

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Due to the extreme cold, the Silver Skates annual meeting scheduled for today, March 3, will be postponed to a later date. Please watch for an update and consider attending that meeting.

Sunday, March 3, 2019

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

Death Notice: LeRoy Woods

LeRoy Woods, 78 of Groton and formerly of Garden City passed away March 3, 2019 at Groton Care and Rehabilitation Center. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Bates Township

BATES TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Bates Township will hold its annual meeting and election on Tuesday, March 5th, 2019 at the home of the Clerk, 14523 409th Ave, Conde.

Election of officers and business meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m.

We will be receiving bids for road maintenance and gravel. Please mail bids to

Betty Geist, Bates Township Clerk, 14523 409th Ave., Conde, SD 57434 prior to meeting date.

Betty Geist, Township Clerk

Help Wanted

Looking for a fun, part-time job? Groton Dairy Queen is now hiring. Stop in for an application. (0216.0316)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

- 1- Death Notice: LeRoy Woods
- 1- Help Wanted
- 1- Bates Township Notice
- 2- Pappas takes third at state debate
- 2- Truss Pros is Hiring
- 3- 7th grade boys were champions at the Florence tournament!
- 3- 4th grade girls got 2nd at the Watertown tournament!
- 4- City Council Meeting Agenda
- 5- I "Hate" Winter Party at Groton Care & Rehab
- 6- Rep. Dusty Johnson's Weekly Column
- 7- Sen. John Thune's Weekly Column
- 8- Sen. Mike Rounds' Weekly Column
- 9- Gov. Kristi Noem's Weekly Column
- 10- GFP Commission Proposal Would Allow for Nest Predator Bounty Program
- 10- GFP Commission Proposes Extending Trapping Dates on Public Lands
- 10- GFP Commission Proposes Rule to Allow for Free Hunting Licenses, Park Entrance Licenses
- 11- GFP Commission Proposes Hunt for Habitat: 3 Super Tag Packages
- 11- GFP Commission Proposes Bighorn Sheep Season; Finalizes Mountain Goat
- 12- GFP Commission Proposes to Close Custer State Park Antlerless Elk Season
- 12- GFP Commission Proposes West River Whitetail Special Buck Licenses
- 13- GFP Commission Proposes Mickelson Trail and Park Entrance Exemptions
- 13- GFP Commission Proposes Changes to Specialized State Park Land Use
- 14- SD News Watch: Thousands of S.D. voters don't live where they register
- 21- Potential Record Lows
- 22- Wind Chill Factors This Morning
- 23- Today in Weather History
- 24- Weather Pages
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- 28 - News from the Associated Press
- 58- Keep Your Hearts on Fire for God!

NOW HIRING!

Truss Pros

10954 424th Avenue | Britton, SD 57430

Looking for assemblers - both shifts &
Class A CDL Drivers

New Starting Competitive Wages
Overtime Available

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Comprehensive Health, Dental & Vision insurance
- Life Insurance
- STD
- LTD
- 401k
- Holiday Pay
- Vacation Pay
- Paid Sick Leave
- Referral Bonuses

To apply visit www.uslbn.com/careers or call Diane at 605-448-2929.



Pappas takes third at state debate

Congratulations GHS Debate—
Sam Pappas 3rd place domestic
extemporaneous speaking at the
State Debate Tournament held in
Sioux Falls this weekend. Sage
Mortenson just missed finals in the
7th spot in original oratory! (Photo from

Kristen Gonsoir facebook page)

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7th grade boys were champions at the Florence tournament!

Back row, Coach Tom Tietz, Jacob Zak, Holden Sippel, Logan Ringgenberg, Colby Dunker, and Coach Jesse Zak. Front row, Dillon Abeln, Lane Tietz, and Braxton Imrie. (Photo by Dawn Imrie)



4th grade girls got 2nd at the Watertown tournament!

Back row, Coach Mike Imrie, Avery Crank, Livy Althoff, Brenna Imrie, Leah Jones, Emerlee Jones and Coach Jason Warrington. Front row Ashlynn Warrington, Teagan Hanten, Taryn Traphagen, and McKenna Tietz. (Photo by Dawn Imrie)

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda Tuesday, March 5, 2019 – 7:00pm Groton Community Center

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Minutes
3. Bills
4. Department reports
5. Open garbage bids for a 3-year contract (Terry Herron)
6. 2018 Drinking Water Report (Terry Herron)
7. Planning and Zoning update (Blackmun)
8. City to follow Governor Noem's declaration for state government offices to be closed April 19th and 22nd for Easter
9. Select an Equalization Meeting Date March 18th-22nd
10. 2nd Reading Summer Salary Ordinance #725
11. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
12. Electric Lineman Wage
13. Hire summer employees
14. Adjournment



I "HATE"

WINTER

PARTY

Free Root Beer Floats

Open to the community

Thursday, March 7th

Starting at 2 p.m.



GROTON

CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 North Second Street
605.397.2365

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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



South Dakotans Way of Life

Washington, D.C. has a tendency of making life more complicated for the average South Dakotan. For years – decades, even – modern politicians have claimed to “know better” than the rest of us. I saw this firsthand this week when House Democrats, led by Speaker Pelosi, put forth two bills to restrict our Constitutional right to bear arms.

I’m a proud gun owner and I take my ownership seriously. I also take seriously my responsibility to teach my three sons how to safely use firearms. What I don’t need, and what South Dakotans surely do not need, is the federal government placing more restrictions on our way of life.

These two bills, both of which I voted against, would heavily curb law-abiding citizens’ access to firearms. For example, H.R.1112 would create unnecessary bureaucratic delay by extending the background check determination window from three days to ten. To add icing to the bureaucratic cake, H.R.8 would criminalize almost all gun transfers between private individuals, including some family members. Imagine that. Transferring a family heirloom to a cousin could wind you up in jail.

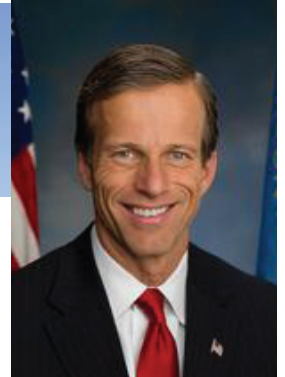
I support safeguards when they make sense – when they protect the general welfare of society and when government action can prevent bad actors from taking advantage of the system. But what I can’t get behind are regulations that infringe upon rights specifically guaranteed to American citizens in the U.S. Constitution. I also can’t support legislation that inherently contradicts our South Dakotan way of life.

South Dakota is boldly leading the way in protecting the Second Amendment. In fact, the first bill Governor Noem signed into law legalized Constitutional Carry throughout the state. South Dakota now joins 14 states who do not require a permit to conceal carry, and instead gives the individual the option to obtain a permit if they choose.

Washington should protect the rights of law-abiding citizens, not those who come to our country illegally. I was proud to cast my vote in support of an amendment which would require U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to be notified when illegal immigrants try to purchase a firearm through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. This amendment passed in the U.S. House, even though 208 Democrats voted against this common-sense change.

It’s true that our country’s Founding Fathers never predicted we would live in an age of instant information access, space exploration and Snapchat, but they did know that the foundation they wrote in the U.S. Constitution would be the basis for everything that was to come after. It is their wisdom, their guidance and their desire to protect our nation from tyranny that continues to deserve unwavering support today. I’ve done a lot of reflecting on the Constitution over the last few weeks, and the Founders were clear: “The right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” It’s time Congress remembers this principle.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Green Nightmare

By now you've probably heard about the Democrats' "Green New Deal," a left-wing smorgasbord of government-knows-best policies that, if enacted, would have a massive effect on the U.S. economy and hit family budgets in states across the country. For American families, it would essentially mean higher taxes, higher energy costs, and less control over their own choices.

What is the Democrats' desired outcome with the Green New Deal, you might ask? Great question. Among their goals is to eliminate all fossil fuels – not just from your car, but your home, the trucks that deliver food to your local grocery store, and the airplanes that get you to and from your vacation destination. All in just ten years, at that.

The Green New Deal mandates "upgrading all existing buildings in the United States and building new buildings to achieve maximum energy efficiency, water efficiency, safety, affordability, comfort, and durability, including through electrification." I'd note that "all existing buildings" would include your house, your kids' school, your place of worship, and your office or place of business.

Some of their proposals will sound familiar. South Dakotans might remember reading headlines like these in their local paper a decade ago: "Farmers, ranchers worry EPA has cow, pig 'sin tax' in store," "Livestock emissions may cost ranchers," or "Thune looking to defeat 'cow tax,'" among others. That's right, the principles of this once-defeated and highly illogical idea that would penalize farmers and ranchers who own flatulent cows (yes, really) are back again.

South Dakotans are smart people, so they know there's no such thing as a free lunch. So when Democrats talk about socialist fantasies like the Green New Deal, they know someone has to pay for them. In this case, the Democrats' suggestion that you rid yourself of gasoline vehicles and retrofit your home with solar panels is an expense that would fall not to the government officials who've come up with these ideas, but to you the taxpayer.

The Green New Deal isn't cheap either. The price tag for implementing it is estimated to cost – you might want to sit down for this – as much as \$93 trillion over just 10 years. To put that into perspective, \$93 trillion is more money than the federal government has ever spent. And I don't mean more than it's spent in one year or 10 years or even 100 years, I mean in the history of the United States.

As an example of just how absurd that is, if the government took every family that makes more than \$200,000 and taxed them at 100 percent for 10 years – taking every penny they earned – Democrats still wouldn't have enough money to pay for their green dream, which is actually more like a green nightmare. That means the enormous burden of covering the cost of this plan would fall on nearly every single American.

Confronted with some of these realities, plus political blowback, Democrats are starting to back away from their Green New Deal. Some are even trying to claim that voting on it – their own proposal – which is something Republicans, who would oppose it, are willing to accommodate, would be nothing more than a political show vote. I know, how is voting on something you support a show vote? I don't know either.

At the end of the day, count me as someone who believes human activity has some degree of an effect on the planet, but I also believe we need to be smart about how we address it. Clean air and clean water are the lifeblood of South Dakota's agricultural, hunting, and tourism sectors, and our state is a leader in clean energy, with hydroelectric and wind creating 75 percent of our energy. I'm always willing to work together on common-sense, cost-effective ideas, but the \$93 trillion Green New Deal is not one of them.

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South Dakota Leads the Way in Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs provide students with the academic and technical training necessary to work in specific jobs such as a trade or craft. This includes programs such as welding, ranch management, dental assisting, bookkeeping, telecommunications, web programming and automotive technology. The Senate recently passed a resolution to highlight the importance of CTE programs across the nation.

In South Dakota, we are home to four high-caliber technical institutions that offer a range of certificates and two-year degrees: Lake Area Technical Institute, Southeast Technical Institute, Mitchell Technical Institute and Western Dakota Technical Institute. In 2017, Lake Area Technical Institute won the Aspen Institute Award for the best two-year campus in the nation. This year, Mitchell Technical Institute is a finalist for the award. All four campuses play a vital role in educating our students and contributing to the health of South Dakota's economy.

Oftentimes, CTE programs partner with local businesses and community leaders to tailor their programs to meet the needs of the local economy. In South Dakota, we also have tools available to help provide students with financial assistance in exchange for working in South Dakota for a period of time following graduation. This includes the Dakota Corps Scholarship Program, which we created while I was working as governor, as well as BUILD South Dakota, a scholarship program specifically for technical education students funded by a donation from T. Denny Sanford.

According to the South Dakota Board of Technical Education, 84 percent of recent tech graduates stay in South Dakota. Additionally, more than 97 percent were "employed, pursuing further education or serving in the armed forces six to eight months after graduation," according to a recent survey. There are also more than 750 CTE programs offered to middle and high school students across the state, with more than 30,000 students currently enrolled.

With the economy in full swing, employers are looking to fill jobs of all skill levels, including highly-technical, highly-skilled jobs that CTE programs can help them fill. This leads to good-paying jobs for workers looking to support their families and thrive in the modern workforce.

Last summer, the president signed into law H.R. 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. This law makes important updates to career and technical education to give both workers and students the skills they need to find high-skill, high-wage or in-demand jobs.

Among other things, it reauthorizes the Perkins CTE Act to encourage states, schools and local CTE providers to update education and job training. It will also help these entities make certain we have the tools and resources they need to remain competitive in the 21st Century. H.R. 2353 also strengthens partnerships with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to promote collaboration between stakeholders so local businesses can better communicate their needs as education programs are being developed. I was pleased to support this effort

As our economy continues to grow and jobs are created, providing students with the skills they need to fill our workforce demands is critically important. This month, we pay a special tribute to the CTE programs across the state that play a vital role in our education system. They provide a crucial link between students, businesses, local governments and communities that will help us compete in a global economy.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



Making South Dakota an Example to the Nation

The Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution says "All powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

This means the founders intended power to default to the states. The federal government is more limited than state government, which means we can be laboratories of democracy. We can learn which policies work best for our country through trial and error at the state level.

South Dakota is a small state in terms of population and GDP, but we're nimble. We have a responsive state government that does more with less. This set of characteristics allows us to take innovative approaches when it comes to issues like economic growth, meth, or dealing with the Indian Health Service (IHS).

Late last month, I went to Washington, DC for the National Governors Association meeting. This was the first time I had the honor to represent our state on the national stage among other governors and national leaders. The time was filled with meetings on issues that many states are dealing with – like education and workforce. I also had the opportunity to meet with President Trump several times and visit with cabinet officials one-on-one to improve the partnership between state and federal governments. It was my goal to listen and learn, but to also begin developing the expectation that South Dakota can, and will, be a leader in innovative policies that will serve as an example to other states and the federal government.

Here are two examples.

First, I met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar about adding flexibility to existing federal programs in South Dakota so we can combat our meth epidemic. I explained to him that while opioids dominate national headlines, South Dakota needs to shift federal dollars from opioids to confront our meth issue. I'm optimistic that our conversation will result in added flexibility on federal programs that could target both opioid and meth concerns.

