is a big problem to tackle. There are many rural areas of our state where the lack of access to broadband is widespread. Half our counties have rural areas where one in four people don't have this kind of broadband access. And some counties have rural areas where half of the residents don't have broadband access. They're not even our most remote counties. Our citizens in rural Beadle and Codington counties, for example, endure poor internet access right alongside those living in rural Charles Mix and Perkins counties.

As I see it, this is a statewide, South Dakota issue, not just an urban versus rural issue. It's a South Dakota issue because the small communities and rural areas near Watertown or Huron provide customers and members of the workforce for those larger communities. Some young girl with a aptitude for math and science could be a future Daktronics engineer but will she be able to excel without broadband at home?

And some young man or woman might want to come back and take over the family farm but they need to have access to information on crops, prices and machinery. Their spouse might run a business online – Will they move back to the farm if they can't access broadband? We must close the broadband gap to ensure people have the opportunity to work and hire locally and sell globally.

This is easier said than done. It can cost \$15,000 per mile or more to lay fiber optic line for internet, and the low number of customers in some rural areas makes it too expensive for companies to justify their investment. Some have discouraged us from even trying to expand access because it's too hard and too expensive. But I refuse to quit. Geographic location cannot be an excuse for the government to do nothing when the future vitality of our economy is at stake. Geographic location no longer has to be a barrier to participating in the global economy. By pairing quality of life, education targeted at in-demand fields, and fast, reliable broadband, I believe our geographic location can actually be an advantage. There's no reason why rural South Dakota can't compete and win by attracting new workers seeking a change. Let's welcome our sons and daughters, who are tired of the crowds and commutes, back to their hometowns

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to raise families while pursuing their careers. And in the process we will strengthen our smaller communities and our state.

So, how does that happen? Well, first we need to set goals as a state that will not only bring our homes and businesses up to an acceptable level of broadband access, but also ensure we remain at the forefront as technology develops. We'll use those goals to drive our policy and ultimately our state's investments. I feel strongly any time we are talking about taxpayer-funded investment, we should be investing for the long term, solving for more than just the immediate problem.

Today, I'm announcing a plan to close the broadband gap. Partnering with others, I want to connect as many more South Dakotans as possible to high speed internet over the next four years.

State government can't tackle this alone. To accomplish this goal, first, we'll bring together industry leaders. Our state's rural telecom companies, in particular, have considerable experience in bringing broadband service to our rural areas. Our state's other wireline service providers have an important role to play in areas they serve as well, and I look forward to working with them on increasing their level of service. What's more, I want to bring in companies with emerging technologies in the fixed wireless arena, such as Microsoft's Airband initiative, that may offer more cost-efficient ways to provide fast, reliable service to our most difficult to serve locations. And I see a role for companies ready to invest in new 5G technology, which promises faster, more reliable service over cellular data networks, as well.

Second, we are going to focus state government's commitment to this issue. My team will work on a mapping process to identify in more detail gaps or deficiencies in South Dakota's broadband coverage. This will ensure we have the best possible picture of what work remains, and deploy our resources effectively to meet our goals.

Third, we are going to commit state resources to closing the broadband gap. Other states have developed programs and we will review those as we put our own together. State resources can't, and shouldn't, get us across the finish line alone. But they will incentivize investment and leverage additional dollars.

Going forward, I have also charged GOED with developing a series of public-private partnerships to help overcome the challenges of service in rural areas and achieve the ambitious goals we've set for South Dakota. In a state where our own Raven Aerostar has partnered with Google's Loon project, which aims to bring Internet access to billions of people in rural areas around the globe through high altitude balloons, I know we can find a way to bridge our own challenges and secure broadband for rural South Dakota's next generation and beyond.

Extending Pheasant Habitat

The rural nature of our state might create higher internet connection costs, but I wouldn't trade it for the struggles and lifestyle that you have in DC or the coast of California. It's hard to beat heading out on that special Saturday in October with family and friends to enjoy the Pheasant opener.

We recently celebrated a century of pheasant hunting here in South Dakota. It's a tradition that my family has enjoyed for years. And for a period of time, it was more than a hobby, it was our livelihood. After my dad died, we opened a hunting lodge to help make ends meet. So to us, hunting isn't just a sport. It's a way of life, and an economic engine for our state. Today bird-hunters spend nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in South Dakota. And outdoor activities in our state support more than 18,000 full and part-time in-state jobs. That's a huge boost to our economy.

My family has been blessed with prime pheasant habitat on some of our land. Of course, we have worked hard to preserve those grounds over the years and have long participated in the CRP program.

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But as land values have increased, areas like ours have begun to disappear, gravely affecting pheasant populations. It's hard to blame folks for making those decisions when land values are high but it has an impact on how and where our pheasant population can nest and produce the next season's birds. In fact, statewide pheasant populations have fallen 65 percent in the last decade.

While in the U.S. House, I authored a provision to increase CRP acres to 29 million acres, a priority for many South Dakota outdoorsmen. As Governor, I will continue to push federal policymakers to enhance CRP even further. But we can, and must, do more at the state level. Which is why I am announcing the official kickoff of our Second Century Initiative. The first century of pheasant hunting has put South Dakota on the map as a destination for every hunter. Now we must preserve and expand habitat to ensure that the second century of pheasant hunting will be as great as the first.

First off, we'll work to increase resources for habitat management – without raising taxes. Maintaining and improving habitat is essential to the future of pheasant hunting in South Dakota. So today, I am directing the Department of Game, Fish and Parks to explore outside-the-box, voluntary funding solutions, such as an expanded Hunt for Habitat program, in which a limited number of hunting tags would be reserved at premium pricing. Programs like this have proven exceptionally lucrative in neighboring states. All proceeds would again go directly to habitat.

We need South Dakotans thinking about pheasant habitat, not just in October as we're cleaning up our shotguns, but year round. To raise visibility and more funds, I'll ask the Division of Motor Vehicles and Game, Fish and Parks to develop a specialty pheasant license plate program in which, again, all proceeds would go directly toward habitat management.

Pheasant hunting is a statewide tradition with statewide economic impact, so maintaining and growing the industry requires statewide involvement. This means we're going to get aggressive on predator control with a bounty program. Young people will have a chance to get out there and help reduce the threats to our pheasant population. This also means the funding for improved habitat must come from an increase in private and foundation dollars as well. I'll make the ask directly if needed. I'd love to see banquets and fundraisers and employer-match programs all making habitat one of their causes.

I'm sure there are other great ideas out there when it comes to habitat that we haven't thought of yet. That's why we're going to crowd source habitat solutions. Taking advantage of online capabilities, my administration will expand the capabilities at habitat.sd.gov to ensure every South Dakotan, not just those on assigned advisory boards or in Pierre, can directly contribute to the policymaking process. Should your ideas be implemented, I'd like to see the commission waive your hunting license fees for that year.

Of course, work at the national level can't stop either. I'm committed to keeping habitat management as a national priority. As a top negotiator of the 2014 Farm Bill, I fought to enhance CRP, and when the Obama administration accepted just 101 acres into CRP in South Dakota in 2016, I fought back. I will take up that same cause as Governor. Working in partnership with groups like Pheasants Forever, I will leverage the relationships I have around the country to win over CRP and habitat advocates in Congress, the administration, and Governors' Associations. This broad base of support is essential in not only maintaining federal programs but making sure everyone knows that if you want to hunt pheasants, you'd better book your trip to South Dakota. We'll do what we need to do in here to keep on harvesting a million roosters each fall for generations to come. Consider me our Sportsman in Chief for South Dakota Pheasant Hunting.

Economic Development & The Next Big Thing

As we look to the next generation, few things are as important as kickstarting our economy. We owe

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it to our kids to create and sustain an economy that is not only strong, but diversified. We owe it to our kids to give them an economy that offers reasons to stay in South Dakota after graduation or to return and raise their families. We owe it to ourselves to encourage growth and development in all communities, large and small. We are, after all, only as strong as our weakest community.

And while we do a lot of things right in South Dakota, our economy has fallen behind in recent years. The economy in Indian Country needs focus as well. There are many challenges today for tribes, but I am looking to build relationships and partnerships with them in many areas: education, law and order, and economic development.

This kickstart begins by lifting government burdens from small businesses owners and making it easier to work and create new opportunities that allow South Dakotans to prosper. By expanding on the strong business climate we have built through a low-tax, low-regulation environment, we'll give businesses room to grow. If you think a state's regulatory or tax burden doesn't matter to business, think again. Just last week, Minnesota start-up aquaculture company trū Shrimp announced plans to move its first planned production facility, a major investment, from the site it previously chose in Luverne, Minnesota, to a new site in Madison, South Dakota. I want to hear stories like this every week, and I believe that's possible. There's a reason we're considered one of the best places to operate a business. It's imperative we keep it that way.

I believe continuing this pro-business approach and stable government will make South Dakota a destination of choice in coming years. When other states raise taxes to bail themselves out and refuse to offer regulatory relief, we'll be here ready. Now is the time to begin the search for the "Next Big Thing" for South Dakota.

As many of you know, in the early 1980's, Governor Janklow had the foresight to identify and to target the credit card industry as an area in which South Dakota could compete and win at a national level. We changed our approach to regulating that industry, ushering in a tremendous expansion of not only credit card processing, but our financial services sector more generally. We created thousands of good jobs. Today, South Dakota is home to \$3.1 trillion in bank assets – more than any other state in the country. Our trust industry oversees billions more, providing still more South Dakotans with reliable, high-paying jobs.

If bringing in the financial services industry was the last "Big Thing" then it's time to start looking for the "Next Big Thing." Because we can't stop moving forward. We must look ahead to the emerging opportunities that can power growth for the next generation.

That is why I am charging my Office of Economic Development with not only identifying our next generation of targeted industries, but also marketing to attract the most innovative companies in those sectors. Over the next six weeks, GOED will develop and roll out a new, more user-friendly website that is more responsive to the needs of existing South Dakota businesses and those interested in moving here.

Our state should continue drawing on our traditional strength as an agricultural state by seeking out more value-added processing opportunities. We have been successful in attracting dairy processing and growing the dairy herd, but we still send far too much of our corn, soybeans, and livestock out of state for consumption or processing. It leaves our farmers vulnerable to the effects of tariffs and basis. Enhancing outlets within South Dakota will benefit farmers and enhance the strength of our small communities, and I have challenged GOED to make this area a priority.

Second, we must leverage our expertise in agriculture along with our growing capacity in human health research. Whether it's new therapies for human diseases, new crop technologies, or other applied research,

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South Dakota has a valuable contribution to make as a place for innovation in this area and in turn we're gaining international recognition.

Third, we have an opportunity to capitalize on a world-class talent pipeline and our strong tradition of service to become a leader in the cybersecurity. The success of DSU's cybersecurity program has brought South Dakota national attention. DSU is poised to supply the financial services industry, military, and intelligence community, among others, with a workforce that will lead this new and rapidly growing industry. Our priority must be not only in training this workforce, but also in attracting or creating companies in South Dakota to keep our graduates here, at home, with great jobs and a way of life they love.

In the Black Hills, the U.S. Air Force's rollout of the next-generation B-21 Raider bomber will also bring with it a surge of activity in and around Ellsworth Air Force base. This growth will open up new opportunities for good jobs, provide a platform for attracting additional military-connected businesses, and increase Ellsworth's already substantial \$300 million annual impact on our economy. Ensuring Box Elder, Rapid City, and the Black Hills region are equipped to capitalize on Ellsworth's rapid expansion must be a priority for us all.

Identifying and securing South Dakota's Next Big Thing, while better supporting our existing businesses, is a challenge, but I can't think of anything more important to our next generation than kickstarting our economy. So many of our other challenges – drugs, family, resources for schools and building community – become easier when our citizens are prospering and our economy is growing. Done well, we will build an economy to take South Dakota to the next generation and beyond.

Improving Education and Developing Our Workforce

Creating new jobs, new industries and new economic horizons for our state will be worthless if we don't have the next generation of South Dakotans educated, trained and ready to take on these new opportunities and challenges.

As I tour our state's businesses and meet with employers, what I have heard from them is encouraging. Outside of ag, business is good and they'd like to expand. Again and again, though, I heard the same challenge that is holding them back: workforce shortages.

As governor, I want to break down barriers to help fill these shortages. In our smaller communities and more rural areas, one common barrier is affordable housing. Today I'm announcing a pilot project by the South Dakota Housing Development Authority to help fix this problem. We will be building new modular multi-housing units, called DakotaPlex, at the state prison facility in Springfield. It will be similar to the Governor's Houses, but built as duplex, triplex, or quadriplex units. South Dakota communities of less than 5000 people will be eligible to purchase these units and offer them for rent at affordable levels. I'm confident this new project will help our smaller communities expand housing options for workers.

Another state-imposed barrier to workforce can be professional licensure. I am directing the Department of Labor and Regulation, over the next year, to work with our professional organizations and licensure boards to conduct a full review of licensing requirements. We need to consider the elimination of unnecessary licenses, opportunities to streamline the licensure process, and options to fast-track licenses for apprentices, in-state graduates, veterans, and military personnel and their families. We can't let unneeded red tape get in the way of growth.

These are both important steps, but they are only a start. Workforce is a national problem. Recently, because of the strength of the national economy, the United States reached an important milestone: there

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are actually more job openings today than there are unemployed people actively seeking to fill them.

In South Dakota, according to our most recent data, we have 15,870 job openings and 13,600 people actively looking for work. Unfortunately, we have a skills gap – those unemployed workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the open jobs.

We have already taken steps in South Dakota to address this skills gap. We should all be very proud of our state's technical institutes. Near my home town, Lake Area Tech was recognized just two years ago as the best two-year college in America. All four of our technical institutes have new facilities, new equipment, and qualified faculty offering cutting-edge programs. The Build Dakota scholarship has made it easier for hundreds of young people to get job training, and then stay in South Dakota to work in high-need fields.

We can also be proud of our university system, which prepares more young people for their careers than any other set of institutions. I am concerned, though, that the priorities of our employers and our educators sometimes do not fully align. That can leave some young people with limited job prospects. My team will help me bring together employers, K-12 educators, the Regents, and the Technical Institutes. We need to do more to provide career counseling and information for students, starting in middle school.

I strongly believe that the best way to prepare our young people for their careers is through work experience. Growing up on the farm, we all worked. We didn't know any other way. There was no Facebook or Instagram, so I didn't know what my classmates were doing after school or in the summers. I just knew that my siblings and I were expected to work hard. I'm glad we did – that early experience taught me lessons that have served me well in my life.

