

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 1 of 38



A control burn at the Groton Rubble Site.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 2 of 38

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



**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”

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)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 3 of 38

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 4 of 38

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 6 of 38

Today in Weather History

January 10, 1911: The temperature at Rapid City, South Dakota plunged 47 degrees in just fifteen minutes.

January 10, 1975: An intense area of low pressure moved from eastern Iowa through eastern Minnesota. The storm center set many low pressure records as it moved across eastern Minnesota. New snow of 3 to 6 inches across much of Minnesota began to blow and drift on the morning of the 10th and then developed into a full blown blizzard with heavy snowfall developing. The blizzard continued over all of the state through the 11th with winds of 30 to 50 mph with gusts of 60 to 80 mph. Drifts up to 20 foot high developed in west central Minnesota paralyzing activity. Snowfall amounts from 1 to 2 feet occurred. Numerous roads were closed due to drifting and low visibility. Numerous sustained power outages occurred, particularly in rural sections. Thousands of people were stranded with 168 people trapped in a train in Willmar. Wind chills ranged from 50 below to 80 below behind the storm. Extensive losses to life and property occurred. There were 35 deaths during the storm and many injuries. Tens of thousands of livestock and poultry losses also occurred with 140 farm buildings damaged or destroyed. Losses to livestock and property were over 20 million. It took 11 days to clear some areas. Shelter was provided for nearly 17,000 people.

In South Dakota, snow began to fall on the 10th in the afternoon and then the winds increased and reached blizzard conditions by evening. These severe blizzard conditions continued on through the 11th and through the morning of the 12th. Wind chills fell to 50 below to 70 below zero. Many cars stalled on roads due to poor visibility, icy roads, and blowing and drifting snow. Eight people lost their lives. Thousands of livestock and poultry were lost. During the blizzard, a 2000 foot radio and TV antenna just east of Sioux Falls collapsed.

January 10, 2000: High winds gusting to over 60 mph caused some spotty damage across central and north central South Dakota. Near Mobridge, the high winds blew a semi-tractor-trailer off the road and tipped it over while it was heading westbound on Highway 12. The semi tractor-trailer sustained quite a bit of damage as a result. The high winds also damaged the windmill at the museum in Mobridge breaking off the tail and bending several of the blades. Some high wind reports include; 56 mph at McLaughlin, 58 mph at Onida and Mobridge, and 63 mph at Pierre.

1949: Snow was reported at San Diego, California for the first time since 1882. Snow was noted on some of the beaches in parts of the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

1982: Bitterly cold weather was found across Illinois. Of the 109 weather reporting stations in the state, 48 of those reported lows of 20 degrees below zero or colder. Some of the coldest temperatures included 27 below zero at Rockford, 26 below zero at Chicago, and 25 below zero at Kankakee and Peoria.

Broton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 7 of 38

Today

Tonight

Friday

Friday
Night

Saturday



Mostly Sunny

Mostly Cloudy

Partly Sunny

Mostly Cloudy

Partly Sunny

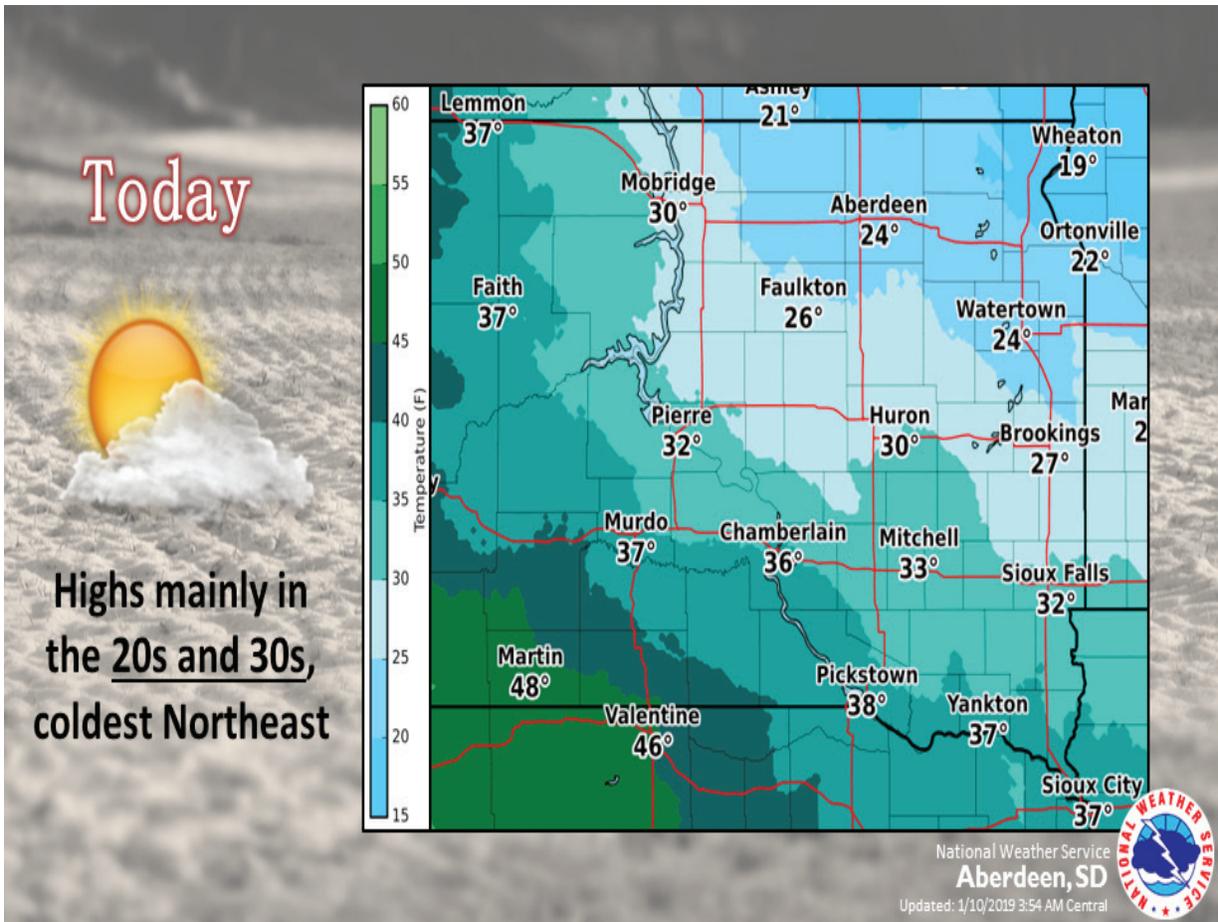
High: 23 °F

Low: 12 °F

High: 24 °F

Low: 9 °F

High: 21 °F



Published on: 01/10/2019 at 3:56AM

Expect dry weather today, with slightly warmer temperatures. Highs will mainly be in the 20s and 30s (coldest northeast).

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 8 of 38

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 11 °F at 12:00 AM

Low Outside Temp: 1 °F at 8:41 AM

High Gust: 13 mph at 12:03 AM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 56° in 2012

Record Low: -30° in 1978

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 1°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.16

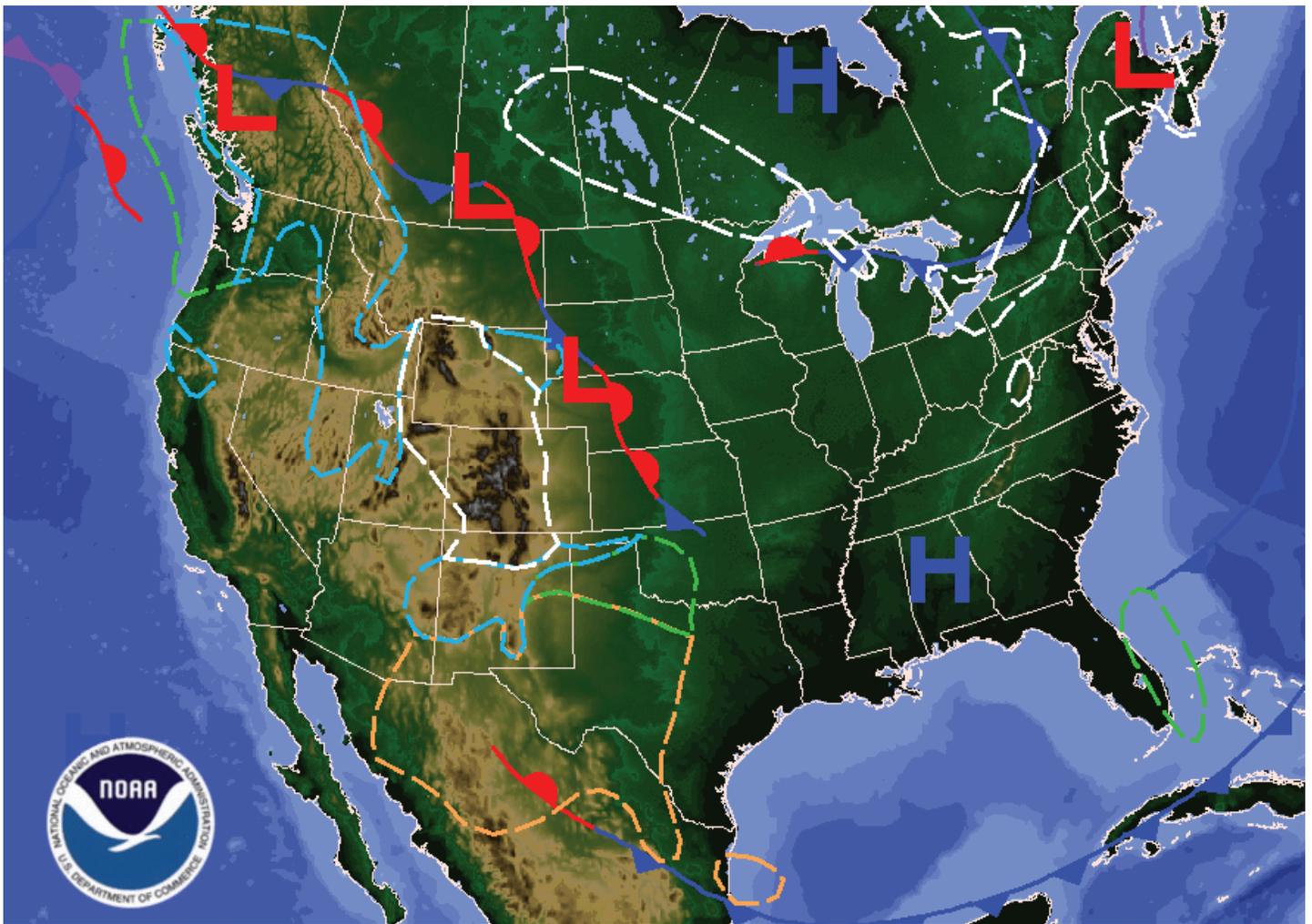
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.16

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:11 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:12 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Jan 10, 2019, issued 4:49 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 9 of 38



GOD - OUR GUIDANCE SYSTEM

Often, lifes disappointments end up being one of Gods special appointments. Like a good father, God will not allow anything into our lives that will permanently hurt, harm or hinder us from accomplishing His purpose for our lives. Often, what seems to be an accident is a very special gift from God. However, sometimes we have to wait until it makes sense to us.

Quite often I find it disheartening when I hear a Christian say, This is my lucky day! or I cant believe that Im this unfortunate! or God must not love me as much as He does others or He would have given me that job.

Life, for the Christian, is not chance. It is choice Gods choice for us. But as He allows things to come into our lives, we are responsible for looking at it through His eyes and then choose how we are going to respond to it.