Secretary Azar and I also discussed ways we can address the failing IHS. For years, people have looked the other way while IHS facilities provide third-world care to tribal members. In the last few years, babies have been born on bathroom floors with no doctor present. Medical personnel performed operations with lapsed certifications. People died because there were no doctors available at hospitals. This is unacceptable. We're working with the feds to launch pilot programs and pursue additional coordinated care agreements that increase access and expand services. Today is a new day for South Dakota's state-tribal relationship, and I hope I can work with the tribes to continue finding ways to make improvements.

Second, I visited with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie about South Dakota's longstanding commitment to military service. As we continue working to make Hot Springs America's "Veteran's Town," I invited him to see the town first hand. When Secretary Wilkie does so, he will fully understand the impact our veterans have on our state and the ways we want to develop that for the next generation of military men and women.

Many say Washington is broken, and I'm the first to agree that there are parts that seem dysfunctional. But I had positive meetings in Washington with governors and federal officials that are looking for solutions and opportunities to implement successful policies. Some of our best ideas start in the states. It's my hope that South Dakota leads the way.

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South Dakota

GAME, FISH AND PARKS



GFP Commission Proposal Would Allow for Nest Predator Bounty Program

PIERRE, S.D. – Earlier this week, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed a rule outlining the new Nest Predator Bounty Program as outlined in Governor Noem's Second Century Initiative.

If approved, the framework for the bounty program would include:

Eligible species: raccoon, striped skunk, opossum, badger or red fox.

Open to South Dakota residents only.

Animals must be harvested in South Dakota by the resident participant.

If under the age of 18 years old, a parent or legal guardian must submit the electronic bounty form on behalf of the youth.

Information on the electronic bounty form must be true and accurate.

These provisions are necessary to allow conservation officers to enforce the bounty program.

The GFP Commission will consider adopting the proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

GFP Commission Proposes Extending Trapping Dates on Public Lands

PIERRE, S.D. – With the launch of Governor Noem's Second Century Initiative, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed to extend the existing rule to allow the use of traps and snares on public lands and improved rights-of-ways through August 31.

Current rule allows for trapping on these lands through May 1.

The proposal would require owners of traps and snares to actively operate and check their equipment in accordance to trap-check rules.

The GFP Commission will consider adopting the proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

GFP Commission Proposes Rule to Allow for Free Hunting Licenses, Park Entrance Licenses

PIERRE, S.D. – Also this week, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed to authorize the department secretary the opportunity to issue a free state park entrance license or small game hunting license as part of a digital crowdsourcing effort to find habitat management solutions across the state.

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As part of this process, any member or the public whose idea is implemented would receive a free state park entrance license or small game hunting license. Constituents with habitat improvement ideas should visit the South Dakota Habitat Solutions Facebook page or submit ideas via email to habitatpays@state.sd.us.

The GFP Commission will consider adopting these proposals on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

GFP Commission Proposes Hunt for Habitat: 3 Super Tag Packages

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed to create three super tag license packages earlier this week as another part of Governor Noem's Second Century Initiative.

Each license package would include a tag for one any elk, any deer and any antelope. In addition, the creation of one Custer State Park trophy bison license was also proposed.

Both residents and nonresidents would be eligible to submit applications for these super tags, but no more than one of the three license packages could be issued to a nonresident. Both residents and nonresidents would be eligible to submit applications for the trophy bison license.

A \$10 application fee is being proposed for residents and a \$20 application fee is being proposed for nonresidents. An unlimited amount of applications can be submitted.

Preference points would not be accrued for super tags. Super tag winners would be able to choose the current or following year for when their tag(s) would be valid.

The GFP Commission will consider adopting the proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

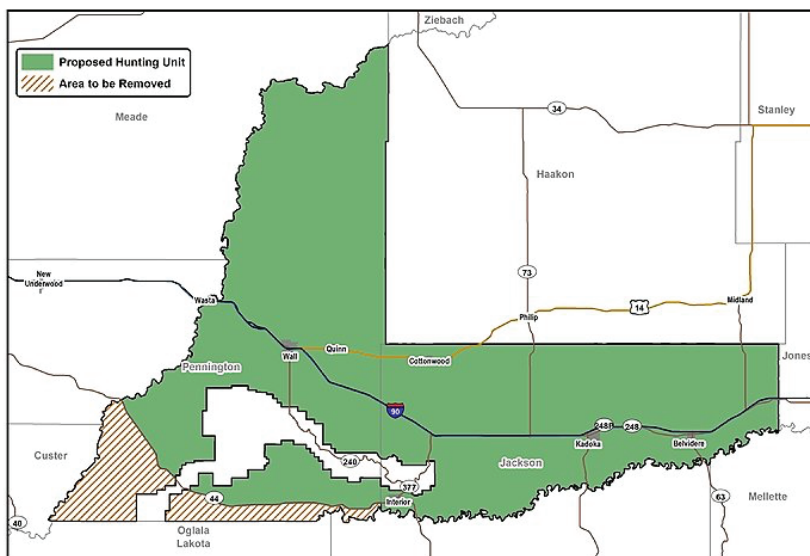
GFP Commission Proposes Bighorn Sheep Season; Finalizes Mountain Goat

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission, proposed a slight change to the Unit 3 boundary for the 2019 bighorn sheep hunting season by removing an area south and west of Badlands National Park.

The proposed hunting season would run Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019, and have four ram bighorn sheep licenses available. One of the three bighorn sheep licenses continues to be allocated as an auction tag.

The GFP Commission proposed no changes to the 2019 and 2020 mountain goat hunting season. By rule, these seasons are finalized with dates of Sept. 1 – Dec. 31 for 2019 and 2020. Two any mountain goat licenses will be available each season.

The GFP Commission will consider adopt-



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ing the bighorn sheep hunting season proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

GFP Commission Proposes to Close Custer State Park Antlerless Elk Season

PIERRE, S.D. – A proposal by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission would close the antlerless elk hunting season in Custer State Park (CSP) with a current elk population estimate of approximately 552 elk.

The population objective for CSP elk is 800 wintering elk and will generally range from 700-900 depending on habitat conditions.

The antlerless season opened in 2017 to allow the department to learn more about several areas of the CSP elk herd, including: Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), concerns of over-utilizing forage, and to evaluate future management actions. With the recent dispersal of elk from this antlerless unit and no identified management response actions if CWD reaches a certain threshold, there is no need for this season.

The GFP Commission will consider adopting the proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

GFP Commission Proposes West River Whitetail Special Buck Licenses

PIERRE, S.D. – A proposal by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission would give deer hunters another option for the 2020 deer hunting season and beyond.

The proposal would establish a special any whitetail deer license for both residents and nonresidents in the West River deer hunting season. This license would be valid only on private land.

The cost of the new license would be \$169 for residents and \$554 for nonresidents.

The proposal calls for an allocation of 4 percent of the total resident West River deer licenses that includes an any whitetail deer tag from the previous year or 500 for each for resident and nonresident hunters; whichever is greater.

Other stipulations within this proposed season would be:

If a person successfully draws a special any whitetail deer license the licensee will not be able to apply for a West River deer license in the first and second deer license drawings.

If a person successfully draws a West River deer license they may not apply for a leftover special any whitetail deer license.

Applicant must have permission from an owner or lessee of private land before applying.

Applicant for special any whitetail buck must also include the name and phone number of the owner or lessee providing permission.

The GFP Commission will consider adopting the proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

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GFP Commission Proposes Mickelson Trail and Park Entrance Exemptions

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed several rule changes related to entrance and use fees that would expand opportunities in state parks across the state.

The Commission proposed exempting the Mickelson Trail pass requirement for past and present military personnel along with their family and guests if participating in an approved military group event held on the trail. It would include South Dakota military veterans, members of the South Dakota National Guard and military reserve units, patients of veterans' hospitals in South Dakota and family members and guests attending the event. Event organizers would need to complete an online special event application before the event.

The change would officially include the Mickelson Trail in a rule that provides the same benefits in all other state park areas, which was implemented three years ago.

The proposal would also eliminate a \$15 late fee on the Mickelson Trail, which could be charged if a user was on the trail without current pass. With the late fee eliminated, users would be required to immediately purchase either a daily or annual trail pass at regular cost.

The Commission also proposed exempting any enrolled Crow Creek tribal member and their family from the park entrance license requirement at West Bend Recreation Area.

Another proposal would set the expiration of a daily park entrance license at 11 p.m. year-round. This would extend use hours and replace the 9 p.m. expiration currently in place during the parks' shoulder season (October through April).

The GFP Commission will consider adopting this proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

GFP Commission Proposes Changes to Specialized State Park Land Use

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed rule changes that impact state park land use, including commercial use, .22 firearms and tree stands.

The Commission proposed a fee structure for permitting commercial activities in South Dakota State Parks. Examples of typical for-profit commercial activity are commercial photography and filming, food vendors, kayak lessons, horseback and bicycle tours, rock climbing schools and concerts. Commercial users would need to secure a permit and pay applicable fees. The proposal would also remove agricultural activity from the permitting requirement, as it is already required by statute and therefore redundant.

The Commission also proposed repealing a rule that prohibits uncased .22 rimfire firearms in the state parks, opening up the opportunity for hunters to pursue small game during legal hunting seasons.

Another proposed change would extend the time that tree stands are allowed in state parks. The proposed timeframe would be from Aug. 1 to March 31, allowing earlier installation of tree stands to accommodate archery hunters and to allow extra time to remove them due to weather restraints. The current rule allows tree stands from Aug. 25 to Feb. 15.

A proposed rule change regarding the time limit for occupying a campsite would not change the rule, but seeks to eliminate confusion. The phrase used to describe the time limit would change from 15 consecutive days to 14 consecutive nights to be consistent with use elsewhere in rule.

The GFP Commission will consider adopting this proposal on April 4-5 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. To comment in person, the public hearing will be held April 4 at 2 p.m. MDT. Individuals can comment online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing) per HB 1006.

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**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

Thousands of S.D. voters don't live where they register

By: Bart Pfankuch

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

Thousands of people who don't live in South Dakota have become state residents, registered to vote and cast ballots in elections, which some lawmakers and election officials fear could unfairly alter elections.

State election officials say they are aware that people are claiming on voter registration forms to live at an address where they do not, but a lack of enforcement of state laws allows it to continue, South Dakota News Watch has found.

In Pennington County, about 6,300 voters are registered to a single rural address where it is clear no one resides; about 1,400 people are similarly registered to vote from a business address in Hanson County.

Some county auditors say they routinely approve voter registration forms, signed under penalty of perjury by applicants, which they believe contain false information about where the applicant resides. A top election official in the Secretary of State's Office said she is aware of voter registration discrepancies but has not been ordered by a court to challenge questionable registration applications.

Critics worry that lax state residency requirements and the hands-off approach to voter registration enforcement have heightened the potential for voter fraud and election tampering in South Dakota.

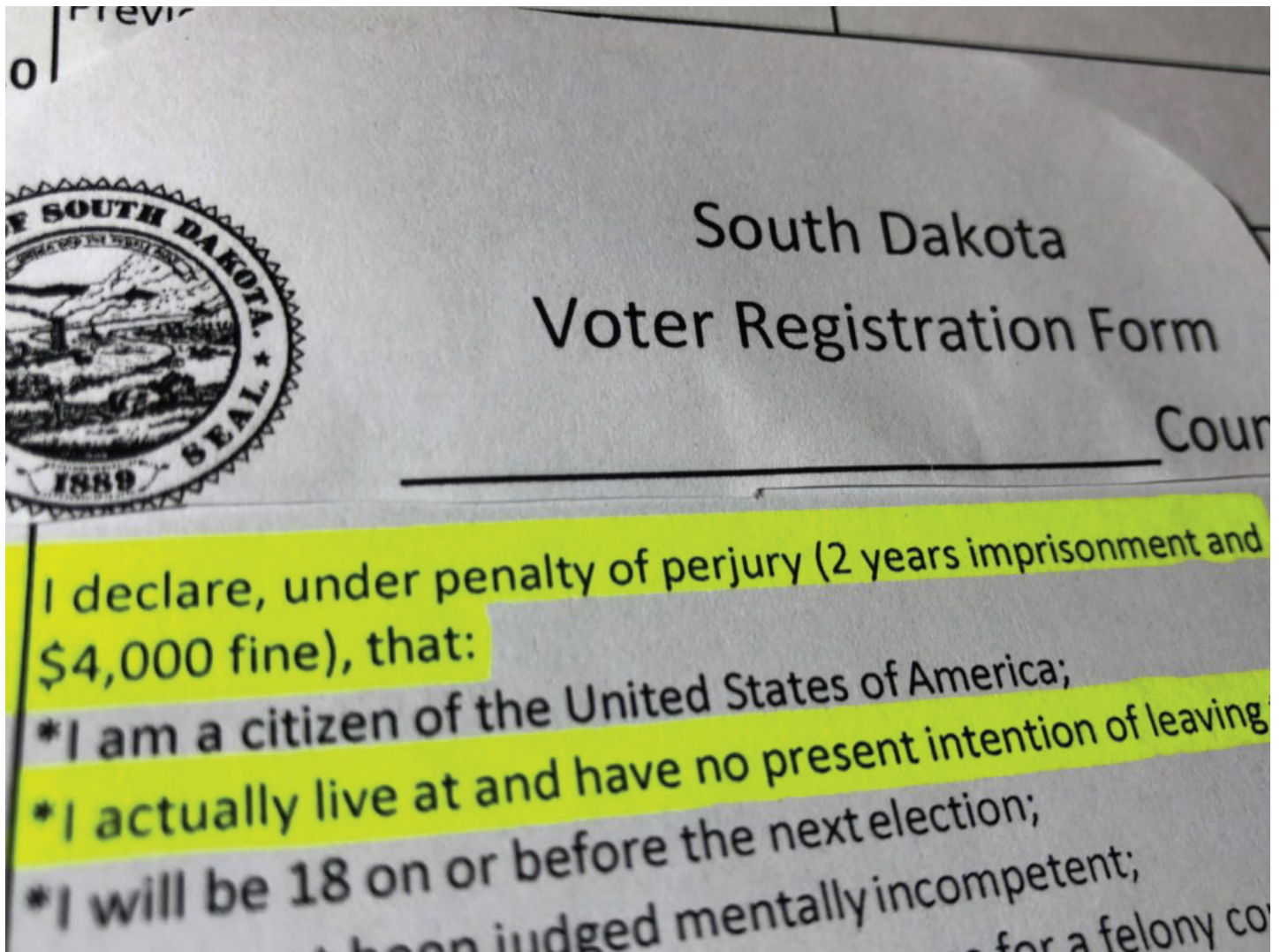
The questionable nature of voter registration came to light in the ongoing court case involving incorporation of the town of Buffalo Chip in Meade County. After reviewing the case, a judge wrote a report confirming that a handful of people who claimed residency and registered to vote at the Buffalo Chip campground admitted at a public meeting that they do not live there.