Over the coming year, I'm asking school leaders to work with me to dramatically increase work experience in our high schools. We need more CTE and skills training in high school. We need more apprenticeship programs. And we need more opportunities for young people to get out of the classroom and experience a real job.

I would like our high schools to join together each year to hold a "Week of Work." This will be a special week when every high school student will get out of the classroom to experience a day on the job. I hope this can lead to schools coordinating more internships and experience-based classes.

Learning about the world of work helps our young people to figure out what fields aren't for them and eventually they'll hopefully find something they love. Perhaps more importantly, though, work experience teaches young people the soft skills they need. Work experience teaches young people to show up on time, to dress professionally, and to interact with customers. We do a disservice to our students if they graduate high school without these skills.

Some of you may know that, when I started college, I considered becoming a teacher. My dad's accident changed my plans, but education remains a priority for me. One of my aspirations as governor is to improve our educational opportunities and performance so that our kids can have greater success.

We need to do more to empower families. Every child has different needs and talents, and we all know that family involvement gets better results. The All-City Elementary School in Sioux Falls is an example of this and a model for others to emulate. One of its core tenants and requirements is a high level of parent involvement. The results are clear. Its students perform at much higher levels than the average elementary school both in the Sioux Falls school district and statewide.

Empowering families also means supporting each family's decisions for education. I am a proud prod-

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uct of public school and so are my kids, but South Dakota also has excellent private schools, and many dedicated home school families. This year, I will be bringing legislation to remove an unnecessary testing requirement that state law currently imposes on home school families. I will also be supporting legislation to make home school students eligible, on an equal basis, for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship.

And we do have abundant opportunity in our state, but too often our students don't understand how blessed they are to live in a land of opportunity. I believe the next generation of South Dakotans must understand the foundations of our nation, the tremendous sacrifices made to protect our constitutional rights, and the freedoms, liberties, and responsibilities we have as citizens.

In this Capitol is a statue of one of South Dakota's early leaders, General William Henry Harrison Beadle. He was a Civil War veteran and he took his civic role seriously. General Beadle once said that the purpose of education is to prepare "also for all civic and social duties. Not for wage earning alone, not for money making alone, must we educate."

Civics need to reemerge. From grade school to the universities. Interim Secretary Jones is a professor of history and he will be key to this effort. This year, as a first step, I will be bringing legislation to require that every high school graduate be able to pass the United States citizenship exam. This is the test that we ask immigrants to take before they become U.S. Citizens. It is only fair that, before our young people graduate from high school and take on their responsibilities as citizens, they also display this basic knowledge of our nation's institutions and its history. If our next generation is to be successful, they must know the story of our past generations.

Battling Meth

You all know when we invest in our kids, we're investing in our future. Our future is only as strong as our kids. Which is why it's vital we address problems when they threaten to dismantle the success of the next generation.

As I mentioned earlier, over the past several weeks, my team and I have received briefings from every cabinet department. One issue I heard, time and again, from many departments is the impact of the meth epidemic on our state. Opioids make the national news and they are a problem in South Dakota, but our overwhelming problem is meth.

A couple months ago, I spoke with a first-responder in one of our cities who told me of situations where they walk into homes of meth users and find kids starving in their bedrooms, their parents drugged out of their minds, incompetent of caring for their children. Stories like this are frequent. In our neighboring state of Iowa, a four-month-old baby was killed just over a month ago after his meth-addict dad forgot him in a swing. He died of malnutrition and infection. The police found his little body covered in maggots and sores – his parents too strung out on meth to remember his existence.

This is what our law enforcement has to deal with every day. Can you even imagine? Meth is filling our jails and prisons, clogging our court systems, and stretching our drug treatment capacity. But meth is rarely made in South Dakota anymore, the vast majority of this meth is coming from Mexico. Our meth epidemic is the price we are paying for our nation's failure to adequately secure our southern border.

To give you a sense of the scale of the problem in South Dakota: In 2011, there were 402 meth arrests in South Dakota. Those arrests led to the seizure of approximately 4,300 grams of meth. Look ahead seven years to 2018. We have gone from 402 arrests to 3,366 – and that doesn't even include December of 2018. The amount of meth seized in these arrests has increased from approximately 4,300 grams to

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nearly 40,000 grams. A nearly tenfold increase.

Some of that increase is due to better enforcement, and that is a good thing. We're catching more bad guys. But we all understand that the meth epidemic is only getting worse.

Meth destroys people, but it does much more. It destroys families. It hurts our kids, and we see that in our schools, in our foster families, and in our health care providers.

Every child deserves to grow up in a good home with parents who love them, and when I see a child who has lost her family to meth, it breaks my heart. Not because I am the governor. Because I am a mom.

We cannot allow meth to break apart our families, consume our resources, and destroy our state. I will not stand for it. Some of us want to look away. We want to flip the channel when we hear about stories like the child in the swing. Some of us might think meth is something that other communities are dealing with or other types of people that you don't associate with. We can't do that. We can't look away. We have to stare down meth.

There are no easy answers to this issue. I know we have tried to address these problems. But we need to do more. And we need to focus on three key areas: education, enforcement, and treatment.

So today, I am proposing that we expand prevention and treatment programs. We need to do more to educate our young people about the effects of meth and give them strategies to avoid it. In the past these efforts have relied on grant funding, but I will be asking for dedicated general funds to carry a strong and consistent message, especially to our young people. Before the legislative session is over, there will be a plan on my desk that will help our state stare down the meth problem. The plan must include tools to improve education, enforcement and treatment.

We will help every South Dakotan learn to identify the early signs of meth use to increase early referrals to treatment. Early intervention is the first defense against this problem. I want to reach meth users before they enter the criminal justice system and commit other crimes. Our objective isn't to imprison people – that hurts families too. We need additional mental health services for this issue and many others. Our ideal is to help people beat their meth addiction and return to their jobs and families.

At the same time, I am proposing that we become much more aggressive in enforcing our laws against meth. We need to stop the traffic of meth into our state, and crack down on those who deal meth and other drugs. I am confident that every dollar we spend to keep meth out will be repaid many times.

And while we crack down on enforcement, we must pave avenues for rehabilitation. Earlier this year, I visited Teen Challenge in Brookings – an incredible program that helps people struggling with life-controlling substance abuse and equips them to become productive members of their community. We need more options for people trapped in addiction, recognizing that second chances are available to people willing to walk the road to recovery.

Foster Care – Every Child Needs a Home

Now for a moment I would like to turn your attention to another important issue impacting families in our state. As I just described, because of meth, dozens of kids are separated from their homes every week, sending child after child into the foster system. While meth isn't the only reason for broken families in South Dakota, the children in our foster system need to be in a home. Every child deserves a home.

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Most of us just finished up spending the holidays with our families and friends. We ate together, gave each other gifts and shared stories and laughter. But this Christmas, 192 children were in our foster care system available and waiting for adoptive families. In total, 940 children were in foster care. They didn't have their family to spend their Christmas with. They didn't have a family to laugh and celebrate with. And while the staff at the Department of Social Services can raise awareness about the need, get the facts out, and debunk some of the myths people may believe, they can't just create families for these kids. They can't put children in a home if no one is willing to provide one. And they can't get the word out if people aren't listening.

That is why, today, I am committing to use my podium, my microphone, and my influence to educate our state about the need for more foster parents. In every formal speech I give, I'm going to talk about it. You're going to get tired of hearing me talk about it. So if you are a foster parent and you have a positive experience to share, send it in to my office. We will use the information with discretion, but we need to tell your stories. We need more parents, more families, more South Dakotans to raise their hands and say, "yes, I'll be a foster parent. I agree, every child deserves a home."

The state has a website - fosterone.sd.gov - where you can learn more, ask questions, and start the process to become a foster family. We'll be updating the website over the next year. And I'll be talking about it. A lot. It's seems almost too obvious to this say out loud, but I will just to be clear – the next generation of South Dakotans will not thrive if they don't have a home. A place to grow up. A family to love them.

Growing Agriculture

Agriculture is the foundation of South Dakota's economy and our number one industry – by a significant margin. All in all, it contributes about \$25.6 billion to the economy, so when ag prospers, South Dakota prospers. Of course, when droughts hit or markets slide, everyone feels that too.

It's been a tough few years for ag in South Dakota, and I've worked hard to put proper safety nets in place for unexpected circumstances like what we've experienced. You see, without certainty, farmers aren't able to do what they do best: feed the world.

As a lifelong farmer and rancher, I know the challenges that come with the business. I know the stress that comes when you take out loans, bury that money in the ground in the form of seed and fertilizer, and hope not only for a good yield, but for the right market conditions at the right time. It's a tough business. But I understand why folks do it. It's a special job to feed the world – to know that the product of your labor brings families together around a dinner table, to know that your work makes a real difference.

So as governor, I'll utilize my experience as a lifelong producer to advance agriculture in our state. From protecting property rights to expanding markets, my administration is being built to develop the state's agricultural economy and give more young people the opportunity to thrive as farmers and ranchers in South Dakota.

This year, we will focus on growth in the ag economy by transferring Ag Development Representatives from the Department of Agriculture to my office of economic development. This makes sense, because ag development is economic development.

For years, these two departments have largely performed the same functions when it comes to ag development. This move will consolidate resources and brainpower, supply more tools for development, eliminate red tape, and create a better approach to developing our largest industry and create a lasting infrastructure for the next generation.

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I might not be traveling to DC every week anymore, and believe me, I'm good with that, but I will continue leveraging my federal network – from the President on down – and partner with our South Dakota delegation to continue pushing for a level playing field when it comes to trade. Farmers want trade, not aid. Producers don't want federal bailouts. We crave expanded market opportunities. And I believe we'll get there with this Administration.

This has been a frequent conversation I've had with President Trump – as recently as a few weeks ago – and I'm grateful for the outcomes we've seen as a result. Late last year, I was glad to see the president's support of farm country when he lifted restrictions on year-round E15, a move that will help consume another 2 billion bushels of corn, while potentially saving consumers up to 10 cents per gallon at the pump.

We'll begin the process of transitioning the state vehicle fleet to E30, further maximizing the use of homegrown fuels and revolutionizing the way we fuel both our vehicles and our economy. I've already met with state government leaders on this initiative and we're working on a plan.

It's critical we keep communicating the impact of decisions like this to the president, because quite frankly, most of Washington isn't talking about agriculture. Fifty years ago, there were more than 200 rural congressional districts in the House of Representatives. Now, just over 30 remain. I'm grateful South Dakota has strong voices for ag in Senator John Thune, Senator Mike Rounds, and Representative Dusty Johnson. I will do everything I can to continue leveraging my experience to expand trade and keep ag strong.

And I'd be remiss to talk about this new Administration's approach to ag without mentioning Kim Vanneman, who'll be serve as my secretary of agriculture. Kim is very different from any ag secretary South Dakota has ever had. She truly brings a new perspective to the table. I'm grateful for the ways she has been an ag leader in our state – on the farm, in the legislature, in the board room and as a mom passing along her love of agriculture to her kids. She's going to make a great Ag Secretary. Thank you for serving, Kim.

I'm proud of our agriculture tradition in South Dakota. Our ag industry is special – it's our legacy, our way of life. We must do everything we can to ensure the ag economy is ready to support the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

Making Government More Transparent

The issue of government transparency might be last among my major policy items mentioned here today but that's because it's a cornerstone. As we build up, every other item must align with transparency. Many Americans and many South Dakotans are losing their trust in government. This is particularly true of the younger generations. Stories of government ineptitude and downright scandal don't help matters much. I hear you. I'm with you.

So today, I'm committing to work toward building the most transparent administration South Dakota has ever seen. I'll bring debates and meetings from the boardroom to your living room by utilizing free technologies like YouTube, Facebook Live and other apps. We'll modernize and expand existing transparency websites by adding all agendas, minutes, and livestreams to a centralized online location. If my cabinet secretaries and other administration leaders don't stay on top of this, I'm going to make them donate to our pheasant habitat funds.

Fact-based reporting must be valued and encouraged in order to uphold the integrity of government

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entities. To that end, I want to see a commonsense Reporter Shield law, protecting the constitutional right to a free and independent press. I want that bill on my desk before the end of session.

Our state government must operate to serve people, not special interests. If you have other ideas for ways to increase transparency, send them in to us. We'll work to bring more sunlight to the statehouse. You have my word.

Closing

Now, none of us would live in this wonderful country today if it weren't for our military and our law enforcement officers.

The South Dakota National Guard continues to support federal commitments worldwide with nearly 150 Soldiers and Airmen deployed in support of overseas operations in Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, and Poland. The Guard is also supporting federal commitments here at home. Seven Soldiers are supporting cyber defense operations in the National Capitol Region. And just yesterday I approved a four-Soldier aviation crew, with a UH-72 helicopter, to deploy this week to Arizona in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection security operations along the Southwest border. We must do what we can to help secure the southern border.

Here in South Dakota, I have big plans for Hot Springs and how we can better care for, and recognize veterans at the facilities in that town. Big plans. Our veterans have served us. It is our solemn duty to serve them.

I am sure that there will be issues that arise during my tenure as governor that will require the strength and resolve of our first responders, our military and our law enforcement. I know that they will be up to the task. I know that they are training and preparing right now, even today, for the unexpected as well as the expected.

One of those issues that we do expect, is the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline through South Dakota. Let me be very clear on this: I want the construction of this pipeline to be safe, clean and efficient. We will make sure that people, water and the environment are protected. My administration will work with the tribes, the companies, and as necessary, law enforcement, to make this as uneventful as possible.

I want to thank you all for your time and attention today. Serving as our state's 33rd governor is an immense honor and I look forward to it. I pray for the strength and wisdom to govern effectively. God will be faithful in guiding us and giving us the strength to persevere.

This is the end of this yearly address, but it is not the end of the conversation around these issues. I look forward to taking these policies, these ideas, these discussions around the state. I want to hear from you. So please, invite me to your local civic organization and community meetings, or even your morning coffee group.

In closing, I want to take a moment to thank my family. Thank you for your support and your help, and your energy. The reason I got involved in public service was to make South Dakota a better place – a better place to do business and raise a family. One of the reasons I care about these issues is because I wanted those things for my family, and every other family. I know that's why you serve as well. So I look forward to working with South Dakota leaders, in governments and in the private sector, to improve our state for today. And for the next generation.