Consider the story of Joseph. His brothers sold him into slavery. Then, he was falsely accused of doing things he did not do. But, it did not matter. He had to pay the consequences and was thrown into prison for two years of hard labor.

And, what did he say to his brothers? Guess what. You meant to do evil and harm me. But, God turned your evil intentions into good for His glory! God led him from being a prisoner to becoming a premier!

Our eyes keep us from seeing beyond the immediate - what is right now. But God sees our past, the present and the future He has for us to become Christ-like.

Prayer: Lord, open our hearts and minds and make us willing to accept Your Leadership and Lordship each day. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 18:30 As for God, his way is perfect: The Lords word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 10 of 38

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 11 of 38

News from the Associated Press

Man accused of killing 2 may be competent within a year

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A doctor says a man accused of killing his mother and nephew in Sioux Falls may be ready to proceed with his case within a year.

Heath Otto has so far been found legally incompetent to stand trial in the 2016 deaths of 48-year-old Carol Simon and 7-year-old Braydon Otto.

The Argus Leader reports a doctor at the Human Services Center in Yankton has submitted a certificate saying there is a "substantial probability" that Otto will make enough progress within a year to stand trial. The finding was discussed at a brief court hearing on the status of the case Wednesday afternoon.

Court documents say Otto told investigators he strangled the two and cut their throats in November 2016 because he wanted to put them out of their misery.

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash
01-06-17-21-24
(one, six, seventeen, twenty-one, twenty-four)
Estimated jackpot: \$29,000

Lotto America
13-19-35-44-50, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 2
(thirteen, nineteen, thirty-five, forty-four, fifty; Star Ball: one; ASB: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$13.35 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$50 million

Powerball
06-19-37-49-59, Powerball: 22, Power Play: 3
(six, nineteen, thirty-seven, forty-nine, fifty-nine; Powerball: twenty-two; Power Play: three)
Estimated jackpot: \$82 million

South Dakota man sentenced to life in ex-girlfriend's murder

BURKE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man has been sentenced to life in prison for the murder of his former girlfriend.

Forty-eight-year-old Chance Harruff of Hamill was sentenced Wednesday at the Gregory County Courthouse. South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg and Gregory County State's Attorney Amy Bartling announced his sentence.

A jury in November convicted Harruff of second-degree murder for the 2017 death of 38-year-old Kristi Olson. The mother of seven was found strangled in her home in Dallas, South Dakota.

A second-degree murder conviction carries a mandatory life sentence in South Dakota. Harruff was given credit for 587 days served and ordered to pay court costs, funeral expenses and other fees.

Authorities say the victim had an on-and-off relationship with Harruff.

Federal shutdown delays some state road, bridge contracts

By SEAN MURPHY, Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Uncertainty over federal funding for transportation projects amid a partial government shutdown is forcing some states to delay contracts for new road and bridge work while others are preparing for that possibility.

Transportation officials in Oklahoma this week announced plans to delay bids on 45 highway projects worth about \$137 million.

"This will affect only new projects that we haven't (bid) yet," Oklahoma Department of Transportation spokeswoman Terri Angier said. "Unless they reach a resolution that includes the budget and authorizes us more money to put toward the projects, we can't add new projects."

The agency is delaying bids on 26 projects totaling about \$101 million in January and another 19 projects in February worth about \$35.6 million, she said.

Highway and bridge projects already underway are not affected by the federal shutdown. The disruption in federal funding flowing to the states instead affects future projects for which departments were going to award bids in the coming weeks. That will put the bidding process on hold, especially in states that receive a large share of their highway dollars from the federal government.

Delays can push back those construction projects by months or even into next year.

Officials in some states say they are starting to see the effects of the shutdown. Federal agencies that often are involved in approving transportation projects, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, are closed and unable to act.

"The longer these delays continue, the more likely it becomes that projects will not meet their planned (contracting) dates," said South Dakota Department of Transportation Secretary Darin Bergquist.

States that receive a greater percentage of road and bridge funding from the federal government should be particularly concerned, said Tony Dorsey with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in Washington, D.C.

"It's just simple math," Dorsey said. "If you have a big chunk of your funding coming from the feds and you've got a partial government shutdown affecting that funding, you might be less inclined to move forward with these major projects."

The association says some states, including Montana, New Mexico and Rhode Island, receive more than 85 percent of their transportation funding from federal sources, although transportation officials in those states said the federal shutdown has not yet delayed any projects.

The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission is expected to approve bids for 24 projects costing about \$60 million at a meeting Thursday. The state agency, which has a \$700 million cash balance, is pressing forward with planned projects despite the uncertainty over federal funding.

"We maintain a cash balance that allows us to handle these types of situations, and some states do not," Missouri transportation department spokesman Bob Brendel said.

Even if an agreement is reached soon to end the shutdown, the delays in Oklahoma could be exacerbated by environmental and weather concerns. That can create a domino effect that leads to projects getting postponed for much longer, said Angier, the transportation department spokeswoman.

As an example, she said work on state bridges can't start once nesting season begins for cliff swallows, a protected species that frequently makes its home on the underside of bridges. That season runs from March to September.

She pointed to planned construction on a bridge over Interstate 35 south of Oklahoma City that is several decades old.

"If we don't let this project, it's not just delaying it for a few months," Angier said. "It could be a year before we could get back to that project."

She said the agency also times the (contracting) of projects so that much of the work, particularly asphalt

resurfacing, can be done in the spring and summer when the weather is better.

Local officials are dismayed that the \$9.3 million project to improve on- and off-ramps on the I-35 bridge is being delayed. They say the project is critical for connecting local communities.

"My best guess would be 400 vehicles a day cross that bridge, including school buses, mail trucks, oil industry trucks," said McClain County Commissioner Wilson Lyles. "That project would definitely make it safer for the motoring public."

Follow Sean Murphy at www.twitter.com/apseanmurphy

Chief justice seeks new mental health court in Sioux Falls

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court's chief justice urged officials in a legislative address Wednesday to seriously consider creating a mental health court in the Sioux Falls region.

Chief Justice David Gilbertson said in his State of the Judiciary message that the need for such a court is "great" in Minnehaha County. He said that from February through June 2018, 13.5 percent of prisoners screened at Minnehaha County jail intake had a mental illness.

"We all agree that people who commit crimes need to be held accountable," Gilbertson said. "On the other hand, we also know that jail is not always the best place for many people with serious mental illness."

Gilbertson said a mental health court in Pennington County, home of Rapid City, met a goal to become fully operational by Jan. 1. The program is led by a specially trained judge and includes a team of mental health personnel to provide treatment plans and services, he said.

If a person with mental illness can be put into a mental health court, where they are monitored, and get back on their medication, then they can become productive citizens again, Gilbertson said after the speech.

"It's a little soon to declare victory, but we're very optimistic it's going to work," said Gilbertson, adding that would engage in discussions to hopefully get the new Sioux Falls-area mental health court funded.

He used the message, the 17th he's delivered, to praise the state's drug and alcohol courts as a "vibrant force to save people from the curse of drug and alcohol addiction."

Gilbertson also said he's supporting the addition of a judge in the Second Judicial Circuit, which includes Lincoln and Minnehaha counties, because the court system is feeling the stress of drug prosecutions.

He noted major changes in state government, including the state's new governor — Republican Kristi Noem — and constitutional officers.

But Gilbertson didn't address a proposal from new Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg to end the state's presumptive probation policy for some lower-level felonies. The push comes after South Dakota in 2013 passed a Republican-led justice system overhaul, which Gilbertson supported, to tackle prison overcrowding, cut costs and expand drug addiction treatment options.

Gilbertson said after the speech that he doesn't plan to weigh in on the measure.

"I have to be a little careful that way because if we get an appeal to the Supreme Court I don't want to be reading my own words, you know, as part of the record holding forth on whether the bill was a good bill or a bad bill," Gilbertson said.

Ravnsborg's push comes after he successfully campaigned on ending presumptive probation to win his first term as the state's chief lawyer and law enforcement officer. Ravnsborg said there must be deterrence.

"You don't always have to use the stick, as I keep saying, but you got to have the threat that you might use the stick," Ravnsborg said.

Indoor shrimp company picks South Dakota over Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A Minnesota company that has pioneered indoor shrimp farming surprised state and local officials by picking South Dakota as the location for its first production facility, citing a Minnesota environmental regulation.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 14 of 38

The mayor of Luverne, the southwestern Minnesota city of about 5,000 that was the \$45 million facility's intended location, calls the decision by Tru Shrimp Co. "a gut shot" that blindsided city officials.

"I understand it was a business decision and they've got to do what they've got to do, but we had no previous interaction with Tru Shrimp that suggested the regulatory issue was going to be a real problem," Mayor Pat Baustian told the Star Tribune.

Groundbreaking was expected this summer at the Luverne site. In November, the board of the Balaton, Minnesota-based company gave final approval for the facility, which Tru Shrimp calls a harbor, on 67 acres (27 hectares) outside Luverne. The state of Minnesota had invested nearly \$2 million to build roads and utilities to the site while Luverne invested \$600,000.

But Tru Shrimp executives recently discovered a Minnesota environmental rule about water discharge could have delayed construction by one to three years.

"Our timeline is to build a harbor in 2019," Tru Shrimp chief executive Michael Ziebell said Tuesday. He said the company could not afford to wait for the discharge issue to be resolved.

Tru Shrimp now plans to break ground in Madison, South Dakota, about 74 miles (119 kilometers) northwest of Luverne, in June. Both towns are on the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System, which serves southeastern South Dakota, northwestern Iowa and southwestern Minnesota.

Former South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard attended Tru Shrimp's announcement Friday, his last day in office. The project got a \$6.5 million low-interest loan from the Governor's Office of Economic Development and the Heartland Consumers Power District, the Argus Leader reported.

Tru Shrimp has \$800,000 invested in the Luverne site, Ziebell said, and will consider the town for one of the two other production sites the company aims to build in the next five years.

"I understand how disappointed they were — and possibly angry. We are not trying to abandon Luverne," Ziebell said. "I'm hoping we can build the bridges and work together in the near future."

At issue is an administrative rule designed in the 1960s, before the company's indoor aquaculture technology existed. Because the facility plans to use reverse osmosis to filter the water, Ziebell said the mineral level in discharged water would be more concentrated and exceed the standards of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

"Our business model is built on sustainability and the irony is this problem has nothing to do with the saltwater" that is typically the environmental concern for indoor shrimp operations, Ziebell said.

New MPCA Commissioner Laura Bishop said Tru Shrimp's decision surprised and disappointed the agency.

"Our staff communicated clearly with Tru Shrimp for an extended period of time, to help facilitate their development plans," Bishop said in a statement. "We recognize the value of economic development across Minnesota and we are committed to economic growth while protecting clean water. We look forward to working with future Tru Shrimp projects."

Information from: Star Tribune, <http://www.startribune.com>

New NDSU football coach filling out offensive staff

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — New North Dakota State University head football coach Matt Entz has named two members of his offensive staff.

Entz has promoted tight ends and fullbacks coach Tyler Roehl to offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Randy Hedberg to associate head coach and passing game coordinator. Hedberg has been on the Bison staff the past five seasons and Roehl the past six.

Entz was offensive coordinator this past season, during which NDSU won its record seventh FCS title. He's taking over as head coach from Chris Klieman, the new head coach at Kansas State.

NDSU has five assistants from this year's staff returning in 2019 including defensive tackles coach Nick Goeser, defensive ends coach Buddha Williams and cornerbacks coach Kody Morgan.

Minnehaha County Jail inmate found dead

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a Minnehaha County Jail inmate has been found dead in his cell. Jail warden Jeff Gromer says 40-year-old Jesse Scott Odle was found unresponsive shortly before 7 a.m. Wednesday. Jailers and medics tried unsuccessfully to revive Odle.