Daniel Ainslie, city manager of Sturgis, which opposes the Buffalo Chip incorporation, said the voter registrations at the campground are evidence of how the current system is flawed and potentially open to fraud.

"This is about voter integrity; we're talking about people registering to vote in a state or a locale where they do not live," Ainslie said. "What I'm worried about as a South Dakotan is that this is such a small state that it's not hard for major parties to go over to Minneapolis or somewhere else and register 5,000 people to vote in South Dakota and flip a state legislative race or congressional election."

Ainslie said he is shocked that state officials have been unwilling to address the flaws in the voter registration system. "It's unbelievable to me if we allow that to occur," he said.

State lawmakers considered a bill to tighten voter registration laws this session, but despite some concerns over potential election fraud, the measure died in its first committee.



People who register to vote in South Dakota must sign a form under threat of perjury and possible prison time on which they affirm that they live at the address listed. Thousands of people, however, are registered to vote in South Dakota but do not actually live here.

Lack of enforcement across the state

Many of the questionable voter registrations result from businesses that allow non-residents, often retirees traveling the country in recreational vehicles, to easily register to vote at the same time they register a vehicle and establish residency in South Dakota. People who register a vehicle and get a driver's license in South Dakota can establish residency if they have a receipt showing they spent one night in the state. Some mailbox businesses have an RV park or motel rooms on site to make that process easier. The services performed by mail-forwarders all appear to be legal under state law.

Once a person establishes residency, registering to vote only requires filling out and signing a one-page form.

However, the voter registration form requires the signee to affirm that, "I actually live at and have no present intention of leaving the above address." The form states that an applicant who perjures themselves could face two years in prison and a \$4,000 fine.

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Pennington County Auditor-elect Cindy Mohler said she and other auditors have been instructed by the state that unless someone formally challenges the registration of a voter, they should continue to approve signed registration forms from any location in the county.

"We don't police that and we don't do research on this person to say have they really stayed there," Mohler said. "We are taking the voter at their word."

Mohler oversees a voting precinct in Box Elder where more than 6,300 people are registered to vote at the address of a mail forwarding company called Americas Mailbox, located on Americas Way.

"You could use somebody else's address, whether it's Americas Way or Cindy Mohler's backyard," she said. "When forms come in to our office, we have no way of knowing if you ever stayed. We have no way of proving that."

A circuit judge who reviewed the Buffalo Chip incorporation case in 2016 was convinced that voter registrations had been improperly filed.

In his findings of fact and law, former Fourth Circuit Judge Jerome Eckrich ruled that voters who registered at lots on the campground site were not living there. "The 'lots' referred to in the voter registration form are just raw ground," Eckrich wrote.

The judge also found that, "No one actually lives at the residence addresses identified on the Meade County Voter Registration forms."

One address in the East River town of Emery is home to between 1,100 and 1,400 registered South Dakota voters, though none of them live at that location, said Hanson County Auditor Lesa Trabing. The legal voters at that address – home to the mail forwarding business My Home Address – make up roughly three times the total number of residents of Emery, which has a population of about 450.

Those registered voters form the largest voting precinct in the county, making up a third or more of the 3,300 active voters in the county, Trabing said.

All of the voters registered at that address must sign the registration form under the threat of perjury.

Whether they live at that address or not, Trabing said that as long as the paperwork is filled out and signed, she certifies the applicants as legal voters.

"The state knows about this and they say continue to register them," she said.

Trabing said she does not know of a time the Emery motor-voters had an impact on an election, and added that no one has ever legally challenged their voter registration. She said she knows of several other South Dakota businesses that are registering vehicles and voters.

"These places are popping up all over; it's a common thing anymore," Trabing said.

On its website, My Home Address spells out for potential customers the advantages of registering a vehicle and gaining residency in South Dakota.

In a section called "Why South Dakota?" the primary answer is that the state has no personal income

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tax or personal property tax on vehicles. Further, it states that the one-time excise tax on vehicles is only 4 percent, that there are no vehicle inspections required. Another section notes that South Dakota does not have an inheritance tax.

Other mail forwarding services – such as Dakota Post and Your Best Address in Sioux Falls and Americas Mailbox in Box Elder – provide customers with similar reasons to register vehicles or obtain residency in South Dakota.

In an FAQ tab on the My Home Address webpage, the question, “Do I need to travel to South Dakota to become a resident?” is answered with the statement, “No!!!! You can establish your address and register your vehicle through the mail, but you will need to travel to South Dakota to obtain your driver’s license.” The fees to have mail forwarding and other services at My Home Address start at \$150 a year and rise depending on services selected.

Bruce Kjetland, president of My Home Address in Emery, serves on the Hanson County Commission and said he has examined local voter data that he said show his mail-forwarding customers do not have an impact on local elections.

“They don’t vote in school board or county commission races, but some voters will vote in legislative races and for president,” Kjetland said.

My Home Address follows all state laws and does not encourage customers to register to vote when they sign up for mail forwarding, get a driver’s license or establish residency, said Kjetland, a Republican.

“We’re not here pushing that ‘Hey, you better go register to vote and vote Republican,’” Kjetland said. “We just do our job and help the customer do what they want to do.”

Kjetland said his clients are often traveling the country in recreational vehicles and simply need a home base and a place to establish residency. He said the registration fees paid by his clients generate about \$450,000 a year in revenues that are split between the state and Hanson County.

“Their domicile is where they’re at because they kind of live all over, but they use South Dakota as their main address,” Kjetland said. “It’s great for South Dakota because they live everywhere but we get the money because they register here.”

Kea Warne, director for the division of elections within the South Dakota Secretary of State’s Office, said she is aware of the risks associated with mail-forwarding services and high levels of non-local voters registering there.

“They could maybe vote in someone different, and that could be an RVer,” she said. “They vote to not let a wheel tax go through, or a bond election. The precinct in Hanson County could change the outcome of that election.”

At this time, there’s no way to know how many people are registered to vote in places they do not live. Other data can help fill out the picture, however.

About 60,000 out-of-state vehicles are registered in South Dakota, according to Wade LaRoche, a spokesman for the state Department of Revenue. Meanwhile, revenues from vehicle title and registration fees have doubled over the past decade, from \$88.3 million in 2009 to \$176.7 million in 2018, LaRoche said.

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Other than a few weeks a year during the Sturgis motorcycle rally, the land around the Buffalo Chip Campground is largely vacant. A judge ruled that people who registered to vote at the campground address did not live there. Photo: Bart Pfankuch

Perjury threat doesn't stop registrations

Warne said her office regularly fields phone calls from people who are registering to vote in South Dakota but get worried when they see the declaration of address and the perjury statement on the registration form.

"We get a lot of calls from RVers and they ask how they can legally sign that voter registration form," Warne said. "We can't give them any guidance, but they know they're signing under penalty of perjury. If they are not living there, they are perjuring themselves with the information they are providing on that form."

Yet Warne and other elections officials say they do not know of any registration challenges or criminal charges being filed against someone who misrepresents their residency on a voter registration form.

"That's never been challenge in court, so unless there's a court ruling challenging it, a county auditor who receives a voter registration and everything is complete and goes through all verification checks, the county auditor has to process that application," she said.

The Secretary of State's Office was hoping that the state Supreme Court or the judge in the Buffalo Chip case would rule in a way that gives finality that it is illegal to register to vote at an address a person does not live, though that did not happen, Warne said.

"We were hoping the Supreme Court would say that you can't just camp one night and register to vote, that either yes, they can come in and camp at the location and register to vote, or else they can't," Warne said. "We were hoping we would get a determination on that."

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Americas Mailbox is a mail-forwarding and vehicle registration business in Box Elder, and is one of several South Dakota businesses that provide quick residency to clients. Many of those clients then go on to register to vote at the business address even though they don't live there. Photo: Bart Pfankuch

“Just the thought that people can start hopping around to vote in Rapid City because they're interested in the civic center expansion and then vote in Yankton because they're interested in the pool referendum there. There may be people in Meade County who would like to vote in Rapid City to raise taxes to pay for a civic center that could benefit them, and that would be legal.”

- Sturgis City Attorney Greg Barrier.

Election, voter fraud a national concern

Concerns over voter registration policies in South Dakota come as questions about the fairness and sanctity of American elections continue to permeate the national discourse.

Voter fraud and election tampering are at the heart of an ongoing dispute in North Carolina in which the state recently set a new election after allegations that absentee ballots were manipulated to give one candidate an advantage.

In a sparsely populated state like South Dakota, it isn't hard to find elections where a few fraudulent votes could swing an election. In 2018, seven legislative races were close enough to warrant a recount, and some county races came down to one or just a few votes.

A 2012 report by the Pew Center on the States highlighted serious flaws in the process of accurately and fairly registering voters across the country.

Titled "Inaccurate, Costly and Inefficient," the study discovered that one in eight voter registrations in the United States, about 24 million, were no longer valid. The study found that 2.75 million people were registered to vote in more than one state, and that 1.8 deceased people were still listed as registered voters.

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The report concluded that voter registration methods are outdated and have not kept up with modern technology and are "plagued with errors and inefficiencies that waste taxpayer dollars, undermine voter confidence and fuel partisan disputes over the integrity of our elections."

One element of the South Dakota registration form authorizes cancellation of voter registration in another area but provides no directions on how to do that or assurances it will take place.

South Dakota also places no time limit on how long someone must stay registered at a specific address, said Sturgis City Attorney Greg Barnier.

That means someone who had a position on issues far from where they live could simply register to vote in that area and cast a ballot there, Barnier said.

"Just the thought that people can start hopping around to vote in Rapid City because they're interested in the civic center expansion and then vote in Yankton because they're interested in the pool referendum there," he said. "There may be people in Meade County who would like to vote in Rapid City to raise taxes to pay for a civic center that could benefit them, and that would be legal."

Some state lawmakers are aware of the potential for abuse of the South Dakota voter registration system.

Rep. Tom Brunner, R-Nisland, filed House Bill 1129 this session to require that in order to register to vote, a person must actually live in South Dakota. Current law states that a voter must obtain residency 30 days prior to an election, but is somewhat vague on how legal residency is determined.

Existing law related to residency for voter registration states, "the term, residence, means the place in which a person has fixed his or her habitation and to which the person, whenever absent, intends to return." The "whenever absent, intends to return" language in the law has sometimes been cited by those who don't believe that a person must live in South Dakota in order to vote here.

Brunner's bill would strike that language and add stronger language requiring that, "a qualified elector may have only one residence, shown by an actual fixed permanent dwelling, establishment, or any other abode to which the person returns when not called elsewhere for labor or other special or temporary purposes."

Brunner said he brought the bill after constituents neighboring uninhabited properties grew concerned that the owners of those properties could improperly vote in local elections. He said the language is modeled after a residency law in North Dakota.

"We've got some issues where people don't have a residence and ... they're not an established resident in an area and they're affecting the vote and outcome of elections," Brunner told the House State Affairs Committee in early February.

The bill was opposed by Warne, who said the "special or temporary purposes" language was too broad and placed an unwieldy burden on county auditors to interpret what special purposes might be.

The committee voted 10-3 to kill the measure but not before lawmakers, including House Speaker Steven Haugaard, R-Sioux Falls, expressed concerns that South Dakota elections could be subject to fraud if residency changes aren't made.

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"I agree there's a high potential for some districts, where a handful of votes make a difference, so we need to give this attention very quickly," Haugaard said, noting that he's heard of situations where groups of like-minded people were bussed into an area to register to vote in order to unfairly swing an election.

"I know there are abuses that take place in a lot of states. It hasn't been quite so much here yet, but it's on the horizon," said Haugaard, who suggested voter registration would be a suitable topic for a summer legislative study.

ABOUT BART PFANKUCH

Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal. Bart has spent almost 30 years as a reporter and editor.



Potential Record Cold March 3rd, 2019

Location	Forecast and (Record) Cold Lows Sunday Morning	Forecast and (Record) Cold Highs on Sunday
Aberdeen	-23° (-15° in 1916)	-4° (5° in 1978)
Watertown	-20° (-20° in 1916)	-4° (4° in 1978)
Pierre	-17° (-11° in 2014)	1° (5° in 1960)
Mobridge	-19° (-22° in 1916)	-1° (4° in 1989)
Sisseton	-16° (-10° in 2002)	-2° (8° in 1978)
Timber Lake	-20° (-19° in 1917)	-2° (1° in 1989)
Kennebec	-14° (-18° in 2014)	0° (5° in 1989)
Wheaton, MN	-18° (-10° in 2014)	-1° (6° in 2014)

Records may fall Sunday, both lows and highs, across the area. Take a look!

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12HR Min Wind Chill (°F)

Bullhead 10 S

Corson 2175ft

-53

Eureka 13 ENE	-50	Holabird	-48
Barnard 5 W	-46	Danforth 5 E	-46
Vivian 12 N	-45	Aberdeen 9 NW	-44
Selby	-44	Watertown Muni AP	-43
Onida 1 W	-43	Lantry 3 NW	-43
Frederick 6 WSW	-42	Pierre Muni AP	-42
Sisseton Muni AP	-41	Aberdeen Rgnl AP	-41
Aberdeen 7 W	-41	Sisseton 2 E	-41
Graceville 2 W	-41	Wallace 4 SW	-40
Highmore 1 NNW	-40	Mobridge Muni AP	-40
Shambo Ranch 2 NNW	-39	Wheaton Muni AP	-39
Webster 3 S	-38	Ortonville Muni AP	-37
Ipswich	-37	Eureka	-35
Odessa 1 W	-32	Groton	-31

valid as of Sun Mar 3rd 08:29 am - NWS Aberdeen

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Today in Weather History

March 3, 1994: The melting of a very high snowpack resulted in flooding along the James River, as well as other lowlands and farmland. Widespread problems included damaged roads, washed out culverts, and flood damage to homes, especially basement flooding.