Thank you. And may God bless South Dakota.

It's Girls' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Sisseton
Redmen**

VS



Groton Area Tigers

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019

7:30 p.m.

At Sisseton

Broadcast of this game is sponsored by the

Aberdeen
Chrysler Center

901 Auto Plaza Drive
Aberdeen, SD

800.874.9173

www.aberdeenchrysler.com

It's Boys' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Sisseton
Redmen**

VS



Groton Area Tigers

Friday, Jan. 11, 2019

8:00 p.m.

At the Groton Area Arena

Broadcast of this game is sponsored by

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

It's Boys' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Little Wound
Mustangs** VS



Groton Area Tigers

Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019

1:00 p.m.

At the Redfield Classic

Broadcast of this game is sponsored by the

Aberdeen
Chrysler Center

901 Auto Plaza Drive
Aberdeen, SD

800.874.9173

www.aberdeenchrysler.com

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Today in Weather History

January 9, 1982: Winds of 20 to 40 mph accompanied by 1 to 3 inches of snow created ground blizzard conditions and extreme wind chills from the 9th through mid-afternoon on the 12th. There were two deaths from exposure that were attributed to the storm including a 69-year old Scotland woman and a woman from Veblen in Marshall County. Both tried to walk after their vehicles stalled. Near zero visibilities and snow drifts to 5 feet high forced closures of numerous highways. Also, minor power outages were reported.

January 9, 1997: A powerful Alberta Clipper and a deep Arctic High brought widespread and prolonged blizzard conditions, heavy drifting snow, and dangerous wind chills of 40 to 80 below to central and north-east South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota. North winds were from 30 to 50 mph gusting to 60 mph. The clipper dropped from 2 to 7 inches of snowfall on top of an already solid 2 to 5-foot snowpack. As with previous storms, most roads again became blocked by huge snowdrifts. As a result of the blockage and the blizzard conditions, both Interstates 29 and 90 closed along with all state highways leaving hundreds of people stranded to wait out the storm. This winter has been the worst for road closings. Many people became stuck in snow drifts or went off the road because of low visibility, and had to be rescued. One dramatic rescue near Webster, involving tens of rescue workers, occurred after a woman was stranded in her vehicle for nearly 40 hours. A couple with a one-year-old was rescued after spending a night in their car and they were unharmed. A Wakpala woman died from carbon monoxide poisoning in her stalled pickup on Highway 1806 near Wakpala. Emergency personnel had a very difficult time responding to emergencies. Some emergencies took up to several hours to go short distances. A rural Leola man died, when emergency workers could not get to him in time. In McLaughlin, seven people had to be taken by air ambulance, because there was no way out.

All area schools were closed the 9th and 10th with most schools at this point in the winter season missing over 7 days. A state record was set when Faulkton School had closed for its 13th day. Mail was delayed and area airports had flight delays or were closed. Many businesses were also closed and were suffering economic losses as a result of this storm and previous storms because customers could not get to them. Many grocery stores ran low or out of bread, milk, and other food necessities. There were some power outages across the area, but were not widespread. The power was out at Isabel, Timber Lake, and Firesteel, for as much as 8 hours. The power outage in Isabel resulted in extensive water pipe breaks at the Isabel School. Willow Lake was without power for over 2 days. Some homes across the area were also without heat for several days in the bitter cold. The majority of ranchers was running out of or was unable to access feed for cattle, sheep, and hogs. As a result of the extreme conditions and lack of food, over fifty thousand livestock died. In addition, many livestock suffered frostbite and were significantly weakened. There was also a lot of wildlife and pheasants killed. As a result, the Emergency Feed Grain Donation Program was activated for the ranchers. One rancher said that he had been ranching in this area for 34 years and had never lost cattle before. Also, some dairy farmers had to dump their milk because trucks could not get them in time.

Some people were trapped in their homes up to several days as snowdrifts buried their homes and blocked the roads with some people having to crawl out their windows. In Wilmot, a 12-foot drift covered the community home, where residents had to turn the lights on during the day. As a result of snow removal budget depletions and other storm damages, President Clinton declared all of the counties a disaster area. Snowplows from Iowa, Nebraska, and plows and manpower from the South Dakota National Guard helped to break through hundreds of roads. The snowdrifts in some places were packed so hard and were measured at 300 pounds per square inch. Some longtime residents said this has been the worst winter they had seen in their lifetimes. The total damage estimate for this January blizzard and for the previous January winter storm is 50 million dollars. This includes the added snow removal costs, livestock losses, building damages, and other economic losses.

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Today

Tonight

Thursday

Thursday
Night

Friday



Mostly Sunny

Mostly Cloudy

Mostly Sunny

Mostly Cloudy

Mostly Cloudy

High: 11 °F

Low: 5 °F

High: 24 °F

Low: 13 °F

High: 26 °F

COLD TODAY

Today 7 to 27°
Thursday 20 to 38°
warmest west of the Missouri River



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Published on: 01/09/2019 at 3:07AM

Cold air will be trapped in place today, with temperatures only rising into the single digits to 20s above zero. The area of Canadian high pressure responsible for the cold air will shift into Minnesota tonight. Temperatures will warm into the 20s and 30s on Thursday.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 35 °F at 12:01 AM

Low Outside Temp: 11 °F at 10:28 PM

High Gust: 32 mph at 2:27 PM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 53° in 2012

Record Low: -31° in 1910, 1970

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 1°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.14

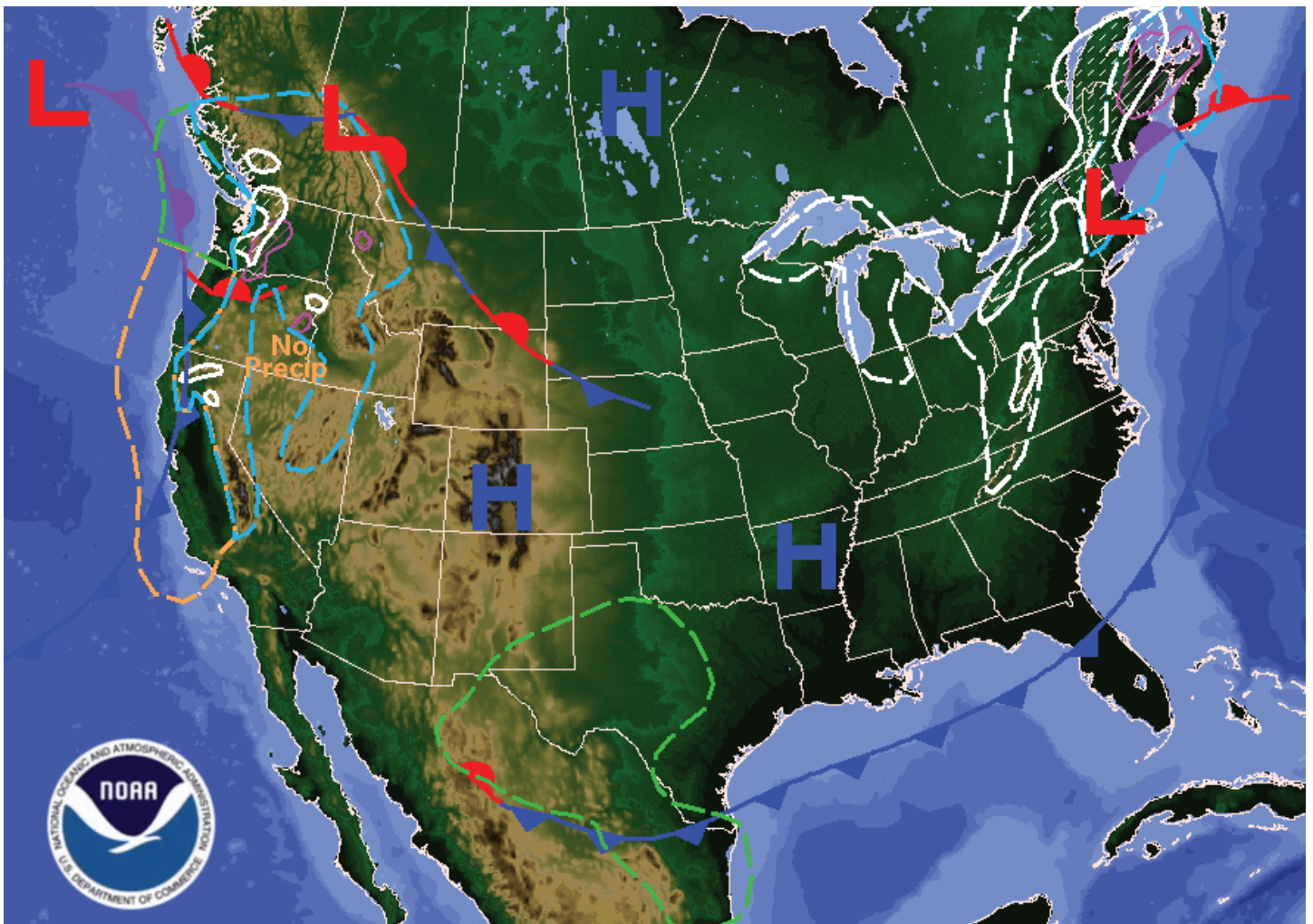
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.14

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:09 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:12 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Jan 09, 2019, issued 4:40 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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FROM DARKNESS COMES LIGHT

This may be hard to believe...

A thief, running through a crowded street, caught the eye of a police officer after a person shouted, Help! Instinctively, the officer ran after him and caught him. While searching his pockets, he found hundreds of dollars that he had taken from a Mini-Market.

How foolish of you to steal in broad daylight! Most thieves steal at night when its dark, said the officer.

I know, sir, came the reply. But, Im afraid of running when its dark. I might trip.

The fear of darkness is one of the greatest fears in the world. But darkness was not created by God. Darkness is the absence of light.

There was a time when the earth was chaotic and dark. Then God said, Let there be light! And there was.

Man does not receive true light from the darkness of the world when he is born. That Light, the Light that man needs to guide him through life and into eternity, comes only from Gods Son. But, that Light must be received if man is to find his way into eternal life through Christ.

My God, said the Psalmist, turns my darkness into light! But, as brightly as that Light shines, and as necessary as it is for man to follow for eternal life, it must be accepted.

John wrote, In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

The way to the light that leads to eternal life is to accept Christ.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for providing us that Light. May we accept the Light that comes from You to save us. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 18:28 You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

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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

Fight precedes fatal shooting in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say a fight between two men who had dated the same woman ended with the fatal shooting of one of the men in Sioux Falls.

Authorities have arrested a 27-year-old man in the death of 37-year-old Jeremy Flynn Sunday afternoon. Flynn was shot once in the chest in an alley in central Sioux Falls.

The Argus Leader reports a court affidavit says the suspect was dating Flynn's ex-girlfriend who believes he didn't like Flynn. The suspect told police he went to meet Flynn and that the two began to fight and wrestled over a handgun. The affidavit says the suspect told police he punched Flynn in the groin, then shot him, dropped the gun and drove away.

Police say they have not recovered a weapon.

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

Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Belle Fourche 58, Spearfish 42
Beresford 68, McCook Central/Montrose 36
Bridgewater-Emery 82, Ethan 39
Canton 60, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 49
Castlewood 72, Lake Preston 52
Centerville 52, Scotland 46
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 81, Crow Creek 64
Corsica/Stickney 78, Mitchell Christian 54
DeSmet 68, Howard 35
Estelline/Hendricks 65, Great Plains Lutheran 37
Florence/Henry 59, Wilmot 43
Freeman 67, Parker 37
Freeman Academy/Marion 68, Avon 40
Gayville-Volin 49, Elkton-Lake Benton 46
Harrisburg 62, Brookings 37
Highmore-Harrold 51, Faulkton 44
Lemmon 58, Bowman County, N.D. 55
Lennox 63, Elk Point-Jefferson 26
Lower Brule 89, Sunshine Bible Academy 59
McLaughlin 61, Mobridge-Pollock 60
Miller 68, Redfield/Doland 64
Ortonville, Minn. 73, Sisseton 48
Potter County 65, Stanley County 59
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 56, Kimball/White Lake 42
Sioux Falls Christian 72, Dell Rapids 62
Sioux Valley 77, Hamlin 55
Tea Area 68, Tri-Valley 39
Wagner 54, Gregory 44
Warner 52, Hitchcock-Tulare 18
Winner 64, Valentine, Neb. 42

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Yankton 66, Huron 60

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Arlington 55, Deuel 51

Avon 64, Freeman Academy/Marion 20

Belle Fourche 51, Spearfish 24

Bowman County, N.D. 64, Harding County 30

Castlewood 49, Lake Preston 38

Clark/Willow Lake 60, Sisseton 30

Colman-Egan 65, Chester 38

Colome 54, Jones County 40

Corsica/Stickney 76, Mitchell Christian 22

Crazy Horse 56, Bison 45

Deubrook 68, Baltic 25

Douglas 56, Lead-Deadwood 32

Estelline/Hendricks 52, Great Plains Lutheran 35

Ethan 57, Bridgewater-Emery 39

Flandreau 55, Garretson 28

Freeman 54, Parker 38

Hamlin 56, Sioux Valley 18

Harrisburg 58, Brookings 30

Hill City 57, Philip 43

Huron 55, Yankton 53, 3OT

Ipswich 67, Northwestern 48

Irene-Wakonda 51, Elk Point-Jefferson 44

Langford 70, Eureka/Bowdle 44

Little Wound 69, Bennett County 14

Lower Brule 70, Sunshine Bible Academy 34

McCook Central/Montrose 60, Hanson 42

Menno 55, Canistota 42

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 59, Canton 55

Potter County 62, Stanley County 34

Redfield/Doland 49, Miller 45

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 47, Kimball/White Lake 30

St. Thomas More 55, Custer 20

Timber Lake 50, McIntosh 47

Todd County 81, White River 60

Tripp-Delmont/Armour 52, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 27

Vermillion 49, Madison 37

Wagner 48, Gregory 35

Wall 48, Chamberlain 45

Warner 59, Hitchcock-Tulare 35

Waubay/Summit 52, Groton Area 48

West Central 71, Dakota Valley 43

Winner 56, Valentine, Neb. 24

West River Tournament(equals)

First Round(equals)

Faith 69, Upton, Wyo. 11

Moorcroft, Wyo. 54, Oelrichs 28

Newell 54, Rapid City Christian 43

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

13-26-29-38-64, Mega Ball: 5, Megaplier: 5

(thirteen, twenty-six, twenty-nine, thirty-eight, sixty-four; Mega Ball: five; Megaplier: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$82 million

Sanford donates \$55M to Children's Home Society

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota philanthropist T. Denny Sanford has donated \$55 million to Children's Home Society, with the gift aimed at expanding services for victims of domestic violence and supporting the organization's staff.