Gromer says there's no indication of suicide or foul play. He says the death appears to be the result of a medical situation. An autopsy will be done.

Odle has been in custody since Jan. 4. He was scheduled to make a court appearance later Wednesday on charges that included attempted murder.

Manslaughter charged filed in deadly bar fight

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A deadly bar fight has led to manslaughter charges against a Mitchell man. Mitchell police say 26-year-old Dylan Thompson was involved in a fight that seriously injured a 59-year-old man on Jan. 3 at Thirsty's Bar. Thompson was originally arrested on an aggravated assault charge. That charge was amended to first-degree manslaughter after the man died on Tuesday. Police have not identified the victim.

First-degree manslaughter is a class C felony, punishable by up to life in prison and a \$50,000 fine.

Johnson to defer pay during shutdown; not Rounds, Thune

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Republican U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson says he's deferring his pay while the federal government shutdown is in effect.

Johnson was the only member of South Dakota's delegation to say he won't take pay during the shutdown. Sens. Mike Rounds and John Thune, both Republicans, both said they would continue taking their salaries.

In Minnesota, several members of Congress said they would donate their pay to charitable causes during the shutdown.

Trump's border visit comes as shutdown talks fall apart

By CATHERINE LUCEY, LISA MASCARO and LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is taking the shutdown battle to the U.S.-Mexico border, seeking to bolster his case for the border wall after negotiations with Democrats blew up over his funding demands.

Trump stalked out of his meeting with congressional leaders — "I said bye-bye," he tweeted soon after — as efforts to end the partial government shutdown fell into deeper disarray. Hundreds of thousands of federal workers now face lost paychecks on Friday.

During his stop Thursday in McAllen, Texas, Trump will visit a border patrol station for a roundtable on immigration and border security and will get a security briefing on the border. But Trump has expressed his own doubts that his appearance and remarks will change any minds, as he seeks \$5.7 billion for the wall that has been his signature promise since his presidential campaign.

McAllen is located in the Rio Grande Valley, the busiest part of the border for illegal border crossings.

The unraveling talks prompted further speculation about whether Trump would declare a national emergency and try to authorize the wall on his own if Congress won't approve the money he's seeking.

"I think we might work a deal, and if we don't I might go that route," he said.

The White House meeting in the Situation Room ended after just 14 minutes. Democrats said they asked Trump to re-open the government but that he told them if he did they wouldn't give him money for the wall. Republicans said Trump posed a direct question to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: If he opened the government, would she fund the wall? She said no.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said Trump slammed his hand on the table. However, Republicans said Trump, who handed out candy at the start of the meeting, did not raise his voice and there was no table pounding.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 16 of 38

One result was certain: The shutdown plunged into new territory with no endgame in sight. The Democrats see the idea of the long, impenetrable wall as ineffective and even immoral. Trump sees it as an absolute necessity to stop what he calls a crisis of illegal immigration, drug-smuggling and human trafficking at the border.

Trump headed to Capitol Hill earlier Wednesday, seeking to soothe jittery Republican lawmakers. He left a Republican lunch boasting of "a very, very unified party," but GOP senators have been publicly uneasy as the standoff ripples across the lives of Americans and interrupts the economy.

During the lunch, Trump discussed the possibility of a sweeping immigration compromise with Democrats to protect some immigrants from deportation but provided no clear strategy or timeline for resolving the standoff, according to senators in the private session.

GOP unity was tested further when the House passed a bipartisan spending bill, 240-188, to reopen one shuttered department, Treasury, to ensure that tax refunds and other financial services continue. Eight Republicans joined Democrats in voting, defying the plea to stick with the White House.

There was growing concern about the toll the shutdown is taking on everyday Americans, including disruptions in payments to farmers and trouble for home buyers who are seeking government-backed mortgage loans — "serious stuff," according to Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 2 Senate Republican.

Some Republicans were concerned about the administration's talk of possibly declaring a national emergency at the border, seeing that as an unprecedented claim on the right of Congress to allocate funding except in the most dire circumstances.

"I prefer that we get this resolved the old-fashioned way," Thune said.

Democrats said before the White House meeting that they would ask Trump to accept an earlier bipartisan bill that had money for border security but not the wall. Pelosi warned that the effects of hundreds of thousands of lost paychecks would begin to have an impact across the economy.

"The president could end the Trump shutdown and re-open the government today, and he should," Pelosi said.

Tuesday night, speaking to the nation from the Oval Office for the first time, Trump argued that the wall was needed to resolve a security and humanitarian "crisis." He blamed illegal immigration for what he said was a scourge of drugs and violence in the U.S. and asked: "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.

In an off-the-record lunch with television anchors ahead of his speech, Trump suggested his aides had pushed him to give the address and travel to the border and that he personally did not believe either would make a difference, according to two people familiar with the meeting. But one person said it was unclear whether Trump was serious or joking. The people familiar with the meeting insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the meeting publicly.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, 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>

Rebel drone bombs Yemen military parade, kills at least 6

By AHMED AL-HAJ, Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — A bomb-laden drone launched by Yemen's Shiite rebels exploded over a military parade for the Saudi-led coalition and its allies on Thursday near the southern port city of Aden, killing at least six people in a brazen attack that threatened U.N.-brokered peace efforts to end the yearslong war tearing at the Arab world's poorest nation.

The attack at the Al-Anad Air Base, where American special forces once led their fight against Yemen's al-Qaida branch, targeted high-ranking military officials in Yemen's internationally recognized government with what the rebel Houthis described as a new version of one of their drones.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 17 of 38

The attack also raised new questions about Iran's alleged role in arming the Houthis with drone and ballistic missile technology, something long denied by Tehran despite researchers and U.N. experts linking the Yemeni rebel weapons to the Islamic Republic.

"Once again this proves that the Houthi criminal militias are not ready for peace and that they are exploiting truces in order for deployment and reinforcements," said Information Minister Moammar al-Eryani, who said two senior military officials were wounded in the attack.

"This is time for the international community to stand by the legitimate government and force the militias to give up their weapons and pull out of the cities," he added.

The Houthis immediately claimed the attack through their al-Masirah satellite news channel, saying the attack targeted "invaders and mercenaries" at the base in the southern province of Lahj, leaving "dozens of dead and wounded."

Yemeni officials said that among the wounded were Mohammad Saleh Tamah, head of Yemen's Intelligence Service, senior military commander Mohammad Jawas, and Lahj governor Ahmed al-Turki, adding that authorities were still searching for wounded among the rubble. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

Local reporter Nabil al-Qaiti was attending the ceremony and standing in front of the stage when he saw a drone approach at a height of about 25 meters (82 feet) in the air, minutes after the parade started. Army spokesman Mohammed al-Naqib was delivering a speech from a podium when the drone exploded.

"It was a very strong explosion and we could feel the pressure," he said, adding that two of the people standing next to him — a soldier and another journalist— were wounded. Al-Qaiti saw many wounded but no dead.

"The drone was packed with explosives," he added.

Some 8,000 soldiers had been taking part in the parade, as well as two governors and a large number of top military commanders, including the chief of staff. Initial reports said six troops were killed.

Yemen plunged into civil war in 2014 when the rebels captured Sanaa, the country's capital. A Saudi-led coalition entered the war in March 2015 as government forces looked poised to lose Aden to the Houthi advance. The U.S. supported the Saudi-led coalition for years despite its airstrikes killing civilians, only recently beginning to step back after the assassination of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

The two sides last month agreed to a prisoner swap and cease-fire in the port city of Hodeida, through which much of the country's humanitarian aid flows, in an effort to provide relief to a country pushed to the brink of famine by the war.

Fighting has largely abated in Hodeida but progress on the withdrawal has been slow. The U.N. humanitarian aid chief Wednesday accused the rebels of blocking humanitarian supplies traveling from areas under their control to government-held areas.

The use of drones also raised new concerns over Iran's influence in the conflict. Officials in the Saudi-led coalition have shown journalists a series of drones they said showed a growing sophistication by the Houthis, starting first with plastic foam models that could be built by hobby kit to one captured in April that closely resembled an Iranian-made drone.

Those drones have in the past been flown into the radar arrays of Saudi Arabia's Patriot missile batteries, according to the research group Conflict Armament Research, disabling them and allowing the Houthis to fire ballistic missiles into the kingdom unchallenged.

Iran has been accused by the U.S. and the U.N. of supplying ballistic missile technology and arms to the Houthis, something Tehran denies.

Houthi media quoted its military describing the drone as a new variant of its Qasef, or "Striker," drone. The drone, a Qasef-2K, has been designed to explode from a height of 20 meters — about 65 feet — in the air and rain shrapnel down on its target, according to the Houthis.

A United Nations panel of experts on Yemen issued a report in 2018 noting that the Houthi's Qasef-1 drone "is virtually identical in design, dimensions and capability to that of the Ababil-T, manufactured by

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 18 of 38

the Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industries." The Ababil-T can deliver up to a 45-kilogram (100-pound) warhead up to 150 kilometers (95 miles) away.

Such drones remain difficult to shoot down with either light or heavy weapons fire. Iraqi forces learned while driving out the Islamic State group from northern Iraq, where the extremists would load drones with grenades or simple explosives to target their forces.

Qasef drones are launched with pre-programmed coordinates to follow, unlike other drones where a pilot flies it with a video link, said Jeremy Binnie, a weapons expert who works as the Middle East and Africa editor at Jane's Defence Weekly.

"They're like slow missiles. Once they are launched, there is no control," Binnie said. "They do have excellent intelligence on the ground. They needed to specifically know when those guys are in the stands to be able to target."

Associated Press writers Brian Rohan and Maggie Michael in Cairo, and Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates contributed to this report.

Some celebrate, others claim fraud in Congo election results

By MATHILDE BOUSSION, Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — Supporters of surprise Congo presidential winner Felix Tshisekedi celebrated in the capital on Thursday, while rival opposition candidate Martin Fayulu denounced the result as fraud after the long-delayed election marred by irregularities.

"Today I am happy," Tshisekedi told supporters. "Happy for the people of Congo. Everyone is celebrating that there is peace. No one could imagine the scenario where an opposition candidate could be victorious!"

Fayulu alleged the results had been rigged, saying outgoing President Joseph Kabila made a backroom deal with Tshisekedi. Kabila appears to have negotiated with Tshisekedi to prevent anti-corruption crusader Fayulu from winning, diplomats and observers said.

Now Congo and the world face the uncomfortable choice of accepting what could be the country's first peaceful, democratic transfer of power or raising a protest that could lead to more violence in the long-turbulent nation.

Many were waiting for a statement from the powerful Catholic church, which has said its 40,000 observers in all polling stations found a clear winner.

Several diplomats briefed on the matter told The Associated Press that the church's figures showed that Fayulu won a landslide majority. Two diplomats also said all major observation missions, including those of the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, showed similar results. The diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press.

Tshisekedi, who received 38 percent of the vote according to the electoral commission's results, had not been widely considered the leading candidate and is relatively untested. Long in the shadow of his father, the late opposition leader Etienne, Tshisekedi startled Congo last year by breaking away from the unified opposition candidate, Fayulu, to stand on his own.

Fayulu quickly called the announced election results "rigged, fabricated and invented" and said they do "not reflect the truth of the ballots." He called on the Congolese people to "rise as one man to protect victory."

Fayulu, a former Exxon manager and Kinshasa lawmaker, received 34 percent of the vote in the official results.

"How long are we going to negotiate results?" he asked. "In 2006, Jean-Pierre Bemba's victory was stolen. In 2011, Etienne Tshisekedi's victory was stolen. In 2018, victory won't be stolen from Martin Fayulu."