1896: The temperature in downtown San Francisco, California fell to 33 degrees, which was the lowest ever for the city in March.

1966: An F5 tornado hit Jackson, Mississippi killing 54 persons.

1980 - A coastal storm produced 25 inches of snow at Elizabeth City, NC, and 30 inches at Cape Hatteras NC. At Miami FL the mercury dipped to 32 degrees. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1983 - The last of a series of storms to strike the California coast finally came to an end. Waves fifteen to twenty feet high pounded the coast for two days, and in a four day period up to 18 inches of rain drenched the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara area. On the morning of the first, thunderstorms spawned two tornadoes which moved through the Los Angeles area. (Storm Data)

1987 - A storm brought heavy rain and gale force winds to Washington and Oregon. Quillayute WA received 2.67 inches of rain in 24 hours, and winds gusted to 60 mph at Astoria OR. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A small but intense low pressure system roared across west central Mississippi at 90 mph early in the morning. A tornado in southern Mississippi picked up an automobile, carried it 150 feet, and tossed it through the brick wall of an unoccupied retirement home. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Wintry weather prevailed from the southern Rockies to the Upper Great Lakes. Neguanee MI received 19 inches of snow, and up to 24 inches of snow blanketed Colorado. Blizzard conditions were reported in Minnesota. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

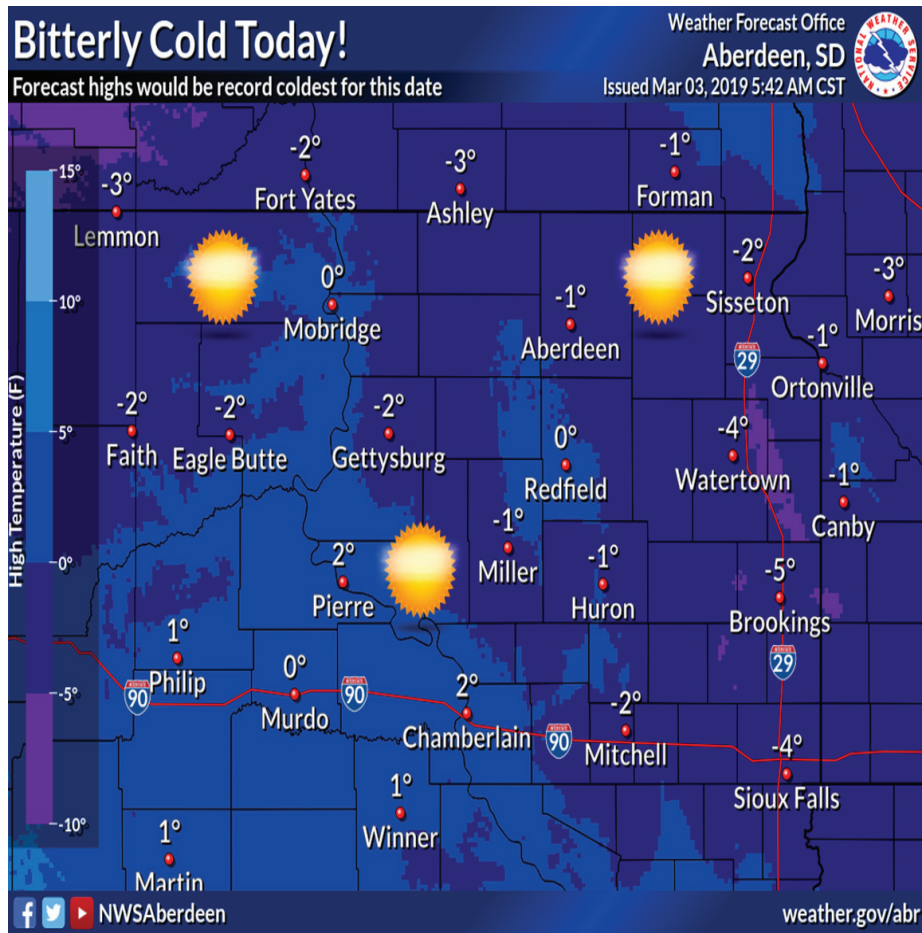
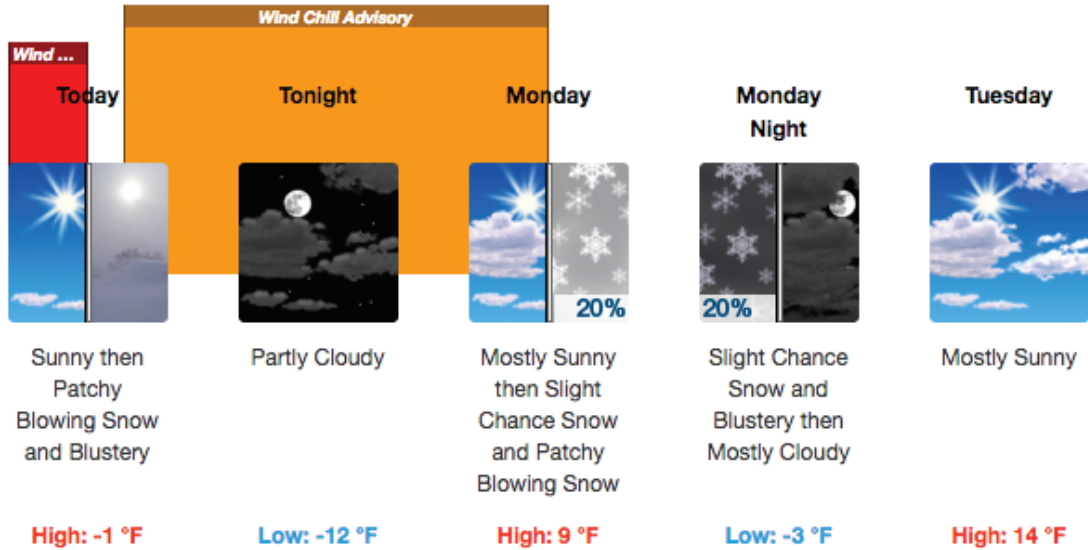
1990 - An upper level weather disturbance produced snow in the Colorado Rockies, with eight inches reported at Winter Park, and a storm moving off the Pacific Ocean began to spread rain and snow across the western U.S. March continued to start off like a lamb elsewhere around the country. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1991: A major ice storm coated parts of central and northwestern New York State with up to two inches of ice. Damage was totaled at \$375 million dollars. It was the most costly natural disaster ever in the state up until that time. Nearly half a million people were without power at the height of the storm and many would not see their power restored until the 16th.

2003 - It was a day of temperature extremes. Miami reached a high temperature of 90 degrees, the earliest observed 90 degree temperature since March 5, 1964. Meanwhile Marquette, MI, dropped to 30 degrees below zero, the lowest temperature ever recorded in the city in March.

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Arctic air will remain in place across the region today, along with breezy northwest winds. Dangerously cold wind chills from 35 below to 50 below zero will be felt across the area this morning, only slightly increasing to 25 below to 35 below zero this afternoon. Actual high temperatures will only rise into the single digits above and below zero. The current forecast highs today would be record coldest high temperatures ever recorded for this date.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 3 °F at 10:38 AM

Low Outside Temp: -17 °F at 4:15 AM

High Gust: 21 mph at 2:51 PM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 72° in 1905

Record Low: -15° in 1916

Average High: 34°F

Average Low: 14°F

Average Precip in Mar.: 0.06

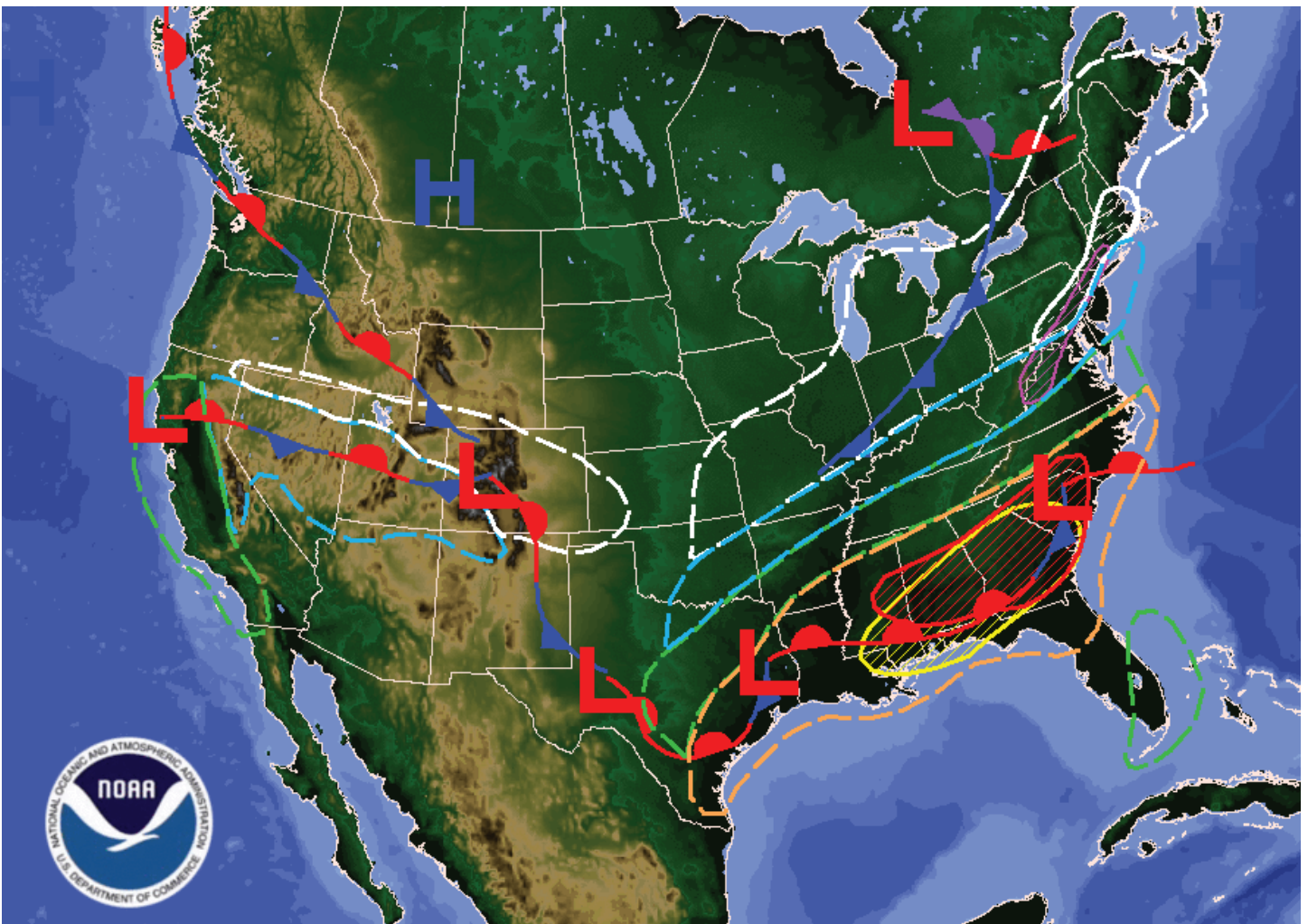
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.08

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 6:23 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:07 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Mar 03, 2019, issued 2:30 AM EST

DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center

Prepared by Hamrick with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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

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THE VALUE OF WISDOM

Can we put a price on wisdom?

We do that with property and stocks, technology and education. It seems that everything in our world has some value to someone. Some things are more valuable than other things. And almost everything is worth something to someone.

Solomon had just about everything anyone could want. Perhaps, he was simply thinking about things one day and gave some great advice: You know what? he said. Get wisdom! Why? Because wisdom is more profitable than silver, it yields better returns than gold and is more precious than rubies. Nothing compares to it, because it leads to a long and peaceful life, riches, honor and pleasant paths. Oh, those who embrace wisdom will be blessed.

What a return on a simple investment! When we invest in the things of this world, we have no assurance that we will ever see their value grow. Often, the opposite happens. And, if our investments exceed our expectations, what will we gain in the end? Will it include any of the benefits or gifts that Solomon describes? Or, who can prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that any of the things the world has to offer will bring any happiness?

Years ago I had a friend who advised me: Larry, you always know how wise a man is by whose advice he listens to and follows. I discovered he was and is right.

God, through Solomon, gave us great advice. Over the years it has proven to be accurate, trustworthy and reliable. To follow it has endless rewards!

Prayer: Lord, there is no better investment, if we want eternal returns, than to pursue Your wisdom and ways. Give us Your strength to do this. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 3:14 For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 03/17/2019 Groton American Legion Spring Fundraiser
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 06/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 06/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 06/21/2019 Best Ball Golf Tourney
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 08/22/2019 First Day of School
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 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
- 11/09/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course 2019 Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services

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News from the  Associated Press

Ponca Tribe fighting 2 states and a city to keep new casino

By MARGERY A. BECK, Associated Press

CARTER LAKE, Iowa (AP) — Some 150 years after suffering the loss of its homeland at the hands of the U.S. government, the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska is celebrating a triumph with the opening of a casino intended to secure a stream of revenue for the long-struggling tribe.

The only thing standing in its way? An effort by governments in Iowa and Nebraska that seeks to strip it of the casino.

"It's the same fight, all these years after it began," said Ponca Tribal Chairman Larry Wright.

The \$10 million Prairie Flower Casino opened in November with 200 slot-style machines after the National Indian Gaming Commission approved the tribe's casino license a year earlier, some 10 years after the tribe began its effort to open the casino. It's far from a novelty in the area: Three much larger casinos are just a few miles away, also in western Iowa. Yet the casino's location is central to the opposition to it, including lawsuits from the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and the states of Iowa and Nebraska.

Unlike most other tribal casinos, the Prairie Flower wasn't built on a reservation. The Ponca Tribe — forced in the 1870s by the U.S. government to leave its homeland along the Missouri River in Nebraska River — has no reservation. The U.S. government terminated the tribe in the 1960s and took its remaining land as part of a policy that sought to abolish reservations and assimilate Native Americans into mainstream American society. The tribe regained its federal recognition in 1990, and most of its 4,500 members are spread over 15 counties in Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota.