More than 100 people were on hand Tuesday when Children's Home Society announced the gift, the Argus Leader reported. Sanford's donation is the largest one-time gift received in the Sioux Falls-based nonprofit's 125-year history.

Sanford said the services provided by Children's Home Society are "invaluable," and that he hopes his gift inspires others to support the organization "as it heads into its next century of service."

"The organization cares for those who require the most care of all — our young people and those who are in serious danger," Sanford said in a statement.

Sanford, a billionaire credit card magnate, has made several donations to Children's Home Society over the last two decades. Sanford pulled his golf cart up to Children's Home executive director Bill Colson in August and asked what his organization's greatest need was. Colson replied that it was supporting staff and expanding services for domestic violence victims.

Part of the gift will help Children's Inn shelter expand its facilities, which will include the T. Denny Sanford Shelter of Hope. The rest will be placed in an endowment to fund long-term improvement of support, compensation and retention of staff.

Children's Inn, a program of Children's Home Society, has outgrown its current facility, the organization said. Children's Inn director Amy Carter said she is not sure yet if the gift will go toward expanding the current facility or building a new one.

"Either way, we know it's needed," Carter said. "The need is there, and our clients deserve it."

The last time Children's Inn expanded was in 2005, when the average daily need was about 28 people, Carter said. The shelter now serves an average of 40 people a day, with some days doubling capacity.

Sanford, owner of First PREMIER Bank and PREMIER Bankcard, was not present at the event because he is recovering from hip surgery. But he made a video statement, saying Children's Home Society was one of the "most meaningful" organizations he supports.

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

SD Guard helicopter, crew sent to Arizona for border support

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota Army National Guard helicopter and four-person crew have been sent to perform aerial monitoring and detection along the southwest border.

The South Dakota National Guard said Tuesday that the UH-72 Lakota helicopter and its crew of pilots and an analyst departed this week for Arizona to augment U.S. Customs and Border Protection's border security operations.

They'll work with the Arizona National Guard and Customs and Border Protection personnel. South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem approved the request for reconnaissance support from the National Guard Bureau.

Noem on Tuesday noted the crew's departure in her State of the State address, saying: "We must do what we can to secure the southern border and our country."

South Dakota National Guard aircraft and crews have previously deployed in 2007, 2013 and 2015 to provide southwest border support.

Noem lays out wide-ranging 2019 priorities for South Dakota

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem outlined priorities Tuesday ranging from improving state government transparency to connecting more people to high-speed internet in her first State of the State address.

The new Republican governor marked the start of the 2019 legislative session with the state Capitol speech, saying it's time to start the search for South Dakota's next big industries and pledging to tackle methamphetamine abuse and work toward the most open administration the state has seen.

"Serving as our state's 33rd governor is an immense honor, and I look forward to it," Noem said. "I pray for the strength and for the wisdom to govern effectively. God will be faithful in guiding us and giving us the strength to persevere."

Noem said she wants to break down barriers to filling workforce shortages, announcing a pilot project for inmates at the state prison facility in Springfield to build new modular multi-unit houses that smaller communities could buy and offer for workers to rent affordably. She said she's also directing the state to work with professional groups and licensure boards to review licensing requirements.

Noem said South Dakota can't allow meth to "break apart our families, consume our resources and destroy our state." She proposed expanding treatment and prevention programs and called for state funds to be used to for education, particularly aimed at youth. A plan will reach her desk by the end of the legislative session to "stare down" the state's meth problem, Noem said.

She declared government transparency the "cornerstone," calling for a reporter shield law and bringing more "sunlight to the Statehouse."

"Many Americans and many South Dakotans are losing their trust in government," Noem said. "Stories of government ineptitude and downright scandal don't help matters much. I hear you, and I'm with you."

On education, Noem said she will propose legislation requiring high school graduates to be able to pass the U.S. citizenship test. Noem also gave her support to legislation that would give home-schooled students another path to get a state scholarship for residents who attend South Dakota colleges.

Noem said the jobs of the future are nearly certain to require access to the internet. Her team will work on mapping to figure out gaps in the state's broadband coverage and plans to commit state resources to "closing the broadband gap," Noem said.

She said the Governor's Office of Economic Development has been charged with creating public-private partnerships to help surmount rural service challenges.

"Partnering with others, I want to connect as many South Dakotans as possible to high-speed internet over the next four years," she said.

Noem also invoked former Gov. Bill Janklow's successful push in the 1980s to bring financial services companies to South Dakota in calling for the state to search for the "next big thing." She said the economic development office will be pinpointing the next generation of targeted industries and seeking to bring in those sectors' most innovative companies.

Noem said she plans to give a budget address in "the next week or so." Republicans overwhelmingly control both legislative chambers for the 2019 session, which runs into late March.

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm said Noem is excited to move the state forward, praising Noem for setting lofty goals in her first State of the State address.

He lauded proposals from Noem to boost resources for pheasant habitat management; Noem called

improving and maintaining habitat "essential" to pheasant hunting's future. Qualm said he's looking forward to digging more into the specifics to make "some of these great things happen."

"I think you have to set the goals high. I really appreciate that, setting them high, and we'll get it figured out," Qualm said. "Give us a lofty goal to work for. I think that's great."

Democratic legislative leaders said they share Noem's priorities in areas including drug addiction, workforce housing and job training. But Senate Minority Leader Troy Heinert said Noem's speech left out discussion about the K-12 funding formula, getting people access to health care and online sales tax revenues.

"There was not a mention of health care, and I think in our state right now, we have some people with some serious health care issues and needs," Heinert said.

Sanford Health breaks ground on new facility in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Dakotas-based Sanford Health has broken ground on a new clinic in Sioux Falls that also will house the headquarters for the NCAA Division I college sports Summit League.

The 8,000-square-foot facility at the Sanford Sports Complex will have an acute care and orthopedic clinic with onsite laboratory and imaging services. It will provide care for patients from Sioux Falls and the surrounding area, as well as athletes using the complex.

Sanford Health is one of the largest health systems in the country, with 44 hospitals and more than 200 senior care locations in 26 states and nine countries.

US government says shutdown shouldn't stop Keystone hearing

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — The U.S. government shutdown may prevent Justice Department attorneys from going before a Montana judge next week to ask him to lift his hold on Keystone XL oil pipeline construction.

But the federal attorneys and the Canadian company that wants to build the pipeline say their absence shouldn't delay Monday's hearing on the matter in U.S. District Court in Great Falls.

Justice Department attorney Bridget McNeil said in a court filing Monday that government lawyers are prohibited from working except in emergencies during the shutdown. But, she added, federal attorneys' participation in the hearing shouldn't be necessary.

TransCanada attorneys previously told U.S. District Judge Brian Morris the company is prepared to hold the hearing without the government being represented. "The company believes that the potential absence of the federal government at the hearing does not provide cause to delay the matter," attorney Peter Steenland Jr. told the court in a filing last week.

In November, Morris ordered an injunction prohibiting TransCanada from any pipeline construction activities and some pre-construction activity. The judge ruled that the Trump administration had not fully considered the environmental effects when it approved a permit to build the 1,184-mile (1,900 kilometer) pipeline from Alberta that would ship up to 830,000 barrels a day of crude oil to the Gulf Coast.

TransCanada appealed Morris' ruling last month to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. On Monday, the company plans to argue that Morris' order blocking construction should be stayed while that appeal is pending, "with the goal of preserving the 2019 construction season," according to the company's request.

Norrie Ramsay, a TransCanada vice president, said in a sworn statement that the company laid off about 650 contract workers from pre-construction activities as a result of Morris' order. If pre-construction activities resume by March 15, the company could still begin construction by Aug. 1, he wrote.

Any later, and the company would be unable to perform any construction in 2019, creating a one-year delay that would add significant costs to the project, he wrote.

The injunction also hurts U.S. energy security interests and bilateral relations with Canada, TransCanada attorneys told the judge.

The environmental groups that sued to block the Keystone XL pipeline permit say the injunction is necessary to protect the public's interest in complying with environmental laws, and none of TransCanada's arguments justifies lifting it.

Woman seeks state survivor benefits after wife's death

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A retired South Dakota police officer asked the state's Supreme Court Tuesday to allow her to collect state retirement system survivor benefits after her wife, a former police captain, died of cancer.

An attorney for retired Rapid City officer Debra Anderson argued to the high court that South Dakota's previous ban on same-sex marriage can't be used to deny Anderson the benefits. The state said Anderson, 64, shouldn't receive survivor benefits because she and former Capt. Deb Cady weren't married before Cady retired in 2012 due to breast cancer.

Anderson and Cady had been together for many years at that point, but weren't married because it wasn't legal in South Dakota at the time. They married in 2015, when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage nationwide, and Cady died two years later.

"The South Dakota law that forbade same-sex marriage was unconstitutional, and as a result Deb Anderson is entitled to benefits as a surviving spouse, just as she would be if she were a man," attorney James Leach said before the arguments.

Retirement system attorney Robert Anderson argued to the high court that Debra Anderson isn't entitled to survivor benefits. He said Debra Anderson is asking the court to create a marriage in 2012 when one didn't exist, arguing that the justices shouldn't engage in that type of "marriage reconstruction."

Robert Anderson contended that if Cady and Debra Anderson had gotten married in a state that allowed same-sex marriage before Cady's 2012 retirement, then "today we would not be in this courtroom."

A 1996 law passed by the South Dakota Legislature and a voter-approved 2006 constitutional amendment banned gay marriage.

According to a court document, the couple discussed getting married when Massachusetts legalized gay marriage in 2003 and hoped it would be an option for them when Iowa legalized it in 2009. That year, Cady surprised Anderson with matching rings that Anderson still wears.

"We agreed that we would marry," Anderson previously testified, according to the document. "But for us it was going to have to be when it was either recognized by the State of South Dakota, which is where we resided and worked, or by the Federal Government, you know, as a nation as a whole."

Anderson referred comment to her attorney after the Supreme Court arguments. Anderson appealed a lower court ruling against her.

Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said Anderson's case represents a relatively new issue emerging in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage. He said the issue is arising in a variety of legal contexts, including alimony, marital property rights and retirement benefits.

"The South Dakota Supreme Court will be one of the very first in the country to address the ... plight of same-sex couples who, you know, yearned to marry but were barred from doing so by an unconstitutional state law," Minter said.

Man pleads guilty to fatally shooting fiancée

MADISON, S.D. (AP) — A man charged with fatally shooting his fiancée in Lake County has pleaded guilty to manslaughter in an agreement with prosecutors.

Terms of the plea agreement call for a 15-year prison sentence for 48-year-old Joseph Schmitz in exchange for the guilty plea, which came Monday just before his trial was to begin.

Schmitz is accused of shooting Corina Booth in April 2016 at a home they shared on Lake Madison. Court documents show Schmitz called 911 to report that he had shot Booth after she attempted to stab him. An open pocket knife was found next to Booth, who was lying on a mattress.

Schmitz will be sentenced in June and is currently out of jail on bond.

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Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, Jan. 3

Celebrating Noem's earned achievement

Kristi Noem took the oath of office Saturday to become South Dakota's 33rd governor.

It was a crowning moment for a 47-year-old mother of three who grew up on a family farm in Hamlin County in northeastern South Dakota. Nobody handed Noem this historic achievement of becoming South Dakota's first woman governor. She worked hard and she fought for it.

If there's one quality that is most respected by South Dakotans, it's the will to work hard every day in relentless pursuit of a worthy goal. If there's a lesson for the state's boys and girls, it's that believing in yourself and working hard to accomplish something still matters. Achievement in South Dakota is not a gift of birth, or a result of lineage, location or gender. No obstacle is insurmountable for those who smartly work long and hard for it.

It's been a dozen years since Noem first entered the Legislature, climbed the ladder of South Dakota Republican Party leadership, tested her mettle in the forever frustrating U.S. House, punched out a Republican primary victory against Attorney General Marty Jackley, and then overcame an unexpectedly strong challenge from Democrat Billie Sutton.

There's no doubt that each of these accomplishments have left her better prepared her for what undoubtedly will be the biggest challenge of her life. The state's population is closing in on 900,000 people, its gross domestic product on \$50 billion, and the state budget on \$1.6 billion.

Like in most states on the Northern Plains, South Dakota's metropolitan areas have grown, mid-sized cities have held their own, but rural areas continue to shrink. Educational challenges keep growing. Drug addiction remains a vexing problem. A lack of mental health services complicates everything. And progress on the tough nut of relations between Native Americans and other state residents has been agonizingly slow.

Now it's Noem's turn to do her best at keeping the good while making progress on our longstanding challenges. It will require her to draw on her experiences in agriculture and government. She will be required to inspire, command respect and deliver real successes.

She will undoubtedly weather strong winds of opposition — some of them undoubtedly coming from here. There will be economic and political uncertainties. That all starts Monday.

Now is a time for celebrating earned achievements, toasting new hopes and offering respect for personal accomplishments. One of our own, a girl born on a South Dakota farm, has climbed to a pinnacle by sheer force of effort. It's a remarkable victory to behold. We should all celebrate it.

American News, Aberdeen, Jan. 5

New perspectives mean new experiences for South Dakotans

It is an important time in South Dakota history.

Not unlike almost eight years ago when a seemingly timid lieutenant governor made bold moves in his first few days as governor.

Two weeks into his new administration, on Jan. 19, 2011, Gov. Dennis Daugaard stood figuratively and literally alone to call for budget cuts of at least 10 percent throughout the state government departments and offices under his control.

"The gun is at our head," he said. "I'm tired of looking at death from a thousand paper cuts."

At that time, he said spending from the state's general fund must be reduced \$127 million in order to bring the budget back into balance with the estimated amounts of tax revenues.

It put his sanity in serious doubt with many South Dakotans who were about to bear the brunt of such cuts. A few days earlier, Daugaard showed his seriousness by starting with himself when he announced he was going to take more than a \$15,000 pay cut as governor.

Last month, with just a few weeks left in his second and final term as governor, Daugaard outlined his

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last state budget proposal as a “needs budget,” not a “wants budget.” Daugaard was proud to be talking about a \$4.8 billion balanced budget for fiscal year 2020 that will begin on July 1.