Fayulu urged the Catholic Church, which has long pressed for a fair election and deployed by far the largest observer mission, to release its results.

Even before the announcement, some observers suggested that Kabila's government made a deal with Tshisekedi as hopes faded for ruling party candidate Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, who received just 23

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 19 of 38

percent of the official results.

Congo's constitutional court has 14 days to validate the results.

France's foreign minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, bluntly cast doubt on the official results, saying they did not match the findings of the Catholic observers. Reports said Belgium did the same. The United Nations secretary-general merely "took note" of the results and urged stability and peace.

The delayed results, nearly two weeks after the Dec. 30 vote, came after international pressure to announce an outcome that reflected the will of the people. The United States threatened sanctions against officials who rigged the vote.

The largely peaceful election was marred by the malfunctioning of many voting machines that Congo used for the first time. Dozens of polling centers opened hours late as materials went missing. And in a last-minute decision, some 1 million of the country's 40 million voters were barred from participating, with the electoral commission blaming a deadly Ebola virus outbreak.

Defiantly, tens of thousands of voters in one of the barred communities held their own unofficial ballot on election day, and Fayulu won easily.

Congo's government cut internet service the day after the vote to prevent speculation on social media. As the electoral commission met this week, anti-riot police moved into place outside.

Some Congolese weary of Kabila's 18-year rule, two turbulent years of election delays and years of conflict that killed millions of people said they simply wanted peace. Some said they would be happy as long as Fayulu or Tshisekedi won, while recalling the violence that followed past disputed elections.

Many Congolese had objected to Shadary, suspecting that Kabila would continue to rule from behind the scenes.

Kabila has ruled since 2001 in the troubled nation rich in the minerals key to smartphones around the world and has amassed vast wealth. He is barred from serving three consecutive terms, but during more than two years of election delays many Congolese feared he'd find a way to stay in office.

Now Congo faces a new leader who is little known after spending many years in Belgium and standing behind his outspoken father. The 56-year-old Tshisekedi took over as head of Congo's most prominent opposition party in early 2018, a year after his father's death.

Happy Tshisekedi supporters in Kinshasa, a lively opposition stronghold, said they were delighted by their candidate's win and happy to see Kabila step down.

"This is the coronation of a lifetime," said the deputy secretary-general of Tshisekedi's party, Rubens Mikindo. "This is the beginning of national reconciliation."

But the streets of Kinshasa were largely quiet.

Associated Press journalists Saleh Mwanamilongo and David Keyton in Kinshasa and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed.

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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 TAKING SHUTDOWN BATTLE TO US-MEXICO BORDER

The president is seeking to bolster his case for a border wall after the latest negotiations with Democrats blew up over his funding demands.

2. STAND TAKEN AGAINST FORCED LABOR

On the heels of an AP investigation, a U.S. company that stocks college bookstores with team apparel cut ties with a Chinese company that drew workers from an internment camp.

3. REBEL DRONE BOMBS YEMEN MILITARY PARADE

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 20 of 38

The brazen attack that killed at least six troops threatens U.N.-brokered peace efforts to end the yearslong war tearing at the Arab world's poorest nation.

4. CONGO DECLARES ELECTION WINNER

Opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi surprisingly wins the long-delayed, disorganized and controversial presidential election as the country braces for possible protests over alleged rigging.

5. AP: IRAQ CLOSES CAMPS FOR DISPLACED

Accused by their tribes in Anbar province of collaborating with the Islamic State group, many families cannot return home. Others worry there is no work, schooling, or housing to return to.

6. SCIENTISTS SEEK WAYS TO TAKE REAL MEASURE OF PAIN

Among the devices in early-stage testing: one that peeks into the eyes to link pupil reactions to pain.

7. LIBERAL LAWMAKERS TO UNVEIL DRUG COST LEGISLATION

The package aims to radically reduce what Americans pay for prescription drugs by linking prices to lower costs in other countries.

8. HOW ATTORNEY GENERAL NOMINEE FEELS ABOUT MUELLER

The new Senate Judiciary chairman says William Barr has confidence in the special counsel and will let him complete his Russia investigation.

9. 'MAMMA MIA! MAMMA MIA!'

"Bohemian Rhapsody", the Golden Globe-winning Queen biopic, will be released as a sing-along in more than 750 theaters in North America.

10. VONN NOT OBSESSING OVER WORLD CUP MARK

As she closes in on Ingemar Stenmark's record 86 wins, Lindsey Vonn doesn't want health or history to dictate when her storied skiing career ends.

Australia praises Thai action on Saudi woman seeking asylum

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

BANGKOK (AP) — Australia's foreign minister praised Thailand on Thursday for its handling of a young Saudi woman who fled her family to seek asylum in Australia, but also reminded it of continuing concern about a Bahraini soccer player granted asylum in Australia who remains in Thai detention.

Marise Payne met with senior Thai officials in Bangkok a day after Australia announced it would assess the request for asylum by 18-year-old Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun, who was stopped Saturday at a Bangkok airport on her way to Australia and her passport seized. She said she was fleeing abuse by her family.

Payne told reporters that Australia's review of Alqunun's case is already underway.

She quashed speculation that Alqunun might accompany her back to Australia, "because there are steps which are required in the process which Australia, and any other country considering such a matter, would have to go through."

Confined to an airport transit hotel, Alqunun conducted an online appeal for help, garnering tens of thousands of followers on Twitter and enough public and diplomatic support to convince Thai officials to admit her temporarily under the protection of U.N. officials. The office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees quickly deemed her a legitimate refugee.

Alqunun's 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 similar cases have gone unreported.

She has attracted interest worldwide, particularly in Australia. In downtown Sydney on Thursday, four women dressed in jeans and calling themselves the Secret Sisterhood held a topless protest outside the building housing the Saudi Consulate, calling on Australia to grant Alqunun residency.

Alqunun's father arrived in Bangkok on Tuesday, but his daughter refused to meet with him. Thailand Immigration Police chief Lt. Gen. Surachate Hakparn said the father — whose name has not been released — denied physically abusing Alqunun or trying to force her into an arranged marriage, which were among the reasons she gave for her flight.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 21 of 38

Surachate said Alqunun's father wanted his daughter back but respected her decision. Surachate described the father as being a governor in Saudi Arabia.

"He has 10 children. He said the daughter might feel neglected sometimes," Surachate said.

Payne was also asked by reporters about the case of Hakeem al-Araibi, a 25-year-old former member of Bahrain's national soccer team, who was granted refugee status in Australia in 2017 after fleeing his homeland, where he said he was persecuted and tortured. He was arrested while on holiday in Thailand last November due to an Interpol notice in which Bahrain sought his custody after he was sentenced in absentia in 2014 to 10 years in prison for allegedly vandalizing a police station — a charge he denies. Bahrain is seeking his extradition.

She said she raised Australia's concerns about the case with Thailand's deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

"The Thai government is most certainly aware of the importance of this matter to Australia," she said. "I do note that there are legal proceedings underway in relation to Mr. al-Araibi, and Australia will continue to be in very close contact with Thai authorities in relation to this."

Al-Araibi, who now plays for Melbourne's Pascoe Vale Football Club, has been publicly critical of the Bahrain royal family's alleged involvement in sports scandals, which puts him at risk of punishment by the Bahraini government.

Al-Araibi has said he was blindfolded and had his legs beaten while he was held in Bahrain in 2012. He said he believed he was targeted for arrest because of his Shiite faith and because his brother was politically active. Bahrain has a Shiite majority but is ruled by a Sunni monarchy, and has a reputation for harsh repression since its failed "Arab Spring" uprising in 2011.

Craig Foster, a former Australian soccer player, held a news conference Thursday in Sydney to issue a joint call for al-Araibi's release with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Sydney-based Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights.

After commending FIFA, soccer's world governing body, and Australia's Football Federation for supporting al-Araibi's release, Foster criticized the Asian Football Confederation and its head, Salman al-Khalifa.

"Sheikh Salman is obligated to support Hakeem. He is obligated to do everything in his power to advocate, both privately and publicly, and to use the immense leverage that football has, with the Bahrain government, his own government, he's a Bahrainian national, and also with the Thai government to release Hakeem. The silence of the Asian Football Confederation is not just confounding, it's absolutely disgraceful," he said.

Associated Press writer Trevor Marshallsea in Sydney contributed to this report.

The shutdown today: President heads to the southern border

By The Associated Press

Here's what's up with the partial government shutdown on Day 20.

WHAT'S NEW TODAY

President Donald Trump will try to bolster his case for the border wall with a visit to the U.S.-Mexico border.

The trip Thursday follows a White House meeting with Republican and Democratic leaders that fell apart quickly, showing the two sides are still far apart on how to bring the partial government shutdown to an end.

QUOTES OF THE DAY

Trump tweet: "Just left a meeting with Chuck and Nancy, a total waste of time. I asked what is going to happen in 30 days if I quickly open things up, are you going to approve Border Security which includes a Wall or Steel Barrier? Nancy said, NO. I said bye-bye."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: "The president stomped out of the meeting when he said to me, 'Will you support a wall?' and I said 'no.'"

WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 22 of 38

Trump will be stopping in McAllen, Texas, where he's expected to visit a border patrol station and stop at a section of the border.

Uncertainty over federal funding for transportation projects is forcing some states to delay contracts for new road and bridge work while others are preparing for that possibility.

The Food and Drug Administration says routine food inspections aren't getting done during the shutdown, but checks of the riskiest foods are expected to resume next week.

The longest shutdown ever was 21 days that stretched from December 1995 into January 1996, when Bill Clinton was president.

WHAT REMAINS CLOSED

Nine of the 15 Cabinet-level departments have not been funded, including Agriculture, Homeland Security, State, Transportation, Interior and Justice. Some iconic National Park facilities are shuttered as are the Smithsonian museums and the National Zoo in Washington. Nearly everyone at NASA is being told to stay home, as are most at the Internal Revenue Service, which is responsible for processing tax returns and issuing refunds, though the administration says tax refunds will go out during the shutdown.

WHO IS AT WORK BUT NOT GETTING PAID

Some 420,000 federal employees whose work is declared essential are working without pay, including the FBI, TSA and other federal law enforcement officers. Some staff at the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security are also working without a paycheck.

South Korean leader urges bolder steps from North Korea, US

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean President Moon Jae-in urged North Korea to take bolder disarmament measures that the United States should then reward, suggesting Thursday he wants harsh sanctions lifted so Seoul can eventually restart dormant economic cooperation projects with its neighbor.

Moon said resolving the issue of the North Korea sanctions hinges on how fast Pyongyang denuclearizes and whether it receives reciprocal measures from the United States. He said that would top the agenda in an expected second summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump.

"North Korea knows it needs (to take) clear denuclearization steps to see international sanctions lifted and the United States also realizes that reciprocal measures are needed to match these North Korean denuclearization steps," Moon told a news conference.

Some observers believe that any sanctions relief, if pursued before Washington is ready, could weaken South Korea's ties with its ally and complicate efforts to rid the North of its nuclear weapons. Others see the comments by Moon, a liberal who covets deep engagement with Pyongyang, as simply a symbolic bit of conciliation toward North Korea.

Moon spoke only days after Kim used a New Year's address to say he was ready to resume two major stalled inter-Korean projects. Kim also said he'll be compelled to take a different path if the United States keeps pressing for unilateral sanctions as well as maintaining broader U.N. sanctions.

The two projects are South Korean tours to the North's scenic Diamond Mountain and a jointly run factory complex in the North Korean border town of Kaesong. They were suspended in the past decade along with other similar projects amid the nuclear standoff. The two projects were considered key sources of badly needed foreign currency for the impoverished North.