Its casino sits on a 5-acre (2-hectare) lot that the tribe bought 20 years ago in Carter Lake, the only Iowa city on the western side of the Missouri River, which otherwise separates Nebraska and Iowa. Carter Lake had originally been on the east side of the river, but thanks to shifting and flooding in the late 1800s, it's now surrounded by the city of Omaha — the largest city in Nebraska, whose constitution expressly forbids casinos.

"The practical result," Nebraska's lawsuit states, "is that Carter Lake is accessible only by traveling through Nebraska, and more specially, through Omaha, which is Nebraska's most populous and densely populated metropolitan area."

The Prairie Flower is essentially in the heart of Omaha, just blocks from the city's downtown and a mile (1.6 kilometers) from its airport.

The lawsuits fault the National Indian Gaming Commission's decision to license the Prairie Flower, saying the tribe misrepresented its intentions when it initially announced plans for a health center on the lot.

But the underlying opposition in Iowa isn't hard to track: It comes down to money and a perceived tug-of-war for patrons such as Helen Syfie, 73, of Omaha, who recently stopped in to play the slots at the Prairie Flower. She said she "couldn't wait" for the Carter Lake casino to open, but she also said she'll still cross the river to go to the Council Bluffs casinos.

"There's plenty of business to go around," she said. "All of them have their own advantages. I really don't think it's going to take anything away from the Council Bluffs casinos."

Iowa officials aren't convinced.

State and local officials don't want to give up any share of the millions in taxes, fees and endowment funds Council Bluffs' three casinos produce. In 2017, that public money came to nearly \$95 million, according to the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, and a large chunk comes from Nebraska residents. A 2013 study ordered by the commission found Nebraska residents spent nearly \$327 million at Iowa casinos, one-quarter of revenues for the state.

"Our early estimates are that the state of Iowa could lose \$30 million in state gaming tax revenue, and we could lose another million in taxes and fees a year locally," said Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsch. "Council Bluffs casinos could, eventually, stand to lose 350 jobs."

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Pat Loontjer, director of anti-gambling nonprofit Gambling With The Good Life, is among those in Omaha fighting to see the Ponca casino shut down.

"The cost to the state will be in the millions when you consider the bankruptcies, embezzlements, increased crime and families torn apart by gambling addiction," she said.

Wright, the tribe chairman, noted that about 80 of the casino's 100 employees are not tribe members. He also said the tribe is paying \$750,000 annually to Carter Lake to offset any safety and infrastructure costs to the city.

"We feel confident in our position," he said. "Regardless to people's opposition to gaming as a whole, it's doing exactly what it was intended to do: Improve support for our services and our people."

Syfie said she hopes the tribe is allowed to keep the casino.

"They worked so long to get it," she said. "Now they're having to work to keep it."

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Class AA SoDak 16

State Qualifier

Brandon Valley 73, Brookings 47

Harrisburg 60, Sturgis Brown 48

Huron 51, Watertown 50

Rapid City Stevens 52, Rapid City Central 51

Sioux Falls Lincoln 68, Mitchell 59

Sioux Falls O'Gorman 68, Aberdeen Central 59

Sioux Falls Roosevelt 71, Sioux Falls Washington 58

Yankton 74, Pierre 33

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Class AA SoDak 16

State Qualifier

Brandon Valley 51, Aberdeen Central 25

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

07-22-23-26-29

(seven, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-six, twenty-nine)

Estimated jackpot: \$141,000

Lotto America

02-10-15-26-49, Star Ball: 8, ASB: 2

(two, ten, fifteen, twenty-six, forty-nine; Star Ball: eight; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$16 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Powerball

01-19-25-27-68, Powerball: 21, Power Play: 2

(one, nineteen, twenty-five, twenty-seven, sixty-eight; Powerball: twenty-one; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$348 million

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Flatten carries S. Dakota St. past W. Illinois 86-66

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Skyler Flatten had 31 points as South Dakota State easily beat Western Illinois 86-66 on Saturday.

Flatten shot 6 for 9 on 3-pointers. He added six rebounds.

Mike Daum had 20 points and 10 rebounds for South Dakota State (24-7, 14-2 Summit League), which earned its fourth consecutive win. David Jenkins Jr. added 12 points. Alex Arians had 11 points for the home team.

Kobe Webster had 17 points for the Leathernecks (9-20, 4-12). Isaac Johnson added 15 points. Ben Pyle had 10 points.

The Jackrabbits improve to 2-0 against the Leathernecks for the season. South Dakota State defeated Western Illinois 100-58 on Dec. 28. The Jackrabbits and the Leathernecks next take the floor in the Summit League Tournament.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

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Peterson lifts South Dakota over North Dakota 78-63

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Tyler Peterson came off the bench to score 17 points to carry South Dakota to a 78-63 win over North Dakota on Saturday.

Cody Kelley had 16 points for South Dakota (13-16, 7-9 Summit League). Triston Simpson added 12 points and six assists. Trey Burch-Manning had 11 points for the hosts.

Cortez Seales had 19 points for the Fighting Hawks (12-17, 6-10). Marlon Stewart added 17 points. Conner Avants had 12 points and nine rebounds.

The Coyotes improve to 2-0 against the Fighting Hawks this season. South Dakota defeated North Dakota 70-56 on Jan. 23. The Coyotes and the Fighting Hawks next take the floor in the Summit League Tournament.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

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Yearning for Zion ex-polygamist ranch in Texas being sold

By JOHN MacCORMACK, San Antonio Express-News

ELDORADO, Texas (AP) — A group of polygamists, with their blond child brides and 19th century doctrine of plural marriage being the pathway to heaven, were forced out their compound here in 2014, and scattered to the west.

The San Antonio Express-News reports their prophet and absolute leader, Warren Jeffs, 63, once on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List, is serving a life sentence in a Texas state prison for raping young girls at the site.

And for most residents of this one-stoplight farming town three hours west of San Antonio, the whole traumatic story that began 15 years ago is fading into history.

But just a few miles north of town, the abandoned Yearning for Zion Ranch looks much like it did when hundreds of followers of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints called it home.

The broad streets, orchards, water treatment plant and more than 40 large buildings, including a mas-

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sive white temple, remain intact and functional.

After years of legal entanglements, the property soon will belong to ETG Properties LLC. The Dallas-area company intends to use it as a military and law enforcement training base.

On a recent flyover, James Doyle, 82, a pilot and former Schleicher County justice of the peace, noted important landmarks.

"That big house down there is where Warren Jeffs lived. He had 15 to 20 wives there," he remarked, pointing out an elongated structure that resembles a small motel.

He also pointed out a huge concrete amphitheater from which Jeffs reportedly planned to address the leaders of the free world after his prison walls crumbled.

And if the fear and anxiety triggered by the arrival of polygamists from Arizona and Utah has ebbed, the unnerving presence of the prophet lingers.

"He is terrible, horrible. He caused a lot of heartache for a lot of kids and other people. He separated wives from their husbands and all kinds of things," Doyle said.

The ranch and all of its improvements were forfeited to the state in 2014 after Jeffs and nine other men were convicted or pled guilty to bigamy and sex crimes committed on the property.

In October, ETG Properties, based in Addison, agreed to buy the ranch for \$4.17 million. While waiting for the sale to close, ETG has been leasing the property for \$5,000 a month.

Already Border Patrol and Department of Defense personnel have come for training, and neighbors are getting used to the sounds of helicopters and other aircraft moving after dark.

Repeated attempts to reach the principals of ETG Properties and related companies were unsuccessful. Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran is the most eager for the story to end.

"This has consumed my life since 2004. There has not been a day that did not involve something to do with this bunch or this land," he said.

For a decade, Doran was the county's liaison with the polygamists and he still maintains contact with one of them.

After the group left in 2014, Doran and his wife Lenette moved into a two-bedroom apartment on the ranch as caretakers.

"It was the cheapest way for the county. At first it was creepy because of everything that happened there. Now there is nothing there that bothers me," he added.

He used inmate labor to maintain the property and structures, once valued at \$34 million on county tax rolls.

During his watch there, the ranch has experienced flooding, a wildfire and scattered attempts to break into the property.

Along the way, he said, he had to learn how everything worked, including the municipal water system.

Before the YFC Ranch turned this small town upside down, people here talked more about cotton, cattle and high school sports.

Doran still remembers the shock of learning that the reclusive polygamists were building a community just to the north.

"It was baptism by fire. We were trying to wrap our minds around what this group was about," he recalled. "Me personally, I barely knew what polygamy was."

On March 25, 2004, as stunned townspeople gathered with Doran outside the courthouse to hear the news, one local woman held up a sign that read "The Devil is Here."

Flora Jessop, an apostate who had left the polygamist colony at Short Creek, Arizona, and Buster Johnson, an official from Mohave County, Arizona, spoke to the crowd.

"They are not a danger to your children. They are a danger to their own children," said Jessop, who said she had 28 brothers and sisters.

Johnson spoke graphically about how the FDLS women received almost no education and some begin bearing children as young teenagers.

Randy Mankin, publisher of the Eldorado Success, the paper of record for the story since 2004, likened

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the polygamist's arrival to that of a UFO.

"It's still fresh to me, like yesterday but I'm one of the old geezers," Mankin said.

"It just felt like a cloud was hanging over the town. No one knew what the future would be. Some people left because they were afraid a group would come and take over," he said.

Things reached a chaotic peak in April 2008, when the state raided the ranch, prompted by an anonymous complaint to Child Protective Services of child abuse. The call later proved to be a hoax, but not before hundreds of women and children were removed.

"There were 13 satellite television trucks parked at the courthouse," Mankin recalls.

More than 400 children were taken into temporary custody by the state. They were returned seven weeks later after the Third Court of Appeals ruled that the state had not met its burden for an emergency removal.

Still, the evidence obtained, including DNA from the children, led to indictments of Jeffs and 11 other men on charges of bigamy and sexual assault.

In August 2011, Jeffs was convicted of aggravated sexual assault of a child and sexual assault of a child. His victims were 12 and 15 years old. He was sentenced to life in prison plus 20 years.

In November 2012, the Texas Attorney General's Office began legal proceedings to seize the ranch. In April 2014, the last polygamists left peacefully and Texas authorities took possession.

As Eldorado's improbable polygamist ordeal is now finally ending, opinions about the place among community leaders differ.

Johnny Griffin, 74, who was county judge through 2008, still thinks the state was wrong to forcefully remove more than 400 children.

"I was really opposed to that whole operation. It was a political stand for (then-Attorney General) Mr. Abbott. He was going to run for governor. In my opinion, it was the worst of the state being Big Brother," Griffin began.

He also disagrees with the state using the criminal convictions of a handful of polygamist men to justify seizing the Yearning for Zion Ranch, and forcing everyone who lived there to leave.

"Why in the hell didn't they leave the mommas and the kids in there, and get rid of the men? When you see your momma get drug off, it's got to affect you. I thought it was terribly handled," he said.

Former County Commissioner Matt Brown, however, thinks that state officials handled the situation appropriately.

"We're just glad that they are gone. There was a lot of turmoil and unrest in the county. When they move in, they can certainly ruin a community," he said.

Brown said that the abuses that occurred within the polygamist community outweigh any arguments about religious liberty or criticism of the state's abrupt removal of the children.

"It was the child abuse and the brainwashing that goes on in that cult. And it's sad that it's still going on. It's pretty much a slave state," he said.

"We're glad to have new owners. We're glad someone was interested in the property and it's being put to good use," he added.

Information from: San Antonio Express-News, <http://www.mysanantonio.com>

Cadaver program seeks more donations of human bodies

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The University of South Dakota program that provides human bodies to schools for anatomy and physiology classes is facing a severe shortage of donors.

Sara Bird, who coordinates the program, told the Aberdeen American News that the program needs 60-65 human bodies to be donated every year to fulfill all requests. She said the program had just 36 bodies at the start of the 2018-19 school year.

The shortage of donations means the program has had to turn away schools, limit requests and reduce the number of students in programs, including at the University of South Dakota, Bird said.

"We understand that this isn't just about USD and our medical school. It's about giving students a strong

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foundation in whatever anatomy course they are trying to access," she said. "We just try the best we can."

People with diseases such as cancer cannot donate organs, but they can still donate their bodies for teaching purposes, Bird said.

"This could be that Plan B and a way for that person to still be able to give back," she said.

Conditions that could prohibit a body donation include morbid obesity, organ donation beyond the eyes, transmittable diseases such as HIV or chronic hepatitis, and severe trauma.

Trisha Waldman, associate dean of health and natural science at Presentation College, said there is an average of five or six anatomy and physiology labs per semester with 16 students in each lab. The school receives two cadavers per year.

"The generous donation of one's body allows medical professionals to gain hands-on experience understanding human anatomy and physiology and the ability to learn and practice skills on human tissue. Most individuals who have sought medical care have benefited from a doctor or health professional who was able to learn utilizing a cadaver," Waldman said.

Bodies remain in the program for about two years before being cremated. Ashes are then either returned to the family or buried at Bluffview Cemetery in Vermillion.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

Milestone: Capsule with dummy aboard docks at space station

By MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A sleek American-built capsule with just a test dummy aboard docked smoothly with the International Space Station on Sunday in a big step toward putting the U.S. back in the business of launching astronauts.

The white Dragon capsule, developed by Elon Musk's SpaceX company under contract to NASA, closed in on the orbiting station nearly 260 miles above the Pacific Ocean and, flying autonomously, linked up on its own, without the help of the robotic arm normally used to guide spacecraft into position.

Dragon is the first American-made spacecraft capable of carrying a crew to pull up to the space station in eight years. If this six-day test flight goes well, SpaceX could launch two NASA astronauts to the orbiting outpost this summer.

"A new generation of space flight starts now with the arrival of @SpaceX's Crew Dragon to the @Space_Station," NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine tweeted. "Congratulations to all for this historic achievement getting us closer to flying American Astronauts on American rockets."

Ever since NASA retired the space shuttle in 2011, the U.S. has been hitching rides to and from the space station aboard Russian Soyuz spacecraft. In the meantime, NASA is paying two companies — SpaceX and Boeing — to build and operate its next generation of rocket ships.