“We don’t spend money we don’t have,” Daugaard said during his hour-long farewell address to the lawmakers and other interested parties gathered in the Capitol’s House chamber in Pierre.

Also listening was Kristi Noem, elected as the state’s first female governor. Noem will use Daugaard’s proposed budget as a basis for her own.

“I’m grateful for the opportunity to build on Gov. Daugaard’s foundation ... and his unwavering commitment to South Dakota,” she said.

Noem will have a lot to live up to financially. Daugaard brought South Dakota to the land of fiscal responsibility.

That’s rare these days, in a time when our elected leaders often don’t see anything wrong with spending money they don’t have.

That bottom-line mindset sets the table for an important and exciting point in our state history.

Madison Daily Leader, Madison, Jan. 3

Reduced antibiotic use is paying off

After years of warnings, the overuse of antibiotics in farm animals has reversed course.

Some observers consider antibiotics the “miracle drugs” of the 20th century. They have been incredibly useful for both human and animal health.

However, the risk of using antibiotics is resistance — the tendency of bacteria to fight back against antibiotics. Some experts say the overuse of antibiotics is causing the development of “super strains” of bacteria that cannot be fought with antibiotics. An estimated two million Americans suffer from antibiotic-resistant infections every year.

Some of the overuse has occurred in food-producing animals. It’s proper, of course, to use the antibiotics in treating sick animals, but some producers have been giving antibiotics as a growth accelerator, or as a preventive medicine against potential infections. Both are considered overuse.

The Obama administration proposed that manufacturers stop selling antibiotics for growth promotion and that veterinary oversight be strengthened for other uses. The Food and Drug Administration now shows the fruits of this wise step. There was a 33 percent decline between 2016 and 2017 in domestic sales and distribution of all medically important antimicrobials for use in food-producing animals — and a drop of 43 percent since 2015.

We applaud those who both passed the rules and those who are abiding by them. We can’t estimate the benefit of reduced antibiotic overuse, but we know it is substantial.

Australia considering resettlement for fleeing Saudi woman

By **KAWEEWIT KAEWJINDA** and **TREVOR MARSHALLSEA**, Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Australia’s government said Wednesday that it will assess the resettlement case of a Saudi woman who fled from her family now that the United Nations has deemed her a refugee, taking the woman’s high-profile quest for asylum a step forward.

The Department of Home Affairs confirmed in a statement that the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees had referred 18-year-old Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun to Australia for consideration for refugee resettlement.

Alqunun arrived in Bangkok on a flight from Kuwait on Saturday, and planned to continue to Australia, where she held a tourist visa. But after being detained by Thai authorities, she refused to board a flight back to Kuwait, barricading herself in an airport hotel room.

After grabbing worldwide attention with dramatic posts on social media in which she said she feared for her safety if made to return home to her family, Alqunun eventually was placed in the care of the UNHCR as her bid for refugee status was considered.

Alqunun’s father denied physically abusing her or trying to force her into an arranged marriage, among the reasons she gave for her flight, Thailand’s Immigration Police chief said after meeting him Wednesday.

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The father, whose name was not released and who was not seen by reporters, said he wants his daughter back but respects her decision, police Lt. Gen. Surachate Hakparn said. He described the man as being a governor in Saudi Arabia.

"He has 10 children. He said the daughter might feel neglected sometimes," Surachate said. "But he didn't go into detail."

Alqunun refused to meet with her father, who arrived in the Thai capital on Tuesday. She had said in her online postings that she was afraid of such an encounter.

Alqunun arrived in Bangkok from Kuwait late Saturday, but was stopped from proceeding to her planned destination of Australia. After mounting a campaign for assistance on Twitter, she was allowed to temporarily stay in Thailand under the care of the U.N.'s refugee agency, which ruled her claim for asylum valid.

Australia's Home Affairs Department said it would "consider this referral in the usual way, as it does with all UNHCR referrals."

Indications from Canberra suggest Alqunun may receive a sympathetic hearing.

"If she is found to be a refugee, then we will give very, very, very serious consideration to a humanitarian visa," Health Minister Greg Hunt told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. before the UNHCR's referral.

The case has highlighted the cause of women's rights in Saudi Arabia. Several female Saudis fleeing abuse by their families have been caught trying to seek asylum abroad in recent years and returned home. Human rights activists say many more similar cases will have gone unreported.

The influence of the Internet on Alqunun's case was noted by several human rights advocates.

The representative in Australia of Human Rights Watch, Elaine Pearson, said it was encouraging that Alqunun was able to highlight her situation using social media, and she hoped more Saudi women might act similarly.

"The unique thing about this case is that she had access to social media, and was able to report on it and bring the world's attention to her plight," said Pearson. "I think there are many cases like this that go unreported."

A similar point was made by UNHCR spokesman Babar Baloch, who said that what was different in Alqunun's case was that "the wave of all of the voices of solidarity and support came together, joined up in terms of caring for this individual."

Surachate discussed Alqunun's situation on Tuesday with Saudi Charge d'Affaires in Thailand Abdalelah Mohammed A. Alsheaiby. In a video clip of the meeting released by Thai immigration police, Alsheaiby is heard telling Thai officials: "From the moment she arrived, she opened a new account and her followers reached almost 45,000 in a day . and I would have preferred it better if her phone was taken instead of her passport."

The comments sparked anger on social media. Surachate said that police could not confiscate her phone because she was not being detained and said that the Saudi diplomat's remark was "just an opinion" and "nothing to be taken seriously."

A Tuesday statement from the Saudi Embassy in Thailand denied interfering in Alqunun's case, and said it was only monitoring her situation. Describing her case as a "family affair," it said Saudi officials had neither seized her passport — as Alqunun had claimed several times — nor demanded her deportation back home.

The embassy and Thai officials earlier said that Alqunun was stopped by Thai authorities because she did not have a return ticket, a hotel reservation or itinerary to show she was a tourist, which appeared to have raised a red flag about the reasons for her trip.

Saudi Arabia's wider human rights record has come under intense scrutiny since the killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi in October. Khashoggi, who wrote critically of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in columns for The Washington Post, had been living in self-imposed exile before Saudi agents killed and dismembered him inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

The kingdom offered various shifting accounts of the circumstances of his death before eventually settling on the explanation that he died in a botched operation to forcibly bring him back to Saudi Arabia.

Marshallsea reported from Sydney. Associated Press writer Jamey Keaten contributed to this report from Geneva.

This story has been corrected to show the rank of Thailand's immigration chief is lieutenant general.

Democrats: Trump using misinformation, malice in wall debate

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top congressional Democrats said President Donald Trump “has chosen fear” in his drive to build a southern border wall and called on him to reopen the government shuttered because of the standoff over his demand for money for the barrier.

Speaking moments after Trump made his case for the wall in an Oval Office address Tuesday night, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told a national television audience that the president's rhetoric has been “full of misinformation and even malice.”

Standing alongside her, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said America's symbol “should be the Statute of Liberty, not a 30-foot wall.” He accused Trump of trying to “stoke fear and divert attention” from his tumultuous administration.

The Democrats' prime-time remarks were something of a debut for the newly empowered opposition. Less than a week after Democrats seized control of the House, Pelosi and Schumer stood side-by-side at a lectern in a joint appearance that appeared designed to emphasize their party's unity.

They spoke moments after Trump warned of a “growing humanitarian and security crisis” at the border with Mexico. He said it was “immoral” for politicians “to do nothing and continue to allow more innocent people to be so horribly victimized” by the drugs and criminals he claims are streaming across the boundary.

Trump and the Democrats have been dueling during a partial government shutdown over his demands for — and their opposition to — \$5.7 billion to begin building a border wall with Mexico. Some 800,000 federal employees are working without pay or have been furloughed at dozens of federal agencies, and each side is blaming the other for the closure.

The longest shutdown ever was 21 days that stretched from December 1995 into January 1996.

Polls have shown that Trump's proposed wall and the shutdown fight have played well with his die-hard conservative supporters, but poorly with the general public. The wall was one of Trump's highest-profile campaign promises and his performance on that issue could have a major impact on his 2020 re-election effort, while Democrats have made opposition to the proposal a cornerstone goal.

Pelosi, D-Calif., said Trump forced the shutdown due to “his obsession” with a costly, ineffective wall, which she recently called “immoral.”

“President Trump must stop holding the American people hostage, must stop manufacturing a crisis and must reopen the government,” she said.

“Most presidents have used Oval Office addresses for noble purposes,” said Schumer, D-N.Y. “This president just used the backdrop of the Oval Office to manufacture a crisis.”

The Democrats' remarks lasted just over four minutes, compared with more than nine minutes for Trump.

Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders, a potential 2020 Democratic presidential contender, delivered his own response on social media. Sanders said Trump “lies all the time,” citing the president's assertions that Mexico would pay for the wall and his claims about the number of terrorists and amount of illegal drugs flowing across the border.

Sanders said true emergencies facing the U.S. include the number of people who remain without sufficient health care coverage, college costs that are unaffordable for many and global warming.

“Mr. President, we don't need to create artificial crises. We have enough real ones,” said Sanders.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. government shutdown: <https://apnews.com/GovernmentShutdown>

Trump pleads on TV for wall money; Dems say he stokes 'fear'

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump urged congressional Democrats to fund his long-promised border wall in a somber televised address that was heavy with dark immigration rhetoric but offered little in the way of concessions or new ideas to break the standoff that has left large swaths of the government shuttered for 19 days.

Speaking to the nation from the Oval Office for the first time, Trump argued Tuesday night that the wall was needed to resolve a security and humanitarian "crisis," blaming illegal immigration for what he said was a scourge of drugs and violence in the U.S. and asking: "How much more American blood must we shed before Congress does its job?"

Democrats in response accused Trump appealing to "fear, not facts" and manufacturing a border crisis for political gain.

Using the formal trappings of the White House, Trump hoped to gain the upper hand in the standoff over his demand for \$5.7 billion to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. He plans a visit to the border Thursday as he continues to pitch what was a signature promise of his 2016 presidential campaign.

He addressed the nation as the shutdown stretched through its third week, with hundreds of thousands of federal workers going without pay and some congressional Republicans growing increasingly jittery about the spreading impact of the impasse. Trump will visit the Capitol on Wednesday to meet with Senate Republicans, and has invited Democratic and Republican congressional leaders to return to the White House to meet with him later that day.

He claimed the standoff could be resolved in "45 minutes" if Democrats would just negotiate, but previous meetings have led to no agreement.

For now, Trump sees this as winning politics. TV networks had been reticent about providing him airtime to make what some feared would be a purely political speech. And that concern was heightened by the decision Tuesday by Trump's re-election campaign to send out fundraising emails and text messages to supporters trying to raise money off the speech. Their goal: a half-million dollars in a day.

"I just addressed the nation on Border Security. Now need you to stand with me," read one message sent out after his remarks.

In their own televised remarks, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer accused Trump of misrepresenting the situation on the border as they urged him to reopen closed government departments and turn loose paychecks for hundreds of thousands of workers.

Negotiations on wall funding could proceed in the meantime, they said.

Schumer said Trump "just used the backdrop of the Oval Office to manufacture a crisis, stoke fear and divert attention from the turmoil in his administration."

In his dire address, Trump ticked off a string of statistics and claims to make his case that there is a crisis at the border, but a number of his statements were misleading, such as saying the new trade deal with Mexico would pay for the wall, or suggesting through gruesome examples that immigrants are more likely to commit crime.

Trump, who has long railed against illegal immigration at the border, has recently seized on humanitarian concerns to argue there is a broader crisis that can only be solved with a wall. But critics say the security risks are overblown and the administration is at least partly to blame for the humanitarian situation.

Trump used emotional language, referring to Americans who were killed by people in the country illegally, saying: "I've met with dozens of families whose loved ones were stolen by illegal immigration. I've held the hands of the weeping mothers and embraced the grief-stricken fathers. So sad. So terrible."

The president often highlights such incidents, though studies over several years have found immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than people born in the United States.

Trump has been discussing the idea of declaring a national emergency to allow him to move forward with the wall without getting congressional approval for the billions he's requested. But he did not mention that Tuesday night.

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The partial government shutdown reached its 18th day on Tuesday, making the closure the second-longest in history, and continued on Wednesday. Hundreds of thousands of federal workers are going without pay, and government disruptions are hitting home with everyday Americans.

Trump was nearly halfway through his 9-minute address before he ever mentioned the border wall, describing it as a request from law enforcement rather than his own longstanding political pledge. He also suggested that his proposal to build the wall from steel, rather than concrete, was a concession to Democrats, although they don't see it that way.

Trump sought to put the blame on Democrats for the standoff, saying they "will not fund border security." In fact, House Democrats passed legislation the day they took control of the House that offered \$1.3 billion for border security. And Senate Democrats have approved similar funding year after year.

Seeking to keep up pressure on Trump and the Republicans, Pelosi said the House would begin passing individual bills this week to reopen some federal agencies, starting with the Treasury Department to ensure Americans receive their tax refunds. The administration says it will act on its own to ensure the refunds.

Ahead of the speech, the White House sought to shore up GOP support on Capitol Hill, where a growing number of Republicans have been expressing unease with the extended shutdown. But GOP lawmakers were still raising concerns Tuesday, talking about disruptions in payments to farmers and troubles for home buyers trying to get government-backed mortgage loans. Vice President Mike Pence met privately with House Republicans, urging them to "stand strong" and insisting the White House wants to negotiate, according to people familiar with the conversation.

He also told the group that Trump won't retreat. "That pickup ain't got reverse in it," he said.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long, Alan Fram and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. government shutdown: <https://apnews.com/GovernmentShutdown>

AP source: Rosenstein expected to leave Justice in weeks

By ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed special counsel Robert Mueller and remains his most visible Justice Department protector, is expected to leave his position soon after William Barr is confirmed as attorney general, a person familiar with the plans said Wednesday.

Barr, who served in the position in the early 1990s and is President Donald Trump's pick to do the job again, has a confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee next week and could be in place at the Justice Department as soon as February.

Rosenstein plans to leave at some point after that, though no date has been set and there is no formal plan for the departure, according to the person, who was not authorized to discuss internal conversations publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. Rosenstein, a former United States attorney in Maryland, will have served as deputy for roughly two years by the time he leaves.