"My administration will cooperate with the international community, including the United States, to resolve the remaining issues such as international sanctions as soon as possible" to get the two projects restarted, Moon said at the news conference.

Moon, who took office in 2017, has shuttled between North Korea and the United States to facilitate high-profile diplomacy that included the first Kim-Trump summit in Singapore last June. Moon's overture, however, has invited criticism from conservatives in South Korea and the United States that he's making

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 23 of 38

too many concessions and helping the North try to weaken U.S.-led sanctions.

Trump has maintained that sanctions on North Korea will stay in place until it completely abandons its nuclear program.

As Moon spoke Thursday, Kim was heading back to Pyongyang after a two-day trip to his country's only major ally, China, that included a summit with President Xi Jinping. Chinese state media reported that Kim told Xi that he's committed to setting up a second summit with Trump to "achieve results" on the nuclear issue.

"In a word, Chairman Kim Jong Un's visit to China is an indication that the second North Korea-U.S. summit is drawing near," Moon said.

Little headway has been made since the Singapore summit, which ended with the North making a vaguely worded promise to work toward the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." Moon on Thursday described the agreements North Korea and the U.S. reached in Singapore as "bit abstract."

The North has previously called for the removal of 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea as a precondition for its denuclearization. Its Foreign Ministry said in a statement in December that it would never unilaterally give up its nuclear weapons unless the United States first removes what it calls an American nuclear threat. The statement further raised questions about whether the country is truly committed to denuclearization.

Moon, who met Kim three times last year, reiterated his previous stance that Kim won't link denuclearization to the U.S. military presence in South Korea. Moon also said Thursday that Kim told him that the denuclearization steps he was talking about were not different from what the international community wants.

Texas landowners prepare wall fight; Trump to visit border

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, Associated Press

HIDALGO, Texas (AP) — As President Donald Trump travels to the border in Texas to make the case for his \$5.7 billion wall, landowner Eloisa Cavazos says she knows firsthand how the project will play out if the White House gets its way.

The federal government has started surveying land along the border in Texas and announced plans to start construction next month. Rather than surrender their land, some property owners are digging in, vowing to reject buyout offers and preparing to fight the administration in court.

"You could give me a trillion dollars and I wouldn't take it," said Cavazos, whose land sits along the Rio Grande, the river separating the U.S. and Mexico in Texas. "It's not about money."

Trump is scheduled to visit the border Thursday in McAllen, a city of 143,000 on the river.

Congress in March funded 33 miles (53 kilometers) of walls and fencing in Texas. The government has laid out plans that would cut across private land in the Rio Grande Valley. Those in the way include landowners who have lived in the valley for generations, environmental groups and a 19th century chapel.

Many have hired lawyers who are preparing to fight the government if, as expected, it moves to seize their land through eminent domain.

The opposition will intensify if Democrats accede to the Trump administration's demand to build more than 215 new miles of wall, including 104 miles in the Rio Grande Valley and 55 miles near Laredo. Even a compromise solution to build "steel slats," as Trump has suggested, or more fencing of the kind that Democrats have previously supported would likely trigger more court cases and pushback in Texas.

Legal experts say Trump likely cannot waive eminent domain — which requires the government to demonstrate a public use for the land and provide landowners with compensation — by declaring a national emergency.

While this is Trump's first visit to the border in Texas as president, his administration's immigration crackdown has been felt here for months.

Hundreds of the more than 2,400 children separated from their parents last summer were detained in cages at a Border Patrol facility in McAllen. Three "tender-age" facilities for the youngest children were opened in this region.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 24 of 38

The president also ordered soldiers to the border in response to a wave of migrant caravans before the November election. Those troops had a heavy presence in the Rio Grande Valley, though they have since quietly left. A spokeswoman for the border security mission said they closed their base camp along the border on Dec. 22.

But Trump's border wall will last beyond his administration. Building in the region is a top priority for the Department of Homeland Security because it's the busiest area for illegal border crossings. More than 23,000 parents and children were caught illegally crossing the border in the Rio Grande Valley in November — more than triple the number from a year earlier.

Homeland Security officials argue that a wall would stop many crossings and deter Central American families from trying to migrate north. Many of those families are seeking asylum because of violence in their home countries and often turn themselves in to border agents when they arrive here.

The number of families has surged. DHS said Wednesday that it detained 27,518 adults and children traveling together on the southern border in December, a new monthly high.

With part of the \$1.6 billion Congress approved in March, U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced it would build 25 miles (40 kilometers) of wall along the flood-control levee in Hidalgo County, which runs well north of the Rio Grande.

Congress did not allow construction of any of Trump's wall prototypes. But the administration's plans call for a concrete wall to the height of the existing levee, with 18-foot (5.5 meters) steel posts on top. CBP wants to clear 150 feet (45 meters) in front of any new construction for an "enforcement zone" of access roads, cameras, and lighting.

The government sued the local Roman Catholic diocese late last year to gain access for its surveyors at the site of La Lomita chapel, which opened in 1865 and was an important site for missionaries who traveled the Rio Grande Valley by horseback.

It remains an epicenter of the Rio Grande Valley's Catholic community, hosting weddings and funerals, as well as an annual Palm Sunday procession that draws 2,000 people.

The chapel is a short distance from the Rio Grande. It falls directly into the area where CBP wants to build its "enforcement zone."

The diocese said it opposes a border wall because the barrier violates Catholic teachings and the church's responsibility to protect migrants, as well as the church's First Amendment right of religious freedom. A legal group from Georgetown University has joined the diocese in its lawsuit.

Father Roy Snipes leads prayers each Friday for his chapel to be spared. Wearing a cowboy hat with his white robe and metal cross, he's known locally as the "cowboy priest" and sometimes takes a boat on the Rio Grande to go from his home to the chapel.

"It would poison the water," Snipes said. "It would still be a sacred place, but it would be a sacred place that was desecrated."

The Cavazos family's roughly 64 acres (0.25 square kilometers) were first purchased by their grandmother 60 years ago.

They rent some of the property to tenants who have built small houses or brought in trailers, charging some as little as \$1,000 a year. They live off the earnings from the land and worry that a fence would deter renters and turn their property into a "no man's land."

On the rest of the property are plywood barns, enclosures for cattle and goats, and a wooden deck that extends into the river, which flows serenely east toward the Gulf of Mexico. Eloisa's brother, Fred, can sit on the deck in his wheelchair and fish with a rod fashioned from a long carrizo reed plucked from the riverbank.

Surveyors examined their property in December under federal court order. The family hasn't yet received an offer for their land, but their lawyers at the Texas Civil Rights Project expect a letter with an offer will arrive in the coming weeks.

"Everybody tells us to sell and go to a better place," Eloisa Cavazos said. "This is heaven to us."

US apparel firm cuts off Chinese factory in internment camp

By MARTHA MENDOZA and YANAN WANG, Associated Press

A U.S. supplier of t-shirts and other team apparel to college bookstores cut its ties Wednesday with a Chinese company that drew workers from an internment camp holding targeted members of ethnic minority groups.

In recent years, authorities in the far west Chinese region of Xinjiang have detained an estimated 1 million Uighurs and Kazakhs in heavily-secured facilities where detainees say they are ordered to renounce their language and religion while pledging loyalty to the China's ruling Communist Party.

Last month an Associated Press investigation found the Chinese government had also started forcing some detainees to work in manufacturing and food industries. The investigation tracked recent shipments from one such factory, the privately-owned Hetian Taida Apparel, located inside an internment camp, to Badger Sportswear, a leading supplier in Statesville, North Carolina.

In a statement posted to its website, Badger said Wednesday it will no longer do business with Hetian Taida, nor import any goods from the same region "given the controversy around doing business" there.

"Furthermore, we will not ship any product sourced from Hetian Taida currently in our possession," the company said, adding that the supplier accounted for about 1 percent of Badger's total annual sales.

Repeated calls to Hetian Taida's chairman, Wu Hongbo, rang unanswered Wednesday. In a previous conversation with the AP, Wu said while Hetian Taida was located in the same compound as one camp that the government calls a "vocational skills education and training center," Hetian Taida was not involved in the camp's activities.

However, Wu said his company employed 20 to 30 "trainees" from the center as part of the region's efforts to alleviate poverty.

Asked about the case, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said Thursday that while the ministry doesn't generally comment on individual business decisions, Badger appeared to have been acting on "misinformation."

The vocational training centers in Xinjiang are "totally different from so-called forced labor," Lu said, referring further questions on the camps to statements made by the regional government, which maintains that the centers help poor Uighurs gain employable skills.

"It's a tragedy for that business," Lu said.

Universities stocking Badger clothing began pulling items from their shelves and websites after the report appeared in December.

Hetian Taida was certified as complying with good business practices by Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production, which sent an auditor to a different Hetian Taida facility, not the one inside the internment camp. That factory "is not engaged in the use of forced labor," WRAP and Badger concluded. But Badger added that "historical documentation provided by Hetian Taida regarding their prior facility was insufficient to conclude with certainty" that it had met Badger's sourcing standards.

WRAP spokesman Seth Lennon confirmed to AP that the facility they investigated is not the same place AP wrote about.

"Our model centers around factories approaching us requesting to be audited," Lennon wrote in an email. "We do not seek out any factories whatsoever to audit unsolicited."

The Washington-based Workers Rights Consortium (WRC), which has agreements with many educational institutions across the U.S. to ensure the products they sell on campus are ethically manufactured, conducted its own investigation and found additional evidence confirming the factory supplying Badger was inside an internment camp.

WRC executive director Scott Nova said Wednesday's announcement reinforces that finding.

"There is nothing in Badger's statement, or WRAP's, that calls into question the conclusion that Hetian Taida used detainee labor while producing for Badger," he said.

Any item that is the product of forced labor is illegal and subject to seizure by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which said in December it was reviewing the reports. A CBP spokesperson had an automatic

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 26 of 38

message Wednesday that they were unable to respond to emails or telephone calls due to the government shutdown.

AP writer Christopher Bodeen contributed to this report.

Kim looking to 'achieve results' in 2nd summit with Trump

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has reportedly told the leader of his only major ally, China, that he wants to "achieve results" on the nuclear standoff on the Korean Peninsula during a second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump.

The comments, contained in Chinese state media reports Thursday, came a day after Kim left Beijing on his special armored train after a two-day visit to the Chinese capital.

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

North Korea will "make efforts for the second summit between (North Korean) and U.S. leaders to achieve results that will be welcomed by the international community," Kim was quoted as saying by China's official Xinhua News Agency.

All sides should "jointly push for a comprehensive resolution of the Korean Peninsula issue" and North Korea will "continue sticking to the stance of denuclearization and resolving the Korean Peninsula issue through dialogue and consultation," Xinhua quoted Kim as saying.

Kim also said North Korea hopes its "legitimate concerns" will be given due respect, a reference to its desire for security guarantees and a possible peace treaty to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War.

He also credited Chinese President Xi Jinping with helping reduce regional tensions, saying "the Korean Peninsula situation has been easing since last year, and China's important role in this process is obvious to all."

The North's Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim told Xi that the North remains unchanged in its push to seek a negotiated resolution of the nuclear standoff. It said Kim also mentioned unspecified difficulties in improving ties with the United States and moving nuclear diplomacy forward.

Xi was quoted by Xinhua as saying that China supports the U.S.-North Korea summits and hopes the two sides "will meet each other halfway." KCNA said Xi accepted an invitation to visit North Korea, although details of when he might go were not given.

It wasn't clear from the reports if Kim was in back in North Korea, but his train presumably would arrive sometime Thursday.

Xi has yet to visit North Korea since taking office in 2012.