The 27-foot-long (8-meter-long) capsule rocketed into orbit early Saturday from NASA's Kennedy Space Center with an instrumented mannequin in a white SpaceX spacesuit strapped into one of its four seats. The test dummy was nicknamed Ripley after the main character in the "Alien" movies.

Ripley and the capsule are rigged with sensors to measure noise, vibration and stresses and monitor the life-support, propulsion and other critical systems.

As the capsule closed in on the space station, its nose cap was wide open like a dragon's mouth to expose the docking mechanism. In a docking with a crew aboard, the capsule would likewise operate autonomously, though the astronauts may push a button or two and would be able to intervene if necessary.

The three U.S., Canadian and Russian crew members aboard the space station watched the rendezvous via TV cameras. Within hours, the capsule's hatch swung open and the three astronauts floated inside to remove supplies and take air samples, wearing oxygen masks and hoods until they got the all-clear.

Canadian astronaut David Saint-Jacques pronounced the docking flawless and called it "a beautiful thing to see."

"Welcome to the new era in spaceflight," he said.

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Dragon will remain at the space station until Friday, when it will undock for an old-school, "Right Stuff"-style splashdown in the Atlantic, a few hundred miles off Florida.

As part of Sunday's shakedown, the space station astronauts sent commands for Dragon to retreat and then move forward again, before the capsule closed in for good. SpaceX employees at company headquarters in Hawthorne, California, cheered the docking, then burst into applause again when the Dragon's latches were secured.

The two astronauts who are set to fly aboard Dragon as early as July — Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken — witnessed the Florida liftoff, then rushed to Southern California to watch Sunday's action.

"Just super excited to see it," Behnken said minutes after the link-up. "Just one more milestone that gets us ready for our flight coming up here."

Next up, though, is Boeing, which is looking to launch its Starliner capsule without a crew as early as April and with a crew possibly in August.

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New Orleans police: Driver in deadly crash likely impaired

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Police suspect a driver was impaired when he killed two people and injured seven others, most of them riding bikes, on a busy New Orleans thoroughfare as large crowds gathered in the city for Mardi Gras.

Police spokesman Andy Cunningham said in statement Sunday morning that authorities are waiting for the results of a blood alcohol test, but they believe the suspect was impaired at the time of the deadly crash Saturday evening.

He identified the suspect who was arrested at the scene as 32-year-old Tashonty Toney and said he was the son of a New Orleans police officer.

Cunningham says that discovery will not change the department's investigation which he said will be "open and transparent."

Saturday was Toney's birthday, the news release said.

Toney faces two counts of vehicular homicide, seven counts of vehicular negligent injury, hit and run, and reckless operation, the release said.

The crash happened along a multiple-block stretch of Esplanade Avenue, a leafy street that connects the city's biggest park with the French Quarter. The scene was close to the route of the Endymion parade, one of New Orleans' largest Mardi Gras parades, that was held Saturday.

New Orleans Police Chief Shaun Ferguson told a news conference late Saturday that despite the crash's proximity to the parade route, "we do not believe at this point in time that this has anything to do with the Endymion parade."

Police said most of the victims were bicyclists, and photographs of the scene showed mangled bikes along the side of the street.

Police Superintendent Shaun Ferguson told local media that bystanders in the area were the ones who stopped the driver.

"We were able to apprehend the subject so quickly because citizens stopped this individual, because they thought they were helping someone who had just been involved in a one-car accident," Ferguson said.

One witness, cyclist Frank Rourk, told The New Orleans Advocate that he saw a driver of a dark sports car spin out on the median. The driver ran to a nearby corner and laid down on the sidewalk where he lost consciousness.

Rourk and two other people were able to wake the driver, and Rourk, who initially didn't realize anyone was hit, told the driver: "I'm pretty sure you're the guy who wrecked the car. You better go back there." The driver then asked whether he had killed anyone.

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EMS spokesman Jonathan Fourcade said a man and a woman — both about 30 years old — were killed. EMS Director Emily Nichols told WVUE-TV that three of the five people brought to the hospital were in critical condition.

One onlooker, Dane Barrymore, told The New Orleans Advocate that he was smoking a cigarette outside a market when he saw a dark sports car speeding down the street. The driver swerved into the bike lane to try to go around a vehicle.

"It just happened there were people there - bicyclists," Barrymore said. Barrymore said he saw two women and one man get struck. He said he went to help but it quickly became apparent that one of the women and the man didn't survive.

US, South Korea end spring military drills to back diplomacy

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** and **LOLITA C. BALDOR**, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea and the U.S. are eliminating their massive springtime military drills and replacing them with smaller exercises in what they call an effort to support diplomacy aimed at resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis.

The decision announced by both countries Sunday came after President Donald Trump complained about the cost of joint drills even as his high-stakes second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un collapsed last week.

The drills' cancellation is an olive branch to North Korea, which has viewed them as an invasion rehearsal. But some experts say it will likely weaken the allies' military readiness amid worries that tensions erupt again in the wake of the failed nuclear summit in Vietnam.

The Pentagon said in a release that the U.S. and South Korean defense chiefs decided to conclude the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle series of exercises. It said the allies agreed to maintain firm military readiness through newly designed command post exercises and revised field training programs.

Acting U.S. Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan and South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo "made clear that the alliance decision to adapt our training program reflected our desire to reduce tension and support our diplomatic efforts to achieve complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a final, fully verified manner," the statement said.

Seoul's Defense Ministry released a similar statement.

Jeong expressed his regrets at the lack of agreement at the Trump-Kim summit but still hopes that Washington and Pyongyang will continue negotiations, the South Korean statement said.

The new training, dubbed "Dong Maeng," which means "alliance" in English, starts Monday and runs through March 12. It will focus on "strategic operational and tactical aspects of general military operations on the Korean Peninsula," South Korea's military and the U.S.-South Korean combined forces command said in a joint statement.

According to U.S. officials, the new training will be done in smaller drills, tabletop exercises and simulations, and will involve smaller units such as battalions and companies rather than massive formations involving thousands of troops, as they had in the past.

Officials said the Pentagon would focus on smaller exercises and mission essential tasks, which include the ability to integrate airstrikes and the use of other weapons systems, drones, surveillance assets, logistics and communications.

In November, a month before he resigned as defense secretary, Jim Mattis disclosed that the U.S. and South Korea would scale back and tone down the spring exercises. He said the aim was to avoid setting back diplomacy over North Korea's nuclear weapons. He described it as a reorganization of the exercises, not an end to maneuvers on the peninsula.

Trump has long complained about the cost of military drills with South Korea.

After his second summit with Kim ended without any agreement in Hanoi on Thursday, Trump spoke again about the cost of annual military drills. "It's a very, very expensive thing and we do have to think about that, too," Trump told reporters.

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Following his first summit with Kim in Singapore last June, Trump caught many in the United States and South Korea by surprise by suspending the allies' summertime military drills. He called joint drills "very provocative" and "massively expensive."

The United States and South Korea also have since suspended a few other smaller joint drills.

Trump has also pushed South Korea to increase its financial contribution for the cost of the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in the country as deterrence against North Korea. He previously threatened to withdraw troops from South Korea and Japan if those countries refused to pay more.

The end of the springtime war games will benefit North Korea, which has responded with its own costly military exercises and weapons tests, including firing a new intermediate-range missile over Japan in 2017.

North Korea's state media on Sunday didn't immediately comment on the drills' cancellation.

After the Hanoi summit, the United States and North Korea blamed each other for the breakdown of the talks. But both sides stopped short of pulling out of negotiations.

The Korean Peninsula remains in a technical state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Baldor reported from Washington.

Trump delivers a slashing speech that rouses the right

By KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. (AP) — In a slashing speech packed with braggadocio and grievance, President Donald Trump denounced Democrats as the party of "the socialist nightmare," relitigated his crowd sizes back to the inauguration and took on "sick," "lunatic" and "dirty" foes at every turn, earning him the unvarnished adoration of cheering conservatives.

After a trying week of tumult and setbacks, Trump delivered a stemwinder Saturday that extended beyond two hours and hardly left him winded.

Trump let loose against House Democrats, who are broadening their investigations of him, predicted he would win re-election by a greater margin than his 2016 victory, taunted his potential White House challengers and sounded themes that are staples of his rallies. He complained often of getting "no credit" for his achievements as he proudly drifted "off script" at the Conservative Political Action Conference.

His comments capped a week that saw his nuclear summit with North Korea's leader collapse without an agreement, his former lawyer deliver damaging congressional testimony about his character and business practices and Congress take action to nullify his emergency declaration to secure money for the border wall that lawmakers have denied him.

On the stage, he was a prideful and at times profane figure as he complained that past political appointments had allowed a situation where political foes were trying to take him out with "bullshit."

Trump reached back to old criticisms of his ex-attorney general, mocking Jeff Sessions' Southern accent and calling him "weak and ineffective."

It took him more than an hour to get to the message that Republicans and members of his administration have been emphasizing in recent weeks as they try to brand Democratic policy ideas as socialism.

"America will never be a socialist country," he said. "Socialism is not about the environment, it's not about justice, it's not about virtue." He said it's about "power for the ruling class."

For every prepared line like that, there were multiple improvisations from a president on policy and personality.

"That's how I got elected — by being off script," Trump said early in his speech as the crowd roared its approval.

He took particular delight in going after the Democrats' Green New Deal, brought forward by some liberal Democrats in Congress and backed to varying degrees by several of the party's 2020 presidential candidates.

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"I think the New Green Deal or whatever the hell they call it — the Green New Deal — I encourage it," Trump said mockingly as he wound up for a round of exaggeration. "I think it's really something that they should promote. They should work hard on it. ... No planes, no energy. When the wind stops blowing that's the end of your electric. Let's hurry up. Darling, is the wind blowing today? I'd like to watch television, darling."

He returned to the topic again and again, and jokingly kicked himself for doing so, saying it would give the Democrats time to back away from it. He also turned the topic into an attack of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and one of the top Democratic contenders for president.

"I'm going to regret this. This speech should have been delivered one year from now, not now, damn it." Trump said. "I should have saved the Pocahontas thing for another year because that destroyed her political career and now I won't get a chance to run against her. I don't want to knock out all of the good stuff and wind up with somebody who's actually got talent."

Trump also went after Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, essentially accusing him of being a drag on the economy.

"We have a gentleman that likes raising interest rates in the Fed. We have a gentleman that loves quantitative tightening in the Fed. We have a gentleman that likes a very strong dollar in the Fed," Trump said. "...With all of that, we're doing great. Can you imagine if we left interest rates where they were?"

Trump defended his declaration of a national emergency to obtain wall funding beyond the \$1.4 billion that Congress approved for border security. He said the order doesn't set a bad precedent for future administrations because Democrats are "going to do that anyway, folks. The best way to stop that is to make sure I win the election."

Trump continued to bask in his 2016 victory and the crowds that attend his events. He talked of how few gave him a chance to win.

"I think we're going to do even better in 2020," Trump said.

When he made his prediction of a second term, the crowd responded with chants of "USA, USA, USA."

He also took a lengthy detour back to the inauguration, claiming that an enormous if not unprecedented crowd showed up, contrary to the thorough video and photo coverage that showed otherwise.

Trump revisited his meeting with North Korea leader Kim Jong Un, calling their summit "very productive." He also took another crack at explaining his remarks that he didn't believe Kim knew about or would have allowed the death of Otto Warmbier, the American college student who was held prisoner in North Korea, then sent home in a vegetative state. His remarks were widely criticized and led the Warmbier family to say they held Kim and his regime responsible for their son's death.

"I'm in such a horrible position because in one way I have to negotiate. In the other way, I love Mr. and Mrs. Warmbier and I love Otto. And it's a very, very delicate balance," Trump said.

With special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation seemingly approaching its end, Trump spoke of the "collusion delusion" and lashed out at newly empowered House Democrats who are opening new inquiries involving him.

"This phony thing," Trump said of the Russia probe, "looks like it's dying so they don't have anything with Russia there, no collusion. So now they go in and morph into 'Let's inspect every deal he's ever done. We're going to go into his finances. We're going to check his deals. We're going to check' — these people are sick."

House Democrats are undertaking several broad new investigations that reach far beyond Mueller's focus on Russian interference in the 2016 election and possible collusion between Russians and the Trump campaign. So far, Mueller has not brought any public charges alleging a criminal conspiracy between the campaign and Russia; the investigation continues.

Their efforts increased this past week after Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, appeared before two House committees and a Senate committee. In his public testimony before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Cohen called the president a "con man" and a "cheat" and gave Democrats several new leads for inquiry.

Trump likes 'actings,' experts say permanent staff is better

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan has been to Europe, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Mexican border as part of his bid to land the job permanently. Acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney was one of just two top advisers to join President Donald Trump for dinner with North Korea's Kim Jong Un. As acting environmental chief, Andrew Wheeler spent months advancing proposals to ease emission limits for power plants, cars, and oil and gas facilities before Trump nominated him to lead the agency for the long term.

Trump opened his third year in office with a Cabinet that included an outsize number of secretaries and other advisers with "acting" in front of their titles, including the attorney general. Trump doesn't seem to mind, and the temporary job status has not kept these officials from diving into their jobs, representing the United States around the world and conducting business alongside the president. But good-government experts and others say it's important to install permanent people in top jobs to maintain stability.

"Actings are not long-termers," said Paul Light, a federal government expert.

Trump has had an acting defense secretary, chief of staff, budget director and ambassador to the United Nations since the beginning of the year. The Senate last week confirmed Wheeler to lead the Environmental Protection Agency after he spent seven months in an interim role, and Trump has nominated acting Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to head that department, where he's been serving in an interim role since December. William Barr is the new attorney general, after the post was filled for three months by Matthew Whitaker in an acting capacity.

Trump says placeholder officials give him more "flexibility." But flexibility for what? Neither Trump nor the White House has fully explained.

"My 'actings' are doing really great," Trump said earlier this year. "David (Bernhardt) is doing great at Interior. Mick Mulvaney is doing great as chief of staff. But I sort of like 'acting.' It gives me more flexibility. Do you understand that? I like 'acting.' So we have a few that are 'acting.' We have a great, great Cabinet."

He recently told a TV interviewer: "It's easier to make moves when they're acting."

Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, which advocates for more efficiency in government, said having too many acting leaders creates "unbelievable uncertainty." Stier said people seek government employment not just to serve the president but to work for specific leaders.