Mueller is investigating Russia's meddling in the 2016 election and contacts with the Trump campaign. Rosenstein and his chief deputy have continued to maintain day-to-day oversight over the probe, a senior Justice Department official told reporters last month.

Barr would take over control of the investigation, assuming the same final say over major investigative steps that acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker has had since former Attorney General Jeff Sessions was ousted in November.

Rosenstein appointed Mueller as special counsel in May 2017 to investigate potential coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign to sway the 2016 election. The appointment followed the recusal of Sessions because of his work on the Trump campaign and Trump's firing of former FBI director James Comey .

The transition to Barr would come with critical steps in the Mueller investigation expected to unfold in the weeks and months ahead, when the special counsel's office is expected to report its findings to the Justice Department.

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Barr has made critical comments of the Mueller investigation in the past, including an unsolicited memo he sent the Justice Department last year critiquing Mueller's investigation into whether the president had sought to obstruct justice by firing Comey. Barr is expected to face questioning from Democrats about his views of the Mueller investigation at next week's hearing.

At a news conference in December, Rosenstein said that Mueller's investigation would be "handled appropriately" no matter who is overseeing it. He said Barr would be an "excellent attorney general when he is confirmed."

The departure is not unexpected. It is common for attorneys general and other Cabinet secretaries to have their own deputies. Barr has told people close to him that he wanted his own No. 2.

Rosenstein's job status has appeared tenuous at times, most notably in September, when he showed up at the White House expecting to be fired over news reports that he had discussed secretly recording the president. But Trump opted not to replace him.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders told Fox News on Wednesday that Rosenstein had always planned to stay around two years.

"I don't think there's any willingness by the president or the White House to push him out," Sanders said. "My guess is he is making room for the new attorney general to build a team that he wants around him."

Associated Press writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump and the disputed border crisis

By CALVIN WOODWARD and COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In his prime-time speech to the nation, President Donald Trump declared a border crisis that's in sharp dispute, wrongly accused Democrats of refusing to pay for border security and ignored the reality of how drugs come into the country as he pitched his wall as a solution to varied ills.

A look at his Oval Office remarks Tuesday night:

DRUGS

TRUMP: "Our southern border is a pipeline for vast quantities of illegal drugs, including meth, heroin, cocaine and fentanyl. Every week, 300 of our citizens are killed by heroin alone, 90 percent of which floods across from our southern border."

THE FACTS: A wall can't do much about that when drug trafficking is concentrated at land ports of entry, not remote stretches of the border.

The Drug Enforcement Administration says "only a small percentage" of heroin seized by U.S. authorities comes across on territory between ports of entry. The same is true of drugs generally.

In a 2018 report, the agency said the most common trafficking technique by transnational criminal organizations is to hide drugs in passenger vehicles or tractor-trailers as they drive into the U.S. through entry ports, where they are stopped and subject to inspection. They also employ buses, cargo trains and tunnels, the report says, citing other smuggling methods that also would not be choked off by a border wall.

Trump recently denied that traffickers use entry ports at the southern border, contradicting the evidence and assertions of his drug enforcement personnel.

Trump stretched credulity even more by comparing the wall money he wants from Congress to the cost of the entire drug problem in the U.S.: "The border wall would very quickly pay for itself. The cost of illegal drugs exceeds \$500 billion a year, vastly more than the \$5.7 billion we have requested from Congress."

WALL MONEY

TRUMP: "Democrats will not fund border security."

THE FACTS: That's not true. They just won't fund it the way he wants. They have refused his demand for \$5.7 billion to build part of a steel wall across the U.S.-Mexico border

Democrats passed legislation the day they took control of the House that offered \$1.3 billion for border security, including physical barriers and technology along the U.S. southern border.

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Senate Democrats have approved similar funding year after year.

Democrats have also supported broader fence-building as part of deals that also had a path to legal status for millions of immigrants living in the country illegally.

In 2013, Senate Democrats voted for a failed immigration bill that provided roughly \$46 billion for a number of border security measures — including new fencing — but that legislation would have created a pathway to citizenship for some of the estimated 11 million immigrants living in the U.S. illegally.

The 2013 Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act had money to double the number of miles of fencing, to 700 miles (1,126 km), as well as for more border patrol agents. It also had a mandatory employment verification system to ensure all U.S. employees are authorized to work in the country. In exchange, however, the bill allowed immigrants living in the country illegally to apply for a provisional legal status if they paid a \$500 fine and had no felony convictions.

As well many Democrats voted for the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which has resulted in the construction of about 650 miles (1,050 kilometers) of border barrier. But that legislation didn't authorize the kind of wall Trump has long been advocating since he launched his campaign.

THE DEMS

HOUSE SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI: "The fact is: President Trump has chosen to hold hostage critical services for the health, safety and well-being of the American people and withhold the paychecks of 800,000 innocent workers across the nation - many of them veterans." — response to Trump's remarks.

SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER, Senate Democratic leader: "The president of the United States - having failed to get Mexico to pay for his ineffective, unnecessary border wall, and unable to convince the Congress or the American people to foot the bill - has shut down the government." — response to Trump.

THE FACTS: That's one way to look at it. But it takes two sides to shut down the government. Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion for his border wall is one reason for the budget impasse. The refusal of Democrats to approve the money is another.

VIOLENCE

TRUMP: "Over the years thousands of Americans have been brutally killed by those who illegally entered our country and thousands more lives will be lost if we don't act right now."

THE FACTS: His statement that people in the country illegally are a special menace to public safety is at odds with plentiful research.

Multiple studies from social scientists and the libertarian think tank Cato Institute have found that people here illegally are less likely to commit crime than U.S. citizens, and legal immigrants are even less likely to do so.

A March study by the journal Criminology found "undocumented immigration does not increase violence."

The study, which looked at the years 1990 through 2014, said states with bigger shares of such people have lower crime rates.

As well, a study in 2017 by Robert Adelman, a sociology professor at University of Buffalo, analyzed 40 years of crime data in 200 metropolitan areas and found that immigrants helped lower crime. New York City, for example, has the nation's largest population of immigrants living in the country illegally — about 500,000 — and last year had only 289 murders among a total population of 8.5 million people, according to preliminary data. Those numbers mean a person's odds of becoming a victim of homicide in tightly packed, diverse New York City were about the same as they were last year in Montana.

And Ruben Rumbaut, a University of California, Irvine sociology professor, co-authored a recent study that noted crime rates fell sharply from 1990 to 2015 at a time when illegal immigration spiked.

CRISIS?

TRUMP: "Tonight I am speaking to you because there is a growing humanitarian and security crisis at our southern border."

THE FACTS: Few would argue that a humanitarian crisis is unfolding, as the demand for entry by migrants

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and the Trump administration's hardline response to them are overwhelming border resources, further backlogging the asylum system and forcing migrants to live in abysmal conditions on the Mexican side of the border. Two sick children recently died in the administration's custody after making the journey to the U.S.

The debate is much sharper over whether a national security crisis exists at the border. Whether he is right or wrong, Trump has exaggerated the problem by repeatedly promoting the discredited notion that terrorism suspects are pouring into the U.S. from Mexico by the thousands.

While the number of families coming over the border has risen sharply, the number of border arrests — the leading gauge of how many people are trying to cross illegally — is actually one-quarter of what it was in 2000, dropping from 1.6 million then to 400,000 in 2018. Also noteworthy: The contingent of active-duty U.S. troops at the border has been more than halved, dropping from a peak in the fall of about 5,900 to about 2,350 last week.

THAT TRADE DEAL

TRUMP: "The wall will also be paid for indirectly by the great new trade deal we have made with Mexico."

THE FACTS: Mexico is not paying for the wall despite what Trump promised during the 2016 campaign, and nothing in the trade agreement would cover or refund the construction cost.

Trump is assuming a wide variety of economic benefits will come from the agreement, but they can't be quantified or counted on. For example, he has said the deal will dissuade some U.S. companies from moving operations to Mexico and he credits that possibility as a payment by Mexico for his wall.

The deal updates the North American Free Trade Agreement, in the main preserving NAFTA's liberalized environment of low or no tariffs among the U.S., Mexico and Canada, while making certain improvements for each country. Trump stated inaccurately that it's "brand new. It's totally different."

Moreover, it's not in effect. The deal has yet to be ratified in any member country and its chances of winning legislative approval are not assured.

DO WALLS WORK?

TRUMP: "This barrier is absolutely critical to border security."

THE FACTS: The evidence is inconclusive as to whether walls are "absolutely critical" or actually work in deterring illegal crossings.

Congress' main watchdog reported in 2017 that the government does not have a way to measure how well barriers work to deter immigrants crossing illegally from Mexico. Despite \$2.3 billion spent by the government on such construction from 2007 to 2015, the Government Accountability Office found that authorities "cannot measure the contribution of fencing to border security operations along the southwest border because it has not developed metrics for this assessment."

Few people dispute that fences contributed to a sharp drop in crossings in cities like San Diego and El Paso, Texas, where people can easily blend in once they enter the country. Before fences were built in San Diego, crossers played soccer on U.S. soil as vendors hawked tamales, waiting until night fell to overwhelm agents. However, those barriers also pushed people into more remote and less-patrolled areas like in Arizona, where thousands of migrants have perished in extreme heat.

When barriers were built in the Border Patrol's Yuma, Arizona, sector in the mid-2000s, arrests for illegal crossings plummeted 94 percent in three years to 8,363 from 138,438. When barriers were built in San Diego in the 1990s and early 2000s, arrests fell 80 percent over seven years from 524,231 in 1995 to 100,681 in 2002. But both areas also saw sharp increases in Border Patrol staffing during that time, making it difficult to pinpoint why illegal crossings fell so dramatically.

IMMIGRANT COSTS/BENEFITS

TRUMP: "America proudly welcomes millions of lawful immigrants who enrich our society and contribute to our nation but all Americans are hurt by uncontrolled illegal migration. It strains public resources and

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drives down jobs and wages.”

THE FACTS: The U.S. is not experiencing “uncontrolled” illegal immigration. The debate is over whether the controls are strong enough.

As for the costs, a major academic study in 2016 by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found the job impacts of immigration, when measured over at least 10 years, are very small. It found immigration — legal and illegal — is an overall benefit to long-term economic growth.

Some evidence suggests that skilled immigrants boost wages. Native-born Americans without a high-school degree are most likely to suffer.

The academy study said estimating fiscal impacts of immigration is complex. Young and old immigrants tend to drain government resources while working-age immigrants contribute.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Hope Yen in Washington, Amanda Seitz in Chicago, Barbara Whitaker in New York and Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

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For AP’s complete coverage of the U.S. government shutdown: <https://apnews.com/GovernmentShutdown>

US, China end talks on tariff battle with no word on outcome

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Three days of U.S.-Chinese talks aimed at ending a costly tariff battle wrapped up Wednesday in an optimistic atmosphere after President Donald Trump said they were “going very well!”

No details were immediately announced, but stocks rose after talks planned for two days were extended to three. Hong Kong’s main market index closed up 2.1 percent and Tokyo rose 1.1 percent.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Lu Kang, announced the talks had ended. Lu said he had no details and an official statement would be issued later.

The talks that started Monday were the first face-to-face meetings since Trump and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, agreed on Dec. 1 to suspend further action against each other’s imports for 90 days while they negotiate over U.S. complaints that Beijing steals or pressures companies to hand over technology.

“Talks with China are going very well!” Trump said late Tuesday on Twitter.

Washington wants Beijing to change plans for government-led creation of Chinese leaders in robotics and other advanced technologies.

Chinese officials have suggested Beijing might alter its industrial plans but reject pressure to abandon what they consider a path to prosperity and global influence.

Neither side has given any indication its basic position has changed. Economists say the 90-day window is too short to resolve all the conflicts between the biggest and second-biggest global economies.

“Even if a deal is cobbled together, the more strident trade hawks in the White House and Trump may not sign off,” Mizuho Bank’s Vishnu Varathan said in a report.

Chinese exports to the U.S. have held up despite tariff increases of up to 25 percent on \$250 billion of Chinese imports, partly due to exporters rushing to fill orders before more increases hit. Forecasters expect American orders to slump this year.

China has imposed penalties on \$110 billion of American goods, slowing customs clearance for U.S. companies and suspending issuing licenses in finance and other businesses.

As the trade talks wound down, China’s top economic official, Premier Li Keqiang, met with CEO Elon Musk of electric car brand Tesla Inc.

“We hope you can get a firm foothold and expand the market,” Li told Musk during the meeting at the Great Hall of the People, the seat of China’s legislature. “We hope your company can become an in-depth participant in China’s opening and a promoter of the stability of Chinese-U.S. relations.”

Tesla broke ground this week in Shanghai on its first factory outside the United States. Musk said pro-

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duction of its Model 3 would start late this year.

China is the largest electric vehicle market and is strongly encouraging its development. Last year it ended restrictions on foreign ownership of EV producers to help spur the industry's growth, and in July Tesla announced plans to build the Gigafactory 3 facility in Shanghai.

Beijing has tried to defuse pressure from its trading partners for more sweeping changes by offering concessions on investment regulations and stepping up purchases of American soybeans, natural gas and other exports.

However, the official Trump put in charge of the talks, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, has focused on pressing Beijing to scrap or change rules Washington says block market access or improperly help Chinese companies.

U.S. companies also want action on Chinese policies they complain improperly favor local companies. Those include subsidies and other favors for high-tech and state-owned industry, rules on technology licensing and preferential treatment of domestic suppliers in government procurement.

The U.S. demands strike at the heart of a state-led development model the ruling Communist Party sees as a great success over the past three decades and is reluctant to give up.

"These issues are much more difficult to solve immediately but are, frankly, much more compelling to U.S. companies," said Jake Parker, vice president for China operations of the U.S.-China Business Council, which represents American companies that do business with China.

Beijing also faces pressure over technology from the European Union. The 28-nation trade bloc has filed a challenge in the World Trade Organization against Chinese licensing rules it says hinder foreign companies from protecting and profiting from their technologies.

Companies disappointed failures or delays in carrying out Beijing's commitments want an enforcement mechanism with "some kind of penalty for not doing what they promised," said Parker.

"That's not something that's going to be done by March," said Parker. "It's probably going to take a little longer."

For its part, Beijing is unhappy with U.S. export and investment curbs, such as controls on "dual use" technology with possible military applications. They say China's companies are treated unfairly in national security reviews of proposed corporate acquisitions, though almost all deals are approved unchanged.