Trump and Kim met in Singapore in June for the first-ever leaders' meeting between their nations, but there has been a standoff ever since, with dueling accusations of bad faith.

Kim's Beijing visit was 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. The sanctions have severely impacted his country's already ailing economy.

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

The trip 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, saying that if things don't improve — meaning that if sanctions relief and security guarantees aren't in the offing — North Korea 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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 27 of 38

entirely separate.

KCNA reported that Kim on Wednesday visited a pharmaceutical plant belonging to Beijing Tongrentang Co. Ltd., where he watched production processes.

It said he met with Xi at the Great Hall of the People on Tuesday after a welcoming ceremony. Later Tuesday, Xi gave a grand banquet for Kim, his wife Ri Sol Ju and other visiting North Korean officials.

At Tuesday's daily Chinese foreign ministry briefing, spokesman Lu Kang 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 but there was no word of any official celebration.

Associated Press writers Foster Klug and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

Lawyer: Georgia prosecutor seeking info about R. Kelly

STOCKBRIDGE, Ga. (AP) — A lawyer representing a couple who appeared in a recent documentary detailing abuse allegations against R. Kelly said prosecutors in Georgia have reached out to him.

Atlanta-based lawyer Gerald Griggs represents Timothy and Jonjelyn Savage, who have said repeatedly that Kelly has kept their daughter from contacting them and has brainwashed her. The Savages, who live in Stockbridge, just south of Atlanta, appeared in Lifetime's "Surviving R. Kelly" series.

The series, which aired earlier this month, looks at the singer's history and allegations that he has sexually abused women and girls. Kelly, who turned 52 on Tuesday, has denied wrongdoing.

Savage and his wife have said they haven't heard from their daughter in about two years.

The Lifetime series reported that their daughter has repeatedly denied that Kelly has done anything wrong and has said she doesn't want to talk to her family.

Griggs said the Fulton County district attorney's office reached out to him on Monday seeking contact information for witnesses. Griggs said Fulton County investigators "haven't confirmed or denied an investigation."

Chris Hopper, a spokesman, for the Fulton County district attorney's office, declined to comment.

Griggs said he has also been contacted by prosecutors in Kelly's hometown of Chicago. Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx addressed reporters Tuesday afternoon after her office had been inundated with calls about the allegations in the documentary, some tied to his Chicago-area home.

But Foxx also said there's no active investigation of Kelly and launching one would require victims and witnesses.

WMAQ-TV reported that Foxx's office said Wednesday it has received calls after Foxx asked the public to come forward with information about potential victims of the singer. The office said it is "reviewing and following up" on the calls, but has no additional information at this time.

Kelly's Chicago attorney, Steve Greenberg, said in a phone interview Tuesday evening that the allegations in the Lifetime documentary were false. He also said it was inappropriate for a state's attorney to characterize allegations she'd seen on TV, prior to charges or even an investigation.

Also in Chicago, according to WMAQ, police confirmed Wednesday that they conducted a "business check" at Kelly's recording studio on the city's West Side but "have no criminal complaints from anyone about the location."

Timothy Savage told a police officer on Jan. 3 that Don Russell, whom he identified as Kelly's manager, had texted him saying it would be best for him and his family if the documentary didn't air, according to a Henry County police report.

Russell called Savage while the officer was there and Savage put the phone on speaker so the officer could listen, the police report says. It went on to say that Russell accused Savage of lying to Lifetime and said that if Savage continued to support the series, Russell and Kelly would be forced to release information that would show Savage was a liar and that would ruin him, his reputation, his business and his family.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 28 of 38

Contact information for Russell could not be immediately found.

Savage also called police in May to report that a man named James Mason had threatened him because Savage was trying to reach his daughter, who he said was being held by Kelly, according to a police report. The report doesn't say what the relationship between Mason and Kelly is.

Savage told the officer that Mason had called him around 3:10 p.m. on May 23 and said, "I'm gonna do harm to you and your family, when I see you I'm gonna get you, I'm gonna (expletive) kill you."

Capt. Joey Smith with the Henry County Police Department confirmed by email Wednesday that a magistrate judge had issued a warrant for Mason on charges of terroristic threats and acts. The email says detectives would like to meet with Mason to "review his version of events." The Henry County Sheriff's Office said no one by that name has been arrested since the warrant was issued last year.

Mason did not respond to an email Wednesday seeking comment.

A Cook County jury acquitted Kelly of all 14 counts of child pornography in 2008. Prosecutors had argued a videotape showed him engaged in graphic sex acts with a girl as young as 13. Kelly and the alleged victim, in her 20s at the time of the trial, denied it was them in the video.

Kelly rose from poverty on Chicago's South Side to become a star singer, songwriter and producer. Despite his legal troubles a decade ago, he still retains a following.

Kelly won a Grammy in 1997 for "I Believe I Can Fly," and is known for such raunchy hits as "Bump N' Grind" and "Ignition."

Steyer to put more millions into impeachment, not a campaign

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JUANA SUMMERS, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Billionaire investor and Democratic activist Tom Steyer said Wednesday that he will not run for the White House in 2020 and will instead focus on calling for President Donald Trump's impeachment.

Steyer, who has spent \$50 million on his Need to Impeach campaign and announced plans to spend \$40 million more this year, said at an event in Des Moines that "the impeachment question has reached an inflection point," given that Democrats have taken majority control of the House.

"I said last year that I'm willing to do whatever I can to protect our country from this reckless, lawless and dangerous president," Steyer said. "Therefore, I will be dedicating 100 percent of my time, effort and resources working for Mr. Trump's impeachment and removal from office. I am not running for president at this time."

Steyer said his \$40 million commitment for 2019 was designed to pressure the Democratic-controlled House to begin impeachment hearings and to persuade the party's presidential contenders to support impeachment on their platform.

The decision not to run comes as a surprise since Steyer had been traveling the country promoting the political platform he released after November's midterm elections.

But Steyer, who chose the premier presidential caucus state to make his announcement, likened his mission to seeking the presidency itself.

"Most people come to Iowa around this time to announce a campaign for the presidency," he said. "I am proud to be here to announce that I will do whatever it takes for as long as it takes to remove a president."

Although Steyer's call for impeachment comes as House Democrats have taken the majority, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has said that the House shouldn't move to impeach Trump without more facts and that the effort would be divisive.

Steyer objected.

"If someone says there are tactical, political reasons not to do the right thing for our country, I would say that's not the basis on which we're making decisions," he said.

Although Steyer opted against a presidential run, the constellation of political organizations that he has built is likely to have an impact on the presidential race and on key congressional races across the country.

Several prominent Democrats have also declined to run in 2020, including former Massachusetts Gov.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 29 of 38

Deval Patrick and Stormy Daniels' lawyer, Michael Avenatti.

Summers reported from Washington.

Political pressure leaves little room for resolving shutdown

By STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — There is no easy way out.

As the third government shutdown of President Donald Trump's tenure stretched into its 19th day, political pressures on Trump and the Democrats have left little room for compromise in the standoff over funding for a border wall. Most prominently, Trump's narrow focus on the desires of his most ardent supporters has him convinced he cannot back off his signature campaign promise without facing backlash. Some powerful Republican allies in Washington and beyond are cheering on his demands for \$5.7 billion funding for the wall, even if some remain uneasy.

For Democrats, broad public skepticism about Trump's case for the wall — combined with a driving push from the base to stand up to the president — has assured them they're on solid ground in refusing to bend.

The looming question is whether the impact of the shutdown on government services and the plight of struggling federal workers force Republican lawmakers to break from the president or compel Democrats to budge. Until then, the dispute has given both parties a fast first test in the politics of divided government as they try to trade blame, manage their messages and strike a balance between competing political wings.

Each side appeared dug in even deeper after a White House meeting between Trump and Democratic leaders on Wednesday as the economic livelihoods of some 800,000 federal workers hang in the balance. Trump said he quickly ended the meeting after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi indicated that Democrats would not fund his wall under any circumstances.

Trump's focus now is squarely on his conservative base and its support for the wall that came to symbolize Trump's promise for a hard-line, unrelenting approach to immigration.

"He got elected because of that wall," said Trump confidant Jerry Falwell Jr., president of the evangelical Liberty University. Falwell said he has told Trump he's doing the right thing. "I don't think it'll help him at all if he backs down."

White House aides largely agree. Officials maintain the issue is a political winner, though they have urged the president to be more aggressive in making his case to the public — and to any wavering Republican lawmakers.

Trump outlined his argument in graphic terms during a prime-time Oval Office address Tuesday night. While several studies suggest that illegal immigration has no impact on crime rates, the president highlighted horrific crimes committed by immigrants and suggested his wall was needed to prevent this "crisis."

"How much more American blood must we shed before Congress does its job?" asked Trump, who plans to visit the border Thursday.

The White House has been searching for options — but not one that involves compromise. The administration has explored the possibility of funding the massive wall without congressional approval by declaring a national emergency or using funds from another department, though such moves would almost certainly trigger a legal challenge and may push some Republicans in Congress to break.

Trump on Wednesday acknowledged the political pressure from within his own party not to back down.

"If I did something that was foolish, like gave up on border security, the first ones that would hit me would be my senators — they'd be angry at me. The second ones would be the House. And the third ones would be frankly my base and a lot of Republicans out there and a lot of Democrats that want to see border security," he told reporters.

Meanwhile, the president's Republican critics are few and far between.

Vice President Mike Pence got a standing ovation during a closed-door meeting of congressional Republicans on Tuesday after he told them to "stand strong" and cited a C.S. Lewis quote on courage as a virtue. As many as two dozen Republicans — a tiny fraction of the 199 Republicans serving in the House — are

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 30 of 38

expected to join House Democrats this week in passing a bill to start reopening parts of the government.

There were modest signs of discomfort with Trump's strategy among Senate Republicans, though few had a pressing political incentive to break with the president given that all but a handful expect easy re-elections in 2020.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, called the shutdown "completely unnecessary and contrived. People expect their government to work ... this obviously is not working."

At the same time, newly elected Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., was more representative of the mood in his caucus when he said voters back home believe Trump is doing the right thing: "They love him. And they want the wall."

The GOP support stands in sharp contrast to most Americans, who do not approve of Trump's job performance. His approval rating has hovered close to 40 percent or below for much of his presidency. But Trump's approval within the Republican Party has surged close to 90 percent.

The sharp divide is reflected in public opinion of the wall.

Overall, 54 percent of Americans oppose construction of a wall along the Mexican border, according to a Quinnipiac poll released in December. At the same time, 86 percent of Republicans backed the proposal.

Those numbers have helped keep Democrats united in opposition.

Both party leaders on the Hill and the handful of presidential hopefuls starting to compete for the Democratic nomination have called on Democrats to hold strong.

Billionaire activist Tom Steyer began running ads in key states calling for Trump's impeachment long before the shutdown drama began to unfold.

"It's not a question as to whether the Democrats are out of line," said Steyer. "What (Trump) is doing is trying to extort the Democratic Congress with the pain of the American people. ... It's like somebody who kidnapped a kid and is holding them hostage to his campaign promise, which made no sense then, makes no sense now, and is incredibly wasteful." Steyer said Wednesday that he had decided against a 2020 presidential bid.

The competing force on Democrat leaders is the pressure to prove they can restore some stability to Trump's Washington. Despite the liberal base's calls to stand up to Trump, party leaders believe they won big in last year's midterms by talking about pocketbook issues and promising to govern. They are eager to make good on that pledge.

Republican pollster Frank Luntz suggested there would be little political price to pay for those associated with the extended government shutdown, which is just days away from becoming the longest in U.S. history — even if most Americans blame Trump and his party.