"People coming in might not know who their boss will be," he said. Turnover at the top can also make it harder to fill second- and third-string jobs.

Trump is also known to quickly turn on aides he once praised, which has contributed to high levels of turnover inside the White House and throughout the government.

Two years into his four-year term, Trump is already on his third national security adviser and third White House chief of staff. Several Cabinet secretary slots, including at the State, Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs departments, also turned over in Trump's first two years.

And it isn't just the top jobs Trump has had difficulty filling. Some second- and third-tier jobs are also vacant, including the deputy secretary positions at the Homeland Security and Housing and Urban Development departments. Trump has left scores of other positions throughout government unfilled in favor of a leaner bureaucracy.

He has signaled that he is in no rush to replace his "acting" secretaries, perhaps viewing them as more inclined to support him, especially if they hope to land the jobs permanently.

"Given how quickly Trump sours on the people who work for him, this approach gives him flexibility to decide how long he wants these officials around," said Chris Lu, who was the White House Cabinet secretary under President Barack Obama. "It also keeps people on their toes and ensures loyalty."

Light, a professor at New York University's school of public service, said the law limits the amount of time an "acting" official can serve to about seven months. He said it gives presidents flexibility to get someone into a job quickly and also replace that official quickly with a Senate-confirmed candidate, rather than hold jobs open for indefinite periods of time.

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Light added that "actings" often aren't viewed as having the same level of authority as a Cabinet secretary who has been approved by the Senate.

Shanahan, who was the deputy defense secretary, has had the "acting" job since Jan. 1. It remains unclear whether Trump will nominate Shanahan to succeed Jim Mattis, who resigned over policy disagreements with Trump, or ultimately pick another candidate. That leaves the Pentagon with an acting secretary for just the third time in its history, and for the first time since 1989.

Trump has publicly praised Shanahan, who used a recent Oval Office appearance to return the compliment.

As Trump prepared to sign papers directing the Pentagon to create a new military branch dedicated to space, a Trump idea that Shanahan supports, the president yielded the floor to Shanahan.

"This is a historic moment," he told Trump.

AP National Security Writer Robert Burns contributed to this report.

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Looking beyond Mueller, Democrats cast investigative nets

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Emboldened by their new majority, Democrats are undertaking several broad new investigations into President Donald Trump and setting the stage for a post-Robert Mueller world.

Whether the special counsel's final Russia report is damning of the president or not, Democrats in charge of a half-dozen House committees are planning to flood the administration with document requests, calls for testimony and even subpoenas if necessary. The investigations reach far beyond Mueller's focus of Russian interference and collusion in the 2016 campaign.

The Democratic efforts increased this past week after Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, appeared before two House committees and a Senate committee. In his public testimony before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Cohen called the president a "con man" and a "cheat" and gave Democrats several new leads for inquiry.

The stepped-up oversight could eventually lead to, or even serve in place of, impeachment proceedings. While many liberal members of the Democratic caucus think impeachment is warranted, Democratic leaders have been cautious, saying they first want to investigate.

A look at the status of some of the House investigations:

HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

The committee is reopening and expanding an investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election that the Republican majority closed last year. At that time, Republicans said, over Democratic objections, that there was no evidence to show that Trump's campaign colluded or conspired with Russia. The top Democrat on the committee then, California Rep. Adam Schiff, said Republicans had prematurely closed the matter without interviewing key witnesses and demanding important documents.

Schiff is now chairman, and last month he announced a broad new investigation looking not only at Russian interference but also at Trump's foreign financial interests. Schiff said the investigation will include "the scope and scale" of Russian intervention in the 2016 presidential election, the "extent of any links and/or coordination" between Russians and Trump's associates, whether foreign actors have sought to hold leverage over Trump or his family and associates, and whether anyone has sought to obstruct any of the relevant investigations.

The committee interviewed Cohen in private on Thursday and will finish the interview this coming Wednesday. After Cohen left, Schiff announced that the committee will hold an open hearing later this month with Felix Sater, a Russia-born executive who worked with Cohen on an ultimately unsuccessful deal to build a Trump Tower in Moscow.

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HOUSE OVERSIGHT AND REFORM COMMITTEE

This committee was in the spotlight when Cohen testified publicly last Wednesday. The chairman, Maryland Rep. Elijah Cummings, said afterward that he wanted to call in several people mentioned repeatedly by Cohen. That could include Trump Organization chief financial officer Allen Weisselberg and possibly two of Trump's children, Donald Trump Jr. and Ivanka Trump.

The committee's jurisdiction touches on all parts of government. On Friday, Cummings demanded that the White House turn over documents by Monday related to security clearances after The New York Times reported that the president ordered officials to grant his son-in-law Jared Kushner's clearance over the objections of security officials. Last Tuesday, the committee voted to subpoena administration officials over family separations at the southern border.

The committee is also looking into other conflict of interest issues within the administration, including at Trump's hotel in Washington, and into prescription drug prices.

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The House Judiciary Committee would be in charge of impeachment, but the chairman, New York Rep. Jerrold Nadler, first wants to examine Mueller's report, whenever it comes out. Nadler has helped lead the charge to pressure the Justice Department to release the full report to the public.

He has also hired two veteran lawyers and Trump critics as the committee gears up to investigate the department and review Mueller's final conclusions. The lawyers, Barry Berke and Norman Eisen, have been retained on a consulting basis.

Nadler said when he hired them that the committee was determined to "ask critical questions, gather all the information, judiciously assess the evidence, and make sure that the facts are not hidden from the American people."

The committee also called in the former acting attorney general, Matthew Whitaker, and plans to question him again in the coming weeks. Whitaker is a close Trump ally who had criticized the Mueller report before he was appointed. William Barr has since been confirmed as attorney general.

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The chairman, Massachusetts Rep. Richard Neal, is expected to eventually try to obtain Trump's tax returns, which the president has refused to release. But for now, Neal is taking it slow.

The law says the treasury chief "shall furnish" the requested information to members of the committee for them to examine behind closed doors. But reality is more complicated, and the request could end up in a lengthy court battle between Congress and the administration.

Last month, Neal held a hearing in which experts discussed the authority under current law for Neal to make a request for any tax returns to the treasury secretary. The hearing also examined proposals to compel presidents and presidential candidates to make years of their tax returns public.

HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The committee's head, California Rep. Maxine Waters, has focused on Deutsche Bank, the German asset management firm that has loaned Trump's real estate organization millions of dollars over the years. She said this past week that the bank is cooperating with requests for documents.

The committee is working with Schiff, who along with Waters has said he wants to investigate whether Russians used laundered money for transactions with the Trump Organization. Trump's businesses have benefited from Russian investment over the years, and Schiff has said he wants to know whether "this is the leverage that the Russians have" over Trump.

Waters said she is also interested in looking at Trump's embattled charitable foundation that is shutting down after agreeing to a court-supervised process and at White House budget director Mick Mulvaney's tenure at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. She has said Mulvaney may be called to testify.

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HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The chairman, New York Rep. Eliot Engel, is also working with Schiff and his committee to review Trump's encounters with and connections to Russian President Vladimir Putin, including a private meeting between the two in Helsinki last year. Trump would not disclose the full details of what was said in their meeting.

The two committees have worked with House lawyers to figure out the appropriate way to investigate that meeting. That could include getting information from a translator who attended.

Engel has said that the committee will hold hearings "on the mysteries swirling around Trump's bizarre relationship with Putin and his cronies, and how those dark dealings affect our national security."

The committee is also looking at the administration's policy toward Saudi Arabia and response to the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Democratic presidential candidates marking Selma anniversary

By **ERRIN HAINES WHACK, AP National Writer**

SELMA, Alabama (AP) — Several Democratic White House hopefuls are gathering at one of America's seminal civil rights sites on Sunday to pay homage to that legacy and highlight their own connections to the movement.

Sens. Cory Booker of New Jersey and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who already are in the 2020 race, and Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who could soon join them, are scheduled to participate in events surrounding the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" in Selma, Alabama.

On March 7, 1965, peaceful demonstrators were beaten back by Alabama state troopers as they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge. It was a moment that galvanized support for the passage of the Voting Rights Act later that year.

This year's commemoration comes in the early days of a Democratic primary that has focused heavily on issues of race. Several candidates have called out President Donald Trump as a racist while others have voiced support for the idea of reparations for the descendants of enslaved black Americans.

The candidates visiting Selma intend to highlight how civil rights have shaped their narratives.

Booker, who announced his candidacy at the start of Black History Month, is the keynote speaker at Brown Chapel AME Church for a service before the symbolic bridge crossing later in the day.

He has spoken of himself as a direct beneficiary of the civil rights era after his family was denied housing in a white neighborhood. In January, Booker traveled through Georgia with Georgia Rep. John Lewis, an Alabama native and civil rights leader who was nearly killed in Selma 54 years ago.

Sanders attended the 1963 March on Washington where Lewis spoke and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. Sanders has highlighted his civil rights and activist background as a young man at the University of Chicago. He is working to reset his relationship with black voters, with whom he struggled to connect in the 2016 Democratic primary that Hillary Clinton won.

Clinton also is set to attend commemoration events in Selma.

Brown, currently on a "Dignity of Work" tour inspired by King, is returning to Selma for the fifth time. He frequently draws connections between civil rights and worker's rights. A former secretary of state in Ohio, Brown also has a reputation as a leader on expanding voter participation.

The backdrop of Selma provides a spotlight on voting rights. Advocates say the gains achieved as a result of "Bloody Sunday" have been threatened in recent years, particularly by the 2013 Supreme Court decision gutting the landmark Voting Rights Act.

Voter suppression emerged as a key issue in the 2018 midterm elections in states such as Georgia and North Carolina, where a Republican congressional candidate was accused of rigging the contest there through absentee ballots. House Democrats signaled they plan to make ballot access a priority in the new Congress, introducing legislation aimed at protecting voting rights in 2020 and beyond.

Whack is The Associated Press' national writer on race and ethnicity. Follow her work on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/emarvelous>

Sanders returns to NY roots, says he can defeat Trump

By JUANA SUMMERS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Bernie Sanders kicked off his presidential campaign Saturday miles from the rent-controlled apartment where he grew up in Brooklyn and forcefully made the case that he is nothing like fellow New Yorker Donald Trump, proclaiming himself the Democrat best prepared to beat the incumbent in 2020.

"My experience as a child, living in a family that struggled economically, powerfully influenced my life and my values. I know where I came from," Sanders boomed in his unmistakable Brooklyn accent. "And that is something I will never forget."

The Democrats in the 2020 race have taken varied approaches to Trump, with some avoiding saying his name entirely, while others make implicit critiques of his presidency. Sanders has never shied from jabbing Trump in stark terms, and during his speech at Brooklyn College, he called Trump "the most dangerous president in modern American history" and said the president wants to "divide us up."

The Vermont senator positioned himself in opposition to Trump administration policies from immigration to climate change. Beyond the issues themselves, Sanders, who grew up in the heavily Jewish neighborhood of Flatbush in a middle-class family, drew a stark contrast between himself and the billionaire in the White House who hails from Queens.

"I did not have a father who gave me millions of dollars to build luxury skyscrapers, casinos and country clubs," said Sanders, who has lived in Vermont for decades. He pegged his allowance as a kid at 25 cents a week.

Sanders also said he "did not come from a family of privilege that prepared me to entertain people on television by telling workers, 'You're fired.'"

"I came from a family who knew all too well the frightening power employers can have over every day workers," he added.

More than 200 miles away in suburban Washington, Trump reveled in his 2016 victory and said Republicans "need to verify it in 2020 with an even bigger victory."

While Trump didn't mention Sanders explicitly in a two-hour speech, he railed against the policies of "socialism" in a continued attempt to portray Democrats as out of touch with ordinary Americans. Sanders is a self-described democratic socialist.

"Socialism is not about the environment, it is not about justice, it is not about virtue. It is only about one thing - it is called power for the ruling class," Trump said. "We know the future does not belong to those who believe in socialism"

Speaking at the same conference Friday, Vice President Mike Pence called Sanders an "avowed socialist."

Sanders enters the race at a moment that bears little resemblance to when he waged his long-shot bid in 2016. Democrats have been mobilized by the election of Trump and are seeking a standard-bearer who can oust him from office. Many of Sanders' populist ideas have been embraced by the mainstream of the Democratic party. The field of Democrats that he joins includes a number of liberal candidates, most notably Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who share similar sensibilities.

As Sanders launched his campaign in Brooklyn, Warren was campaigning in Waterloo, Iowa and was questioned repeatedly about Sanders. Though the two have been friends since before they came to the Senate, Warren did not endorse Sanders in 2016, a decision that angered his supporters.

"I'm going to be blunt - we can't go back and relitigate 2016," she told a voter who asked why she declined to back Sanders. "We've gotta keep our focus on how we're going to win in 2020."

Later asked by reporters how she'll distinguish herself from Sanders, she said she would focus on issues, and emphasized the need for the Democratic field to stick together.

"The way I see it, I got plenty to talk about as it is — about the structural change we need in this country and laying out how we can do this. This is hopeful. People come and they hear what's broken, that we can fix it and that we do it together."

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Sanders' rally was his first campaign event since announcing a week ago that he would run against Trump for the White House. Sanders will make his first trip to the leadoff caucus state of Iowa next week, with plans to campaign in Council Bluffs, Iowa City and Des Moines. He is headed to the early state of Iowa

Hours before his speech in Brooklyn College's East Quad, a line of supporters snaked down the snowy streets.

A reggae band played before Sanders spoke, and he was introduced by a number of supporters including Nina Turner, the former Ohio state senator who is a co-chair of Sanders' campaign this year, and Shaun King, the writer and civil rights activist.

King cited Sanders' participation in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, when he was a student at the University of Chicago.

"This is the origin story of an American revolutionary," King said of Sanders, who will return to Chicago on Sunday evening for a second campaign rally, where he's expected to further highlight his own activism.

Paul Crewdson, 37, of Brooklyn, came to the rally carrying a hand-drawn cardboard sign that read, "Win Michigan, Win Ohio, Win Wisconsin."

"I think this was the reason that Democrats lost in 2016," he said.

As he began his speech, Sanders himself hinted at how he sees the race, a campaign that runs beyond the battlegrounds. "This is a 50-state campaign," he said. "We will not concede a single state to Donald Trump."