With cooling economic growth raising the urgency for a settlement, this week's talks went ahead despite tension over the arrest of a Chinese tech executive in Canada on U.S. charges related to possible violations of trade sanctions against Iran.

The American delegation was led by one of Lighthizer's deputies, Jeffrey D. Gerrish. It included agriculture, energy, commerce, treasury and State Department officials.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. TRUMP LINKS DRUGS, CRIME TO LACK OF BORDER WALL

In a televised plea from the Oval Office, the president urges congressional Democrats to fund his border wall, but Democrats accused the Republican of appealing to "fear, not facts."

2. AUSTRALIA WILL ASSESS RUNAWAY SAUDI WOMAN FOR SETTLEMENT

The move comes as 18-year-old Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun was deemed a refugee by the United Nations.

3. KIM JONG UN HEADS HOME FROM BEIJING

The North Korean leader's trip to China — his fourth in the past 10 months — was believed to be an effort to coordinate with his only major ally ahead of a possible second summit with Trump.

4. WHERE A STRIKE SEEMS INEVITABLE

Teachers in Los Angeles, the nation's second-largest school district, are ready to walk out over a contract dispute.

5. WHAT TRUMP SAID WENT 'VERY WELL'

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Financial markets rally as U.S. and Chinese envoys wrap up three days of talks designed to end a protracted tariff war.

6. CHINA ALLOWING ETHNIC KAZAKHS TO LEAVE XINJIANG

The move is a sign that Beijing may be starting to feel a backlash against its sweeping crackdown on Muslims in the far west region.

7. AUSTRALIA POLICE EXAMINING PACKAGES LEFT AT CONSULATES

Several foreign missions are evacuated in Melbourne and Canberra after they received suspicious packages.

8. KURDS' AMBITIONS CAUGHT IN POWER GAMES

The ethnic group has gotten close to setting up their own state or autonomous regions on several occasions only to have their dreams shattered by world powers, and now Turkey is bearing down on them in northern Syria where the U.S. allies helped rout the Islamic State group.

9. SEATTLE BRACES FOR HISTORIC TRAFFIC SQUEEZE

A major thoroughfare for commuters along the downtown waterfront is shutting down for good, ushering in a painful traffic period for the booming Pacific Northwest city.

10. NETWORKS FACT-CHECK TRUMP SPEECH

TV pundits move swiftly to correct or challenge Trump following his Oval Office speech on the proposed border wall.

Australia police examining packages left at consulates

By TREVOR MARSHALLSEA, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Several foreign diplomatic missions were evacuated in the Australian cities of Melbourne and Canberra on Wednesday after they received packages containing suspicious substances.

Police, fire crews and ambulances were seen at a number of foreign consulates in Melbourne, including those of India, Germany, Italy, Spain and South Korea. Officials at the U.S. and Swiss missions in the city said they had also received packages.

The Vic Emergency website, the collective body of emergency agencies in Victoria state, of which Melbourne is the capital, noted at least 10 "hazardous material" incidents in the city, though by Wednesday night none of those incidents was listed as ongoing.

There were no reports of anyone being injured at the targeted missions in both cities.

Victoria Police said they believed the incidents were targeted and did not impact the general community.

Australian Federal Police said in a statement that "the circumstances surrounding these incidents are being investigated."

The Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported that a worker from the New Zealand consulate in Melbourne had said the packages in question were envelopes labelled "asbestos." Inside were plastic sandwich bags containing a fibrous material.

The ABC reported suspicious packages were also found at the Melbourne diplomatic offices of Pakistan and possibly those of Greece, France and Hong Kong. It said the Israeli Embassy in Canberra also received a suspicious package.

It was not immediately clear which other countries' diplomatic missions in the national capital were affected, if any.

Two firetrucks, a hazardous materials vehicle and police cars were seen at India's consulate in Melbourne, where staff members had been evacuated, some wearing protective masks.

Staff were later allowed to re-enter the building, which was deemed safe by Vic Emergency.

The incidents come after Sydney's Argentinian consulate was partially evacuated on Monday after reports of a suspicious substance. The powder, contained in clear plastic bags within an envelope, was subsequently deemed not dangerous.

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Kim Jong Un heads home via train after 2-day Beijing visit

By **CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press**

BEIJING (AP) — A special train believed to be carrying Kim Jong Un departed Beijing on Wednesday after a two-day visit by the North Korean leader to the Chinese capital.

Kim could not be seen, but he was presumed to be on board the long train as it crossed on elevated tracks over a busy Beijing street and headed toward eastern China and the border with North Korea.

Kim's trip to China — his fourth in the past 10 months — is believed to be an effort to coordinate with his only major ally ahead of a possible second summit with President Donald Trump. It comes after U.S. and North Korean officials are thought to have met in Vietnam to discuss the site of the summit.

Details of his visit have not been released, but Kim reportedly met with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Earlier Wednesday, Kim's motorcade headed out to an unannounced destination and returned about an hour later.

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency said Kim visited a technology development zone and spent around 20-30 minutes touring a factory run by famed traditional Chinese medicine maker Tong Ren Tang.

North Korean and Chinese state media announced his visit shortly in advance of his arrival in Beijing, in a break with standard protocol dictating such trips are only confirmed after they happen. However, neither side has provided details of what he has done since arriving aboard his personal armored train on Tuesday morning.

Yonhap said Kim met with Xi for about an hour on Tuesday and later attended a dinner at the Great Hall of the People in central Beijing hosted by Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan. Kim was accompanied by his wife,

Ri Sol Ju, the news agency said.

At Tuesday's daily Foreign Ministry briefing, spokesman Lu Kang said details of Kim's visit would be released "in due course." He said Beijing remains supportive of efforts to end tensions over U.S. demands for a halt to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

"We always believe that, as key parties to the Korean Peninsula issue, it's important for the two sides to maintain contact and we always support their dialogue to achieve positive outcomes," Lu said.

Tuesday was Kim's birthday. His visit is also seen as part of an effort to win Chinese support for a reduction of U.N. sanctions imposed over his nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, which have severely impacted his country's already ailing economy.

While North Korea hasn't conducted any launches or detonations in more than a year, it's displayed no real intention of abandoning the programs that are seen as guaranteeing the hard-line communist regime's survival.

Kim's visit also came after he expressed frustration in his annual New Year's address over the lack of progress in negotiations with Washington since the Singapore summit with Trump in June, saying that if things don't improve — meaning that if sanctions relief and security guarantees aren't in the offing — Pyongyang might have to find "a new way" forward.

While Trump says he considers Xi key to enticing Kim into taking concrete steps toward denuclearization, the president's own relationship with his Chinese counterpart has frayed over the U.S.-China trade war.

Officially, at least, China says it considers the tariff battle and North Korea's weapons programs to be entirely separate.

Associated Press writer Eric Talmadge in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Seattle braces for highway closure, historic traffic squeeze

By LISA BAUMANN, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A major thoroughfare for commuters along downtown Seattle's waterfront is set to shut down for good Friday, ushering in what officials say will be one of the most painful traffic periods in the history of the booming Pacific Northwest city.

The double-decker, 2.2-mile (3.5-kilometer) Alaskan Way Viaduct, which carries about 90,000 vehicles each day, will be replaced by a new four-lane tunnel.

But the tunnel won't open until about three weeks after the viaduct closes as workers realign the highway into it. A mélange of other construction projects will further constrain traffic in the hilly city surrounded by water, already known for its population growth and traffic woes.

Washington's transportation agency on its website has a clock counting down to the viaduct closure, which it says will be the longest major highway closure the Puget Sound region has ever seen.

The weeklong period between the viaduct's closure, scheduled for 10 p.m. Friday, and the state Route 99 tunnel opening is already being dubbed the "Seattle Squeeze," according to Heather Marx, director of Downtown Mobility for the Seattle Department of Transportation.

"It is dramatic. Everyone traveling in the region will be impacted," Marx said, referring to people going to and through the Seattle metropolitan area.

City, King County and state officials have been working to mitigate the headaches sure to plague anyone caught unprepared.

Seattle school bus drivers will start their days earlier, and officials are advising commuters to work from home or adjust their work hours if they can. Those who can't are being asked to walk, bike, join a carpool or use transit including buses, light rail or water taxis — all to avoid driving solo into downtown during peak commute times.

Tad Donaghe, of West Seattle, usually travels by bus to his downtown job at Nordstrom but has worked out an alternate route involving light rail and water taxi to avoid the anticipated crush of drivers switching

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to buses during the closure.

"I tried out my #Viadoom commute tonight," he tweeted Monday, using a popular hashtag related to the closure.

Donaghe told The Associated Press that route was relatively "lovely," and although it will cost more and may take longer than the 80 minutes it took Monday, his employer pays for his transit so he doesn't mind.

"No matter what, it was infinitely nicer than if I had driven home," Donaghe said. "I quit driving for a commute because mass transit is infinitely less stressful."

The growth of tech giant Amazon and a population boom has spawned an abundance of construction in the Seattle area in recent years with new housing, light rail expansion and infrastructure development already straining commuters' patience. Once the tunnel opens, removing the viaduct will take months, which will be followed by the creation of a new downtown waterfront area. Large private projects also in the city's core include the renovation of a sports arena that will host professional hockey and an addition to the Washington State Convention Center.

"We've added 85,000 new people to the county in just the last two years, so these are the kinds of public spaces and destinations and mobility we need to support our growing region," Meghan Shepard, with Seattle's Transportation Department, said in a city video posted on YouTube.

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan recently announced legislation that would complete funding of the new waterfront area, which includes 20 acres (8 hectares) of public spaces and an elevated pathway connecting the waterfront to the historic Pike Place Market and downtown.

"After the many years of tunnel construction, the viaduct will finally be coming down, and work on the waterfront of the future will begin," Durkan said in a statement.

The viaduct was built in 1953 and weakened in a 2001 earthquake. While it was repaired and strengthened, the aging roadway remained vulnerable to earthquakes. City and state officials and others battled for years over how best to replace it, with the tunnel plan, now estimated at \$3.3 billion, chosen by former Gov. Chris Gregoire and state lawmakers in 2009.

The tunnel, designed to withstand roughly a magnitude 9 earthquake off the coast of Washington state, it is set to open three years behind schedule. Lawsuits involving Seattle Tunnel Partners, its insurance companies and the state transportation agency over delays and cost overruns are expected to play out for years.

The tunnel will be free to use when it opens, with tolling starting as soon as this summer.

With the viaduct closure looming, the city has staffed a transportation operations center 24/7 to observe roadways in real time and make changes that can help traffic flow more smoothly, Marx said.

Traffic engineers, for example, will be able to adjust traffic signal timing and send out additional buses that will be staffed and on standby. More buses in general will be deployed, and a public water taxi service from West Seattle to downtown will run more often. Drawbridges around the city will stay closed to vessels longer.

And on Interstate 5, which runs through the city, the state will convert a carpool lane to general traffic and will stage more incident-response vehicles.

"This is just going to be a time where people who have flexibility to work from home or to take the bus outside of peak times, this is when those choices are going to make a difference for other people who don't have that flexibility," Marx said. "If we're all paying attention to how much space we're taking up and making those decisions ... that's what's going to see us through."

Follow Lisa Baumann on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/LisaBaumann>

Los Angeles teachers are ready for first strike in 30 years

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Teachers in Los Angeles, whose 640,000 students make it the nation's second-largest school district, are ready to strike Thursday over a contract dispute that follows teacher walkouts

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in other states that emboldened organized labor after a critical defeat at the U.S. Supreme Court.

United Teachers Los Angeles said its 35,000 members would walk off the job for the first time in 30 years if a deal wasn't reached on higher pay and smaller class sizes. The Los Angeles Unified School District says the union's demands could bankrupt the school system, which is projecting a half-billion-dollar deficit this budget year and has billions obligated for pension payments and health coverage for retired teachers.

Negotiations are continuing, but little progress is evident. The two sides rejected Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's offer to broker a deal.

Thousands of teachers took to the streets of downtown Los Angeles last month to demand a new contract. They wore red shirts, banged drums and carried signs that read "Stand With LA Teachers!" as they marched.

They are hoping to build on the "Red4Ed" movement that began last year in West Virginia, where a strike resulted in a raise. It moved to Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado and Washington state, spreading from conservative states with "right to work" laws that limit the ability to strike to the more liberal West Coast with strong unions.

"What you're seeing with unions is real enthusiasm and a belief that you can actually be successful," said Robert Bruno, a professor of labor and employment relations at the University of Illinois. "The educational sector is rife with deep grievance and frustration, but there's now a sense that you can actually win."

Actions elsewhere emboldened Los Angeles teachers, union President Alex Caputo-Pearl said.

"Each state is different, but the commonality across all states is teachers, and parents are sick of schools not being invested in," he said.

But unlike other states, schools will stay open if a strike happens. The district has hired hundreds of substitutes to replace teachers and others who leave for picket lines. The union said it's "irresponsible" to hire substitutes and called on parents to consider keeping students home or join the marchers if a strike goes forward.

It comes as unions are stinging from a Supreme Court ruling last year that said government workers can't be required to join unions and pay dues.

Larry Sand, a retired Los Angeles and New York City teacher who heads the California Teachers Empowerment Network, said he believes the Los Angeles union sees its showdown with the district as a public "sales pitch" for organized labor now that teachers have a choice about joining.

Sand, whose organization describes itself as a nonpartisan information source for teachers and the public, said overly generous benefits for teachers in the past have overburdened the district.

Teachers earn between \$44,000 and \$86,000 a year depending on their education and experience, according to the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The district says the average teacher salary is \$75,000, which reflects the older, more experienced workforce.

The district has offered a 6 percent raise over the first two years of a three-year contract. The union wants a 6.5 percent hike at the start of a two-year contract. Health care fully paid by the district and a pension plan would be unchanged under both proposals.

The union also wants significantly smaller class sizes, which routinely top 30 students, and more nurses, librarians and counselors to "fully staff" the district's campuses in Los Angeles and all or parts of 31 smaller cities, plus several unincorporated areas.

The union argues that the district is hoarding reserves of \$1.8 billion that could be used to fund the pay and staffing hikes. The district said that money is needed to cover retiree benefits and other expenses.

Schools Superintendent Austin Beutner, an investment banker and former Los Angeles deputy mayor without experience in education, has become a lightning rod in negotiations.

The union says Beutner and school board members who voted him in are trying to privatize the district, encouraging school closures and flipping public schools into charters. Charter schools are privately operated public schools that compete for students and the funds they bring in.