"For most people, their day-to-day lives are not being affected," Luntz said.

A frequent Trump critic, he predicted the Republican president would find a way to escape the shutdown as a political winner, even if it appeared unlikely now.

"Is he boxed in? I'd say no. He's the Harry Houdini of American politics," Luntz said. "He had 38 percent favorability on the day of the election and he still won."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Zeke Miller and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

Congo opposition leader Tshisekedi named presidential winner

By MATHILDE BOUSSION, SALEH MWANAMILONGO and DAVID KEYTON, Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — Congo opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi has been declared the winner of the long-delayed presidential election, the electoral commission announced early Thursday to the surprise of many, as the vast country braced for possible protests over alleged rigging.

Tshisekedi, who received more than 7 million votes, or 38 percent, had not been widely considered the leading candidate and is relatively untested. The son of late opposition leader Etienne, who pursued the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 31 of 38

presidency for many years, he startled Congolese shortly before the election by breaking away from an opposition effort to unite behind a single candidate.

Some observers have suggested that President Joseph Kabila's government sought to make a deal as hopes faded for a win for ruling party candidate Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, who received more than 4 million votes, or 23 percent.

It was not immediately clear whether opposition candidate Martin Fayulu, who had pushed hard for Kabila to leave power and vowed to clean up Congo's widespread corruption, will contest the results after leading in polling. The constitutional court has 14 days to validate them. Fayulu received more than 6 million votes, or 34 percent.

The election may enable Congo to achieve its first peaceful, democratic transfer of power since independence in 1960. Kabila has ruled since 2001 in the troubled nation rich in the minerals key to smartphones around the world and has amassed vast wealth. He is barred from serving three consecutive terms, but during more than two years of election delays many Congolese feared he'd find a way to stay in office.

"This is the coronation of a lifetime," the deputy secretary-general of Tshisekedi's party, Rubens Mikindo, said shortly after the announcement that his candidate had won, above the cheers at party headquarters. "This is the beginning of national reconciliation."

Scores of people in the capital, Kinshasa, danced after the election results were announced long after midnight, but observers waited to see how other Congolese would respond, especially after Fayulu this week warned that the results were "not negotiable."

Fayulu, who once tweeted that "When the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn," was backed by two popular opposition figures barred from running, former Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba and former governor Moise Katumbi. Fayulu, a former Exxon manager and Kinshasa lawmaker, accused the government of impeding his campaign by blocking flights and assaulting his supporters, which Kabila dismissed.

Ahead of the election results, activist groups urged people to "be ready to massively take to the streets" if the outcome didn't match "the truth of the ballot boxes."

Attention now turns to Congo's powerful Catholic church, which has said its 40,000 election observers at all polling stations found a "clear winner" but was barred by electoral regulations from saying more.

If the church found Fayulu won, "how will population react?" Stephanie Wolters, analyst with the Institute for Security Studies, posted on Twitter ahead of the announcement. She added, will the African Union "consider a power transfer 'enough' or will they push for investigation and real result?"

The delayed results come after international pressure to announce an outcome that reflected the will of the people. The United States threatened sanctions against officials who rigged the vote.

The largely peaceful election was marred by the malfunctioning of many voting machines that Congo used for the first time. Dozens of polling centers opened hours late as materials went missing. And in a last-minute decision, some 1 million of the country's 40 million voters were barred from participating, with the electoral commission blaming a deadly Ebola virus outbreak.

Defiantly, tens of thousands of voters in one of the barred communities held their own ballot on election day. Fayulu won easily.

Congo's government cut internet service the day after the vote to prevent speculation on social media. As the electoral commission met this week, anti-riot police moved into place outside.

Some Congolese weary of Kabila's long rule, two turbulent years of election delays and years of conflict that killed millions of people said they simply wanted peace. Some said they would be happy as long as Fayulu or Tshisekedi won, while recalling the violence that followed past disputed elections.

Many Congolese objected to Shadary, suspecting that Kabila would continue to rule from behind the scenes.

Now Congo faces a new leader who is little known after spending many years in Belgium and living in the shadow of his outspoken father.

On Wednesday afternoon, hours before results were announced, some Tshisekedi supporters began to celebrate at his Union for Democracy and Social Progress party headquarters, with calendars already printed saying "Felix Tshisekedi president."

The 56-year-old Tshisekedi took over as head of Congo's most prominent opposition party in early 2018, a year after his father's death.

Some Congolese have said Tshisekedi lost support by splitting the opposition. He was less visible in campaigning than Fayulu and did not make himself available to reporters after the vote. As he cast his ballot, he accused Congo's government of deliberately creating a mess to spark a court challenge that could allow Kabila to extend his time in power.

"I deplore all the disorder," Tshisekedi said.

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Teacher strike delayed in second-largest US school district

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The union representing teachers in Los Angeles — the nation's second-largest school district — postponed the start of a strike until Monday because of the possibility of a court-ordered delay of a walkout.

United Teachers Los Angeles previously said its 35,000 members would walk off the job Thursday for the first time in 30 years if a deal wasn't reached on higher pay and smaller class sizes.

However, a judge was considering Wednesday whether the union gave legally proper notice of a strike and could have ordered teachers to wait.

Union officials said they believe they would have prevailed in court but decided to postpone a strike to avoid confusion and give teachers, parents and others time to prepare.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, with 640,000 students, said the delay provides an opportunity to keep talking and avoid a strike.

Teachers are hoping to build on the "Red4Ed" movement that began last year in West Virginia, where a strike resulted in a significant 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."

The walkouts in other states emboldened organized labor after a critical defeat at the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled last year that government workers can't be required to join unions and pay dues.

"Each state is different, but the commonality across all states is teachers, and parents are sick of schools not being invested in," union President Alex Caputo-Pearl said.

The Los Angeles 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 that would take effect all at once and be retroactive to fiscal 2017. 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 district has said 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 were continuing, but little progress was evident in the contract dispute.

Superintendent Austin Beutner traveled Wednesday to Sacramento to ask state lawmakers for additional resources for Los Angeles schools in hopes of averting a walkout.

Unlike other states, schools in California stay open if a strike happens. The Los Angeles district has hired hundreds of substitutes to replace teachers and others who leave for picket lines.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 33 of 38

The union said it's "irresponsible" to hire substitutes and called on parents to consider keeping students home or join marchers if a strike goes forward.

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 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.

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 campus closures and flipping public schools into charters — 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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AP Exclusive: NC election fraud probed long before 2018 race

By **MICHAEL BIESECKER** and **EMERY P. DALESIO**, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Long before accusations of absentee ballot fraud in a small North Carolina county cast doubt on the results of a heated 2018 congressional race, a state elections investigator spent weeks probing whether the man at the center of the current scandal was among a group buying votes.

That 2010 investigation was one of at least a half dozen instances over the last nine years that prosecutors and elections officials received complaints of serious elections irregularities in Bladen County, a rural locale of 35,000 people that has long had a statewide reputation for political chicanery by both Republicans and Democrats. The state's ongoing criminal investigation into 2018 voting irregularities has focused on Leslie McCrae Dowless Jr., a local political operative and convicted felon.

Marshall Tutor, who retired in March after 15 years as an investigator for the N.C. Board of Elections, told The Associated Press his office first fielded accusations nearly a decade ago that Dowless, now 62, was among a group giving voters cash to fill out ballots the way he directed.

Emails obtained by AP through a public records request detail the elections board's 2010 investigation in Bladen, which began after a Democratic candidate for county commissioner reported seeing political operatives handing voters what he suspected to be cash outside an early voting site.

Tutor traveled to Bladen multiple times, but said in an interview Monday he was unable to build a strong enough case against Dowless to support criminal charges.

"Dowless was throwing a lot of money around," said Tutor, 70, recounting the 2010 investigation. "There was no paper trail. Witnesses refused to give sworn statements or testify in court. No one was going to admit they were paid \$5 to vote. But where there's that much smoke, there was fire."

Dowless did not respond Tuesday to a message seeking comment. His attorney, Cynthia Adams Singletary, issued a statement last month asserting that Dowless hasn't broken any campaign laws.

The AP first reported last month that North Carolina's top elections official issued an urgent plea nearly two years ago for the Trump administration to file criminal charges against Dowless and others, warning in a January 2017 letter that those involved in illegally harvesting absentee ballots in Bladen would likely

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 34 of 38

do it again if they weren't prosecuted.

Both federal and state prosecutors failed to file criminal charges before the now disputed 2018 vote, the last unresolved Congressional election in the nation.

Investigators are now probing whether Dowless ran a sophisticated operation over multiple election cycles to collect absentee ballots from voters, potentially altering the selections or not turning them in to be counted. Under state law, it is illegal for anyone other than a voter or their immediate family to handle an absentee ballot before it is sealed and mailed.

Also at issue is whether Dowless was working as part of a larger local political machine, including whether he could have had improper help from current or former Bladen County officials.

The state Board of Elections refused to certify the results of the Nov. 6 vote where Republican Mark Harris leads Democrat Dan McCready by 905 votes, according to unofficial results. State investigators are also probing Dowless' work for Harris for the May 2018 Republican primary, in which he narrowly defeated incumbent U.S. Rep. Robert Pittenger.

Harris has admitted making the decision to hire Dowless after hearing about him from Bladen GOP officials, paying for the absentee ballot operation through a political consulting firm. Harris, a Baptist minister, has denied knowledge of any wrongdoing. He filed a lawsuit last week asking a state judge to order his certification as the winner of the November election.

North Carolina's appointed elections board was dissolved earlier this month by a panel of three state judges who in October struck down the GOP-back law that formed it as unconstitutional. A revamped board is due to be seated Jan. 31.

Democratic leaders in the U.S. House have said they won't allow Harris to take office because of the ongoing investigation. The U.S. Constitution makes the House the judge and final arbiter of its members' election contests.

Tutor, the former elections investigator, said he suspected in 2010 that political candidates or their supporters were funneling undisclosed cash to Dowless to fund efforts to influence votes.

"Dowless deals in cash," Tutor said. "He doesn't care about party affiliation. You show him the money, and he'll get the votes."

Years later, evidence surfaced that at least some political cash had been steered to Dowless that was never disclosed in campaign finance reports, as required by state law.

Jeffrey S. Smith, a Bladen County sweepstakes parlor operator, says he gave Dowless off-the-books cash in 2014. Smith testified as part of a lawsuit that he gave Dowless three cash payments totaling \$5,800 on behalf of current Bladen County Sheriff Jim McVicker, a Republican.

"Everybody will tell you that McCrae takes cash for work," Smith told AP in an interview last month, recounting the payments.

North Carolina's legislature has repeatedly voted to outlaw so-called sweepstakes games, which typically resemble video slot machines. But many of the operations have managed to stay open with court challenges, software tweaks and frequent political donations.

Smith filed a lawsuit against McVicker after deputies raided his gaming parlor in 2015. As part of the case, Dowless gave a sworn statement admitting he received the cash and used it to hire about 20 people that encouraged voters to cast ballots supporting McVicker.

Larry Guyton, McVicker's chief deputy, said the sheriff declined to comment.

Though Tutor's 2010 investigation didn't yield a criminal case against Dowless, the investigator said he did gather strong evidence of wrongdoing by others.

The elections board doesn't have authority under state law to make arrests or file criminal charges. Emails reviewed by the AP show Tutor met with agents from the State Bureau of Investigation, North Carolina's version of the FBI, about pursuing a potential criminal case against Sue Anne Long, a state probation and parole officer.

Tutor said political alliances in Bladen often have more to do with skin color than party affiliation, and that his investigation indicated Long was part of a group gathering absentee ballots from low-income black residents and then throwing them away, a potential felony under state law. At the time, a black candidate

for sheriff was squaring off against a white man in a Democratic party primary.