This version of the story is corrected to say that Pence spoke Friday at the conservative conference, not Thursday.

Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe in Waterloo, Iowa, and Kevin Freking and Zeke Miller in Oxon Hill, Maryland, contributed to this report.

No charges for police who shot 22-year-old California man

By DON THOMPSON, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Two Sacramento police officers won't face criminal charges for the fatal shooting of a black man following a chase that ended in his grandparents' yard and started a series of angry protests that roiled California's capital city, the county's top prosecutor announced Saturday following a nearly yearlong investigation.

Officers Terrance Mercadal and Jared Robinet acted within the law when they shot 22-year-old Stephon Clark seven times, Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert concluded, noting that the evidence supported their account that Clark was moving toward them when they opened fire.

Schubert said the evidence, including their reactions captured on body cameras, supported the officers' statements that they thought Clark was pointing a gun.

It turned out Clark was holding only a cellphone. His family and their supporters expressed anger and disappointment, and accused Schubert of unnecessarily revealing grim details of Clark's personal life.

"Whatever his character is or his actions prior to those officers gunning him down, is no one's business," said Clark's mother, SeQuette, who had a brief and contentious meeting with Schubert before the DA made her announcement. "It's not justification. That's not a permit to kill him."

Schubert said the decision not to file charges against the officers "does not diminish in any way the tragedy," adding that "We cannot ignore that there is rage within our community."

Before Schubert had finished speaking, Black Lives Matter began a demonstration where about 100 people eventually protested peacefully in chilly rain outside Sacramento's police headquarters.

The shooting last March prompted larger demonstrations. Protesters twice disrupted games for the NBA's Sacramento Kings, including one where they blocked thousands of fans from entering. That game was played in a nearly empty arena.

Schubert repeatedly apologized for raising the personal details during her hour-long presentation.

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She revealed Clark was facing possible jail time after a domestic violence complaint two days earlier from Salena Manni, the mother of his two children. He also had researched suicide websites including those that suggested using a tranquilizer, which was among several drugs found in his system after his death.

"I can't tell ultimately what was going on in his mind," Schubert said. "He was in a state of despair and he was impaired, and that may have affected his judgment."

The disclosures brought additional outcries from protest leaders and Clark's relatives, including Manni, who said they weren't relevant to whether the officers acted properly.

The decision continues "the shameful legacy of officers killing black men without consequences," Manni said.

Black Lives Matter leader Tanya Faison criticized Schubert for providing details including text messages between Clark and Manni.

"Those officers didn't know any of that when they had him in the backyard and they killed him," Faison said.

SeQuette Clark held out the hope that her son's death would result in systemic change, which was echoed by statements from Gov. Gavin Newsom, legislative leaders, Sacramento's mayor and black religious leaders who urged protesters to channel their anger into positive steps.

"This is just the beginning. The fight for justice has just begun," Clark's mother said outside the home where her son was killed. Later, Clark's grandmother, Sequita Thompson, was taken by ambulance to a hospital after falling ill. No details on her condition were available.

Several officials supported pending state legislation that would allow police to use deadly force only if there is no reasonable alternative, including non-lethal force or efforts to calm the situation. Newsom did not address the bill, but called for "systemic reforms that reduce inequities, increase community confidence in our criminal justice system, and that reinforce the sanctity of human life."

Clark's family, including his two sons, his parents and his grandparents, filed a wrongful death lawsuit in January seeking more than \$20 million from the city and officers, alleging that they used excessive force and that he was a victim of racial profiling.

Attorneys for Clark's family disputed Schubert's conclusion by citing a competing autopsy for the family by Dr. Bennet Omalu, who said police shot Clark seven times from behind. Omalu is the pathologist whose study of chronic traumatic encephalopathy in football players prompted the NFL to adopt new safety rules designed to prevent concussions.

Schubert said the official autopsy showing Clark was most likely shot as he approached police was reviewed by four pathologists and two independent experts. One of them acted on behalf of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, who is conducting his own investigation at the request of local officials.

She also said for the first time that physical evidence showed that Clark was indeed the man who broke three vehicle windows and an elderly man's sliding glass patio door. Previously police had not said definitively that he was the vandal they were chasing.

Enhanced video from a police helicopter showed Clark was empty handed as he jumped a fence and moved alongside his grandparents' home before he was chased by officers. Another enhanced photo from an officer's body camera showed a flash of light from Clark's position near his grandparents' back door, which Schubert said supported an officer's statement that he thought he saw a muzzle flash from a gun. She said enhanced audio revealed Clark cursed at officers as he moved toward their position.

The Sacramento Police Officers Association and the police department did not respond to requests for comment on behalf of the two officers. But police union president Timothy Davis said in a statement that the case "illustrates how complicated and dynamic a request for police service can be."

Sacramento police noted that they have not yet decided if the officers broke any department policies. They and Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg said the department has since increased training, limited foot pursuits like those in the Clark case, and committed to quickly releasing videos of officer-involved shootings.

Regardless of whether officers acted legally, Steinberg said, "the outcome was wrong — he should not have died."

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Associated Press writers Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Booker urges Democrats not to be distracted by Trump vitriol

By MEG KINNARD, Associated Press

Presidential candidate Cory Booker on Saturday urged fellow Democrats not to be distracted by vitriol directed at the party's candidates by the man whom they seek to replace.

Asked during a Charleston, South Carolina, town hall meeting how best to oppose President Donald Trump without running an overly negative campaign, the New Jersey senator said Democrats need to look inward and focus on issues important to many of them, such as health care and education.

"We have got to understand this is not about him, it's about us, and we should not be motivated by what we are against, but by what we are for as a country," Booker said.

As other Democratic hopefuls campaigned in early voting states, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont made Brooklyn the official launch site of his second run for the White House, telling supporters that his campaign is tailor-made to defeat Trump. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts courted voters in Iowa while Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio visited South Carolina. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota represented Democrats at the annual Gridiron Club dinner in Washington, an event where politicians traditionally poke fun at the press and other politicians.

Trump spoke to a gathering of conservatives in suburban Maryland, mocking Democrats for their framework to combat climate change and saying that House Democrats pushing to expand their investigations of him are "sick." He also predicted he would win re-election by a greater margin than his 2016 victory.

Highlights of Saturday's campaigning:

CORY BOOKER

Taking questions from a diverse crowd, Booker urged the audience of activists, some waving campaign signs, not to become complacent just because Democrats marked successes in the 2018 midterm elections. That drew a round of cheers from the Charleston crowd, where the party wrested the 1st District congressional seat from Republican control last fall for the first time in decades.

Booker also said that it's up to activism, not politics, to make substantive changes. He pointed to a long-time South Carolina politician, the late Sen. Strom Thurmond, a Democrat turned Republican who ran for president in 1948 as a Democratic segregationist.

"It wasn't Strom Thurmond who came to the Senate floor and said, 'Hey, wait a minute, hey guys — it's time for those Negro people to have the right to vote,'" Booker said.

The senator also had sharp words for those who don't vote. "It is inexcusable that we have rates of voting in presidential elections at 40, 50, 60 percent ... when so much is going to be hung in the balance in this election," he said.

SHERROD BROWN

In the final swing of a political tour as he decides whether to enter the 2020 presidential race, Brown spent time this weekend in South Carolina. He stressed his commitment to higher wages and more robust health care and acknowledged the crucial role of the early-voting state.

At a Darlington County Democratic women's event, Brown said he values the important role that black women play in the primary process. South Carolina holds the first Southern voting, and its Democratic primary electorate is largely African-American.

"You can't be a Democrat in this country, especially in a state as diverse as Ohio — you can't be a human being who's awake and not understand that black women are the heart of the Democratic Party," he said. "It's black women that drive this party. It's black women that get progressives like me elected."

Later Saturday, Brown was to speak at Dorchester County Democrats' oyster roast, an event that Booker

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was also scheduled to attend.

BERNIE SANDERS

Sanders was in his birthplace of Brooklyn to call for Americans from all walks of life to join his effort for a political revolution, one he's been waging for four decades.

Calling Trump the most dangerous president in modern U.S. history, the Vermont senator said that his campaign is built to defeat Trump.

Sanders told supporters at a rally at Brooklyn College, which he once attended, that his campaign is saying "loudly and clearly that the underlying principles of our government will not be greed, hatred and lies. It will not be racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia and religious bigotry. That is going to end."

Sanders pledged to fight for "economic justice, social justice, racial justice and environmental justice."

He had begun his 2016 campaign in Vermont, which he has represented in the Senate for nearly two decades. But this time, as he tries to showcase more of his personal story, Sanders kicked off his 2020 bid in the New York City borough where he grew up as the son of a Jewish immigrant and lived in a rent-controlled apartment.

After Brooklyn, Sanders planned to travel to Selma, Alabama, where he will be among the politicians commemorating the anniversary of the 1965 clash known as "Bloody Sunday," when peaceful demonstrators were beaten back by Alabama state troopers as they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge. A second campaign rally was set for Chicago, where he attended the University of Chicago and was involved in civil rights protests.

ELIZABETH WARREN

During a campaign stop in Waterloo, Iowa, the Massachusetts senator emphasized the need for Democrats to focus on policies over personal attacks, and to remain united in order to win the 2020 presidential race.

"I'm not here to attack Democrats, I'm here to get our country back on track. I'm going to stay on the issues," she said, in response to a question from a voter about what she would do to avoid the primary becoming "a circular firing squad."

"This is our moment, and the need to get this right couldn't be more urgent," she added. "I'm going to support our Democratic nominee all the way."

Warren criticized Vice President Mike Pence when asked by a reporter about former Vice President Joe Biden's remarks earlier this week calling Pence a "decent man."

"I'm sorry, I followed Pence's history on LGBTQ Americans, and I don't think that is a decent position," she said.

Warren focused heavily on policy, but she refused to draw any contrasts between her own policy proposals and those offered by other candidates — even when asked directly by a voter to clarify her health care policy. Warren said she supported Medicare for All, but that there were many ways to achieve universal coverage.

"We're working it through as Democrats. We're talking about it," she said.

DONALD TRUMP

Trump aired his grievances and basked in the adoration of cheering conservatives after a trying week of tumult and setbacks, giving a stemwinder of a speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference that clocked in about two hours-plus and hardly left him winded or the audience disappointed.

Trump let loose against House Democrats broadening their investigations of him, predicted he would win re-election by a greater margin than his 2016 victory, taunted some of his potential White House challengers and sounded themes that are staples of his rallies.

The off-the-cuff remarks came at the end of the week that saw his nuclear summit with North Korea's leader collapse without an agreement, his former lawyer deliver congressional testimony about his character and business practices and Congress take action to nullify his emergency declaration to secure money for the border wall that lawmakers have denied him.

Associated Press writers Juana Summers in New York City, Alexandra Jaffe in Waterloo, Iowa, and Kevin Freking in Oxon Hill, Maryland, contributed to this report.

Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>

'Sanctuary' cities are getting their grants despite threats

By WILSON RING, Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — About 18 months after the Trump administration threatened to withhold law enforcement grants from nearly 30 places around the country it felt weren't doing enough to work with federal immigration agents, all but one have received or been cleared to get the money, the Justice Department said.

In most cases, courts chipped away at the crackdown that escalated in November 2017 with letters from the Justice Department of former Attorney General Jeff Sessions to 29 cities, metro areas, counties or states it considered as having adopted "sanctuary policies" saying those policies may violate federal law.

Of those 29 jurisdictions — which include cities as large as Los Angeles and as small as Burlington, Vermont — only Oregon has yet to be cleared to receive the grants from 2017, a Justice Department spokesman told The Associated Press this week.

Vermont officials announced Monday that they had been told the state Department of Public Safety would be getting \$2.3 million in law enforcement grants that had been blocked. Vermont had not joined any of the legal cases, instead corresponding directly with the Justice Department.

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, declared victory, saying the money would be used primarily on anti-drug efforts.

"State and local law enforcement agencies already are stretched thin, and withholding these federal grants only makes their work more difficult," Leahy said in an email to the AP. "It's unthinkable that the Trump Justice Department would hold these funds hostage over an unrelated dispute on immigration policy."

Last summer, the U.S. Conference of Mayors sued in Illinois on behalf of its member cities focusing on the issue. In September, a federal court temporarily blocked the Justice Department from withholding the funds for the jurisdictions represented by the conference.

The conference's litigation is now focused on making the order affecting the 2017 grants permanent and apply to 2018 grants, as well, said Kate O'Brien, a Chicago attorney who represented the mayors.

Other federal courts have ruled against the Justice Department. Similar cases are being litigated across the country, and the Justice Department is considering appealing some unfavorable rulings.

The Trump administration has long argued that places that don't cooperate with federal immigration authorities, often called "sanctuary cities," pose a threat to public safety.

"I continue to urge all jurisdictions under review to reconsider policies that place the safety of their communities and their residents at risk," Sessions said in a statement in January 2018. "Protecting criminal aliens from federal immigration authorities defies common sense and undermines the rule of law."

The details differ by jurisdiction, but the Justice Department felt law enforcement agencies in those communities weren't sufficiently committing themselves to cooperating with federal immigration agents when officers came in contact with people who might not be in the country legally.

Aside from confirming the clearance of grants to the 28 jurisdictions, Justice Department spokesman Steven Stafford declined to comment.

Some, but not all, of the 28 jurisdictions were cleared for the grants without changing the policies that triggered the original concern from the Justice Department, now led by Attorney General William Barr. And not all of the places actually have the money in hand yet, or have been told they've been cleared to get it.

Ken Martinez, the county attorney for Bernalillo County, New Mexico, said officials there had yet to hear about 2017 grant funding and are eager to get it.

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"It will be incredibly helpful," Martinez said. "I can tell you there's been a high level of frustration from people on both sides of the issue."

In West Palm Beach, Florida, the Justice Department was concerned about the wording of a city resolution dealing with police investigations involving citizenship or immigration status. A year ago, a memo was sent to city employees saying they "may" share information with federal authorities.

"So no funds (were) lost on our end," said police Sgt. David Lefont, noting the total was less than \$100,000.

That some of the threatened cities ended up changing their policies amounts to at least a partial victory for the Trump administration, said Jessica