Beutner, who attended public school, has said his plan to reorganize the district would improve services to students and families. He and his supporters on the board envision an education system with a "portfolio approach" — public and charter schools under the same leadership.

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Sand of the California Teachers Empowerment Network said Beutner is "the right man for the job" because his business background gives him an understanding that "there's a bottom line that has to be acknowledged."

Both sides say they don't want a strike, but John Rogers, a professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, said one seems inevitable.

"I would be surprised if a strike doesn't come about, because I think each side has a real interest in demonstrating the dominance of their positions," Rogers said.

Follow Weber at <https://twitter.com/WeberCM>

TransCanada to change name to TC Energy

NEW YORK (AP) — TransCanada Corp., the company behind the contentious Keystone XL oil pipeline, is changing its name to TC Energy.

If approved by shareholders and regulators, TransCanada becomes TC Energy in the second quarter. The stock ticker "TRP" will not change.

The Keystone XL project is being delayed by a federal court that found the Trump Administration didn't fully consider the environmental effects when it approved the permit for the 1,184-mile (1,900 kilometer) pipeline, intended to ship up to 830,000 barrels a day of crude oil from Alberta, Canada to the U.S. Gulf Coast.

The project has been marred by protests. Environmentalists and Native American groups had sued to stop the pipeline, citing property rights and possible spills

A hearing on the proposed pipeline is scheduled for Monday in Great Falls, Montana.

Asian shares rally on hopes for China-US trade breakthrough

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares extended gains in Asia on hopes for progress in resolving the tariffs battle between the U.S. and China as talks appeared to have been extended in Beijing.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index gained 1.3 percent to 20,472.79 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 2.5 percent to 26,512.06. The Shanghai Composite index surged 1.6 percent to 2,566.66 while South Korea's Kospi advanced 1.9 percent to 2,062.64. Australia's S&P ASX 200 surged 0.9 percent to 5,775.20. Shares also rose in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

CHINA-US TRADE: President Donald Trump tweeted that "Talks with China are going very well!" as news reports said trade negotiations would be extended to a third day, a potential positive sign even though no major developments have been announced so far. Experts say it may take months to resolve the causes of the trade war, which include disagreements over Beijing's handling of technology and intellectual property.

US SHUTDOWN: President Donald Trump's televised address Tuesday night helped soothe frazzled nerves over what steps he might take in the standoff with lawmakers over border wall funding, which has resulted in a partial government shutdown. Trump argued for funding on security and humanitarian grounds as he sought to put pressure on newly empowered Democrats.

ANALYST'S VIEWPOINT: "Trump did not declare a national emergency, nor did he hint toward one, which might have been a fear before the speech," Stephen Innes of Oanda said in a commentary. Meanwhile, "currencies are holding firm riding the wave sentiment from the positive buzz in U.S.-China trade talks."

WALL STREET: Optimism over trade propelled shares to their third straight session of gains Tuesday, the longest winning streak for U.S. indexes since late November. The S&P 500 index rose 1 percent to 2,574.41. The Dow Jones Industrial Average picked up 1.1 percent to 23,787.45 and the Nasdaq composite also gained 1.1 percent, to 6,897. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks gained 1.5 percent, to 1,426.55.

ENERGY: Oil prices also continued to rally. U.S. crude rose 80 cents to \$50.58 per barrel in electronic

trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It has risen for eight of the past nine days and gained 2.6 percent to \$49.78 per barrel on Tuesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, added 79 cents to \$59.51 per barrel. It gained 2.4 percent to \$58.72 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar climbed to 108.91 yen from 108.75 yen. The euro rose \$1.1454 from \$1.1442.

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

We're techy, too! Deere, Tide maker head to CES gadget show

By MATT O'BRIEN and JOSEPH PISANI, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The companies founded by blacksmith John Deere and candle-and-soap-making duo Procter & Gamble may not be the hip purveyors of new technology they were in 1837.

But they're first-time exhibitors at this year's CES gadget show, along with other unlikely newcomers such as missile-maker Raytheon, outdoorsy retailer The North Face and the 115-year-old motorcycling icon Harley-Davidson.

The four-day consumer-electronics show opens Tuesday with some 4,500 companies exhibiting products and services and more than 180,000 people expected to attend. It's the place startups and established tech giants alike go to unveil everything from utilitarian apps to splashy devices.

So what are these legacy companies doing here?

"Every company today is a technology company," said Gary Shapiro, CEO of the Consumer Technology Association, which organizes CES.

Shapiro said many companies already send executives to Las Vegas each January to gauge trends, so it's not surprising that they eventually unveil their own new technology as well.

It's also part of a more fundamental economic shift as consumers increasingly expect to buy not just goods and services, but a personal experience, which often skews digital, said Dipanjan Chatterjee, a brand analyst at Forrester Research.

"We're still doing old-fashioned things: Ordering clothes, buying detergent, getting a cup of coffee, but there are new-fangled ways of doing it," he said. "Brands have no choice but to play a role in this new technology space."

That's one reason Harley-Davidson is using the show to announce the commercial launch of its first electric motorcycle LiveWire. The motorcycle will have a cellular connection, as many cars do these days, so people can keep track of their motorcycle's charge or check where they parked it through an app.

Consumer goods giant P&G, best known for Pampers diapers and Tide detergent, is showcasing heated razors, a toothbrush with artificial intelligence and a wand-like device that scans the skin and releases serum to cover up age spots and other discoloration.

P&G is also showing off an internet-connected scalp adviser: The Head & Shoulders-branded device uses ultraviolet light and other techniques to uncover scalp issues and recommend products. The device is available only in Europe and Asia for now.

Expect these gizmos to cost more than the plain-old "dumb" versions. P&G's Oral-B toothbrush, for example, is expected to cost \$279, while a regular Oral-B electric toothbrush can be had for less than \$30.

And every new connected device means more data collection about people's personal habits — a gold mine for advertisers and hackers alike.

The North Face is using virtual reality to provide a fine-grained look at its waterproof fabrics.

Raytheon is demonstrating the everyday applications of GPS anti-jam technology, which was originally designed to protect military forces.

And John Deere has hauled in self-driving tractors and a 20-ton combine harvester aided by artificial intelligence. The combine has cameras with computer-vision technology to track the quality of grain coming into the machine so that its kernel-separating settings can be adjusted automatically. Farmers can monitor it remotely using a smartphone app.

It's hard to imagine what 19th century Illinois blacksmith John Deere might think if he were plopped

into his company's 2019 booth at the flashy Vegas convention center, but Deanna Kovar believes he'd be "amazed and astonished."

"His innovation was making a self-powering steel plow that could cut through the heavy, rich soils of the Midwest," said Kovar, the company's director of production and precision agriculture marketing. "We've been a technology company since the start."

Kovar said American farmers have been using self-driving tractors for decades — and CES is a chance to let everyone else know.

Chatterjee said such messages are directed not just at a company's customers, but to investors, potential corporate partners, startup acquisition targets and the technically skilled employees these more traditional firms are hoping to attract.

"These are brands that are aggressively looking to work tech into their DNA," Chatterjee said. "They want to be perceived all around as a tech-forward innovative brand."

AP video journalist James Brooks contributed to this report.

USDA: Food stamps will be funded through February

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration says benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps, will be funded through February should the government shutdown continue.

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue is asking states to issue the February benefits on or before Jan. 20 so that they can be paid to the nearly 40 million Americans in the program. SNAP is already fully funded for January.

The administration announced its plans as the White House worked to limit Republican defections on spending bills in the House this week, which Democratic leaders have scheduled in hopes of driving a wedge between GOP lawmakers on the shutdown. Democrats set a vote for Thursday on the agriculture bill, which is largely made up of payments for food stamps, knowing that it would put pressure on Republicans to abandon their leaders and vote for the measure.

The USDA said it can fund SNAP through February thanks to the short-term funding bill that ran out on Dec. 22. That bill included a provision giving federal agencies the authority to make obligated payments to support certain programs for 30 days after its expiration date.

Brandon Lipps, an acting deputy undersecretary, said other USDA programs will also be funded through February, including school lunches, food distribution programs on Indian reservations and child nutrition programs. The latter includes WIC, which provides nutritional assistance to pregnant women, mothers and babies.

Under the provision, the SNAP program will operate as it normally does and without any lapse in service, but with an earlier deadline for states to request benefits through a process called early issuance. That process is typically used during natural disasters, Lipps said, enabling states anticipating hurricanes or other weather events to distribute monthly benefits ahead of time.

Lipps said the USDA is sending letters to all state agencies to explain the process and will issue a blanket waiver of department regulations to allow for the early issuance.

"We know this is a time of great uncertainty, and no doubt anxiety for people who rely on SNAP and are dealing with tough times," Lipps said. "I hope it's reassuring for us to make clear today that we're committed to maintaining service to SNAP clients without interruption to the extent possible under the law."

The SNAP program will cost roughly \$4.8 billion for February, and those funds have already been appropriated through the expired spending bill. But if the shutdown lasts until March, the USDA could be forced to dip into its reserves to help fund the program, and its \$3 billion SNAP contingency fund won't cover a full month of benefits.

Perdue is a strong proponent of scaling back the SNAP program, and publicly supported a GOP House

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measure to strengthen work requirements for food stamp recipients. The measure garnered no support in the Senate and didn't make it into the final farm bill, which President Donald Trump signed into law in December.

The Trump administration has announced its intent to try and limit SNAP use through regulation, crafting a proposal to limit the ability of states to waive the program's work requirements.

Associated Press writer Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 9, the ninth day of 2019. There are 356 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 9, 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede from the Union, the same day the Star of the West, a merchant vessel bringing reinforcements and supplies to Federal troops at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, retreated because of artillery fire.

On this date:

In 1788, Connecticut became the fifth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1908, French philosopher and feminist Simone de Beauvoir was born in Paris.

In 1913, Richard Milhous Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, was born in Yorba Linda, California.

In 1914, the County of Los Angeles opened the country's first public defender's office.

In 1916, the World War I Battle of Gallipoli ended after eight months with an Ottoman Empire victory as Allied forces withdrew.

In 1931, Bobbi Trout and Edna May Cooper broke an endurance record for female aviators as they returned to Mines Field in Los Angeles after flying a Curtiss Robin monoplane continuously for 122 hours and 50 minutes.

In 1945, during World War II, American forces began landing on the shores of Lingayen Gulf in the Philippines as the Battle of Luzon got underway, resulting in an Allied victory over Imperial Japanese forces.

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in his State of the Union address to Congress, warned of the threat of Communist imperialism.

In 1972, reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes, speaking by telephone from the Bahamas to reporters in Hollywood, said a purported autobiography of him by Clifford Irving was a fake.

In 1987, the White House released a January 1986 memorandum prepared for President Ronald Reagan by Lt. Col. Oliver L. North showing a link between U.S. arms sales to Iran and the release of American hostages in Lebanon.

In 1997, a Comair commuter plane crashed 18 miles short of the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, killing all 29 people on board.

In 2001, Linda Chavez withdrew her bid to be President-elect George W. Bush's Secretary of Labor because of controversy over an immigrant in the U.S. illegally who'd once lived with her.

Ten years ago: The Illinois House voted 114-1 to impeach Gov. Rod Blagojevich (blah-GOY'-uh-vich), who defiantly insisted again that he had committed no crime. (The Illinois Senate unanimously voted to remove Blagojevich from office 20 days later.) President-elect Barack Obama announced he had picked retired Adm. Dennis Blair to be the national intelligence director and Leon Panetta to head the CIA. A Saudi supertanker, the Sirius Star, and its crew of 25 were released at the end of a two-month standoff in the Gulf of Aden after pirates were reportedly paid \$3 million in ransom. (Five pirates were said to have drowned with their share of the money when their boat overturned.)

Five years ago: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie fired one of his top aides, Deputy Chief of Staff Bridget Anne Kelly, and apologized repeatedly for his staff's "stupid" behavior, insisting during a news conference that he had no idea anyone around him had engineered traffic jams as part of a political vendetta against

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a Democratic mayor. A chemical plant spill into West Virginia's Elk River contaminated the water supply for Charleston, forcing more than 300,000 water customers in nine counties to stop using tap water. Activist poet-playwright Amiri Baraka, 79, died at a hospital in Newark, New Jersey.

One year ago: Downpours sent mud and boulders roaring down Southern California hillsides that had been stripped of vegetation by a gigantic wildfire; more than 20 people died and hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed. Breitbart News Network announced that Steve Bannon was stepping down as chairman after his public break with President Donald Trump. Former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio (ahr-PY'-oh) announced that he would run for the Senate seat being vacated by fellow Republican Jeff Flake; Arpaio had been spared a possible jail sentence when Trump pardoned him for disobeying a judge. (Arpaio finished third in an August primary won by Rep. Martha McSally.)

Today's Birthdays: Author Judith Krantz is 91. Football Hall of Famer Bart Starr is 85. Actress K. Callan is 83. Folk singer Joan Baez is 78. Rockabilly singer Roy Head is 78. Rock musician Jimmy Page (Led Zeppelin) is 75. Actor John Doman is 74. Singer David Johansen (aka Buster Poindexter) is 69. Singer Crystal Gayle is 68. Actor J.K. Simmons is 64. Actress Imelda Staunton is 63. Nobel Peace laureate Rigoberto Menchu is 60. Rock musician Eric Erlandson is 56. Actress Joely Richardson is 54. Rock musician Carl Bell (Fuel) is 52. Actor David Costabile is 52. Rock singer Steve Harwell (Smash Mouth) is 52. Rock singer-musician Dave Matthews is 52. Actress-director Joey Lauren Adams is 51. Comedian/actor Deon Cole is 48. Actress Angela Bettis is 46. Actor Omari Hardwick is 45. Roots singer-songwriter Hayes Carll is 43. Singer A.J. McLean (Backstreet Boys) is 41. Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, is 37. Pop-rock musician Drew Brown (OneRepublic) is 35. Rock-soul singer Paolo Nutini is 32. Actress Nina Dobrev is 30. Actor Basil Eidenbenz is 26. Actress Kerris Dorsey is 21. Actor Tyree Brown is 15.

Thought for Today: "One's lifework, I have learned, grows with the working and the living. Do it as if your life depended on it, and first thing you know, you'll have made a life out of it. A good life, too." — Theresa Helburn, American theatrical producer (1887-1959).

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