Tutor says he provided witness statements attesting to Long's alleged misconduct, but the case was later dropped. Tutor says the witnesses, whom he described as elderly black people, weren't deemed credible enough to bring criminal charges against Long.

"I was told the witnesses wouldn't be good in court," Tutor told the AP.

Long, 49, is still employed at the state adult corrections office in Elizabethtown, the Bladen County seat. She did not respond Monday to a phone message and email seeking comment.

SBI Deputy Director Gerald Thomas confirmed Monday that records showed his agency had investigated Long and made a referral to state prosecutors, who elected not to pursue charges.

Associated Press investigative reporter Michael Biesecker reported from Washington.

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Trump stalks out of shutdown talks with Dems, says 'bye-bye'

By CATHERINE LUCEY, LISA MASCARO and LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump walked out of his negotiating meeting with congressional leaders Wednesday — "I said bye-bye," he tweeted — as efforts to end the 19-day partial government shutdown fell into deeper disarray over his demand for billions of dollars to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

In a negotiating session that was over almost as soon as it began, Democrats went to the White House asking Trump to reopen the government. Trump renewed his call for money for his signature campaign promise and was rebuffed. Republicans and Democrats had differing accounts of the brief exchange, but the result was clear: The partial shutdown continued with no end in sight.

Hundreds of thousands of federal workers will miss paychecks on Friday; a little more than half of them are still working without pay. Other key federal services are suspended, including some food inspections. And as some lawmakers expressed discomfort with the growing toll of the standoff, it was clear Wednesday that the wall was at the center.

Trump revived his threat to attempt to override Congress by declaring a national emergency to unleash Defense Department funding for the wall. He's due to visit the border Thursday to highlight what he declared in an Oval Office speech Tuesday night as a "crisis." Democrats say Trump is manufacturing the emergency to justify a political ploy.

That debate set the tone for Wednesday's sit-down at the White House.

Republicans said Trump posed a direct question to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: If he opened the government, would she fund the wall? She said no. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said Trump slammed his hand on the table, said "then we have nothing to discuss" and walked out.

Republicans said Trump, who passed out candy at the start of the meeting, did not raise his voice and there was no table pounding. Pelosi said Trump "stomped" out of the room and was "petulant." Republicans said he was merely firm.

"The president made clear today that he is going to stand firm to achieve his priorities to build a wall — a steel barrier — at the southern border," Vice President Mike Pence told reporters afterward.

Trump had just returned from Capitol Hill, where he urged jittery congressional Republicans to hold firm with him. He suggested a deal for his border wall might be getting closer, but he also said the shutdown would last "whatever it takes."

He discussed the possibility of a sweeping immigration compromise with Democrats to protect some immigrants from deportation but provided no clear strategy or timeline for resolving the standoff, according to senators in the private session. He left the Republican lunch boasting of "a very, very unified party,"

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 36 of 38

but GOP senators are publicly uneasy as the standoff ripples across the lives of Americans and interrupts the economy.

Trump insisted at the White House: "I didn't want this fight." But it was his sudden rejection of a bipartisan spending bill late last month that blindsided leaders in Congress, including Republican allies, now seeking a resolution to the shutdown.

The effects are growing. The Food and Drug Administration says it isn't doing routine food inspections because of the partial federal shutdown, but checks of the riskiest foods are expected to resume next week.

The agency said it's working to bring back about 150 employees to inspect more potentially hazardous foods such as cheese, infant formula and produce. FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said the agency can't make the case that "a routine inspection of a Nabisco cracker facility" is necessary during the shutdown, however. He said inspections would have ramped up this week for the first time since the holidays, so the lapse in inspections of high-risk foods will not be significant if they resume soon.

Republicans are mindful of the growing toll on ordinary Americans, including disruptions in payments to farmers and trouble for home buyers who are seeking government-backed mortgage loans — "serious stuff," according to Sen. John Thune, the No. 2 Senate Republican.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, was among several senators who questioned Trump at the Capitol.

"I addressed the things that are very local to us — it's not just those who don't receive a federal pay-check perhaps on Friday, but there are other consequences," she said, mentioning the inability to certify weight scales for selling fish. The president's response? "He urged unity."

That unity was tested late Wednesday when the House passed a spending bill, 240-188, to reopen one shuttered department, Treasury, to ensure that tax refunds and other financial services continue. Eight Republicans joined Democrats in voting, defying the plea to stick with the White House.

Democrats said before the White House meeting that they would ask Trump to accept an earlier bipartisan bill to reopen the government with money for border security but not the wall. Pelosi warned that the effects of hundreds of thousands of lost paychecks would begin to ripple across the economy.

"The president could end the Trump shutdown and reopen the government today, and he should," Pelosi said.

Ahead of his visit to Capitol Hill, Trump renewed his notice that he might declare a national emergency and try to authorize the wall on his own if Congress won't approve the money he's asking.

"I think we might work a deal, and if we don't, I might go that route," he said.

Republicans are particularly concerned about such a threat, seeing that as an unprecedented claim on the right of Congress to allocate funding except in the direst circumstances.

"I prefer that we get this resolved the old-fashioned way," Thune said.

Trump did not mention the idea of a national emergency declaration Tuesday night. A person familiar with deliberations who was unauthorized to discuss the situation said additional "creative options" were being considered, including shifting money from other accounts or tapping other executive authorities for the wall.

Trump on Wednesday floated ideas for a broader immigration overhaul. Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., has suggested a compromise that would include wall funding as well as protecting some immigrants — young "Dreamers" and those in Temporary Protective Status, two programs Trump is eliminating — from deportation.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Matthew Daly, Alan Fram, Colleen Long and Deb Riechmann in Washington and Candice Choi in New York contributed to this report.

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

Asian markets settle after rallying on US-China trade hopes

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 37 of 38

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian markets were mostly lower Thursday as U.S. and Chinese officials wrapped up three days of talks in Beijing without significant breakthroughs.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index, which closed up 1.1 percent on Wednesday, retreated 1.4 percent to 20,141.93. The Kospi in South Korea dropped 0.1 percent to 2,062.49. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.3 percent to 26,394.06, while the Shanghai Composite index was flat at 2,545.05. Australia's S&P ASX 200 lost 0.3 percent to 5,759.80. Shares fell in Taiwan but rose in Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines.

WALL STREET: Stocks rose for the fourth consecutive session after American and Chinese negotiators extended their talks to a third day. Traders took this as a positive sign, but a partial government shutdown at home that appeared far from being resolved limited gains. The S&P 500 index added 0.4 percent to 2,584.96. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.4 percent to 23,879.12 and the Nasdaq composite was 0.9 percent higher at 6,957.08. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks rose 0.9 percent to 1,438.81.

U.S.-CHINA TALKS: Official statements released after the talks, which lasted a day longer than planned, did not indicate if progress was made on a tariffs battle that has shaken global financial markets. China's Ministry of Commerce said there were "detailed exchanges" and both sides would "maintain close contact," without offering specifics. A statement from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said negotiators will "report back to receive guidance on the next steps." The talks come after President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping met and agreed to hold off on more tariffs for 90 days, on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Argentina last month. Investors are hopeful that more and higher-level negotiations will follow.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "While there was agreement on less thorny issues such as agriculture and energy, U.S. demands for verification and enforceable targets on intellectual property rights, transfer of technologies and non-tariff barriers may not be that easily addressed," DBS Group Research strategists Eugene Leow and Neel Gopalakrishnan said in a commentary.

ENERGY: Oil prices settled after hitting their highest levels in almost a month. U.S. crude, which has jumped 15 percent in 2019, dropped 52 cents to \$51.84 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It surged 5.2 percent to \$52.36 per barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gave up 54 cents to \$60.90 per barrel. It climbed 4.6 percent to \$61.44 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar strengthened to 107.90 yen from 108.15 yen late Wednesday. The euro rose to \$1.1565 from \$1.1543.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 10, the 10th day of 2019. There are 355 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 10, 1863, the London Underground had its beginnings as the Metropolitan, the world's first underground passenger railway, opened to the public with service between Paddington and Farringdon Street.

On this date:

In 1776, Thomas Paine anonymously published his influential pamphlet, "Common Sense," which argued for American independence from British rule.

In 1860, the Pemberton Mill in Lawrence, Mass., collapsed and caught fire, killing up to 145 people, mostly female workers from Scotland and Ireland.

In 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the Union.

In 1870, John D. Rockefeller incorporated Standard Oil.

In 1920, the League of Nations was established as the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') went into effect.

In 1946, the first General Assembly of the United Nations convened in London. The first manmade contact with the moon was made as radar signals transmitted by the U.S. Army Signal Corps were bounced off the lunar surface.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 185 ~ 38 of 38

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union address, asked Congress to impose a surcharge on both corporate and individual income taxes to help pay for his "Great Society" programs as well as the war in Vietnam. That same day, Massachusetts Republican Edward W. Brooke, the first black person elected to the U.S. Senate by popular vote, took his seat.

In 1984, the United States and the Vatican established full diplomatic relations for the first time in more than a century.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton, attending a NATO summit meeting in Brussels, Belgium, announced completion of an agreement to remove all long-range nuclear missiles from the former Soviet republic of Ukraine.

In 2000, America Online announced it was buying Time Warner for \$162 billion (the merger, which proved disastrous, ended in December 2009).

In 2002, Marines began flying hundreds of al-Qaida prisoners in Afghanistan to a U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In 2006, Iran resumed nuclear research two years after halting the work to avoid possible U.N. economic sanctions.

Ten years ago: Vice President-elect Joe Biden arrived in Afghanistan, where he pledged long-term American support. Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in cities across Europe and in Lebanon against the Israeli offensive in Gaza. The aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush was commissioned with its namesake, the 41st president, and other members of the Bush family on hand for the ceremonies at Naval Station Norfolk.

Five years ago: The Labor Department reported that U.S. employers added just 74,000 jobs in December 2013. Larry Speakes, who'd spent six years as acting press secretary for President Ronald Reagan, died in Cleveland, Mississippi, at age 74.

One year ago: Immigration agents descended on dozens of 7-Eleven stores nationwide before dawn to check on the immigration status of employees in what officials described as the largest operation so far against an employer under Donald Trump's presidency. The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra said Charles Dutoit had stepped down as artistic director and principal conductor after multiple allegations of sexual assault. After nine terms in the House, California Republican Rep. Darrell Issa announced that he would not seek re-election.

Today's Birthdays: Opera singer Sherrill Milnes is 84. Rock singer-musician Ronnie Hawkins is 84. Movie director Walter Hill is 79. Actor William Sanderson is 75. Singer Rod Stewart is 74. Rock singer-musician Donald Fagen (Steely Dan) is 71. Boxing Hall of Famer and entrepreneur George Foreman is 70. Roots rock singer Alejandro Escovedo is 68. Rock musician Scott Thurston (Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers) is 67. Singer Pat Benatar is 66. Hall of Fame race car driver and team owner Bobby Rahal is 66. Rock musician Michael Schenker is 64. Singer Shawn Colvin is 63. Rock singer-musician Curt Kirkwood (Meat Puppets) is 60. Actor Evan Handler is 58. Rock singer Brad Roberts (Crash Test Dummies) is 55. Actress Trini Alvarado is 52. Rock singer Brent Smith (Shinedown) is 41. Rapper Chris Smith (Kris Kross) is 40. Actress Sarah Shahi is 39. Presidential adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner is 38. American roots singer Valerie June is 37.

Thought for Today: "You got to look on the bright side, even if there ain't one." — Dashiell Hammett, American author (born 1894, died this date in 1961).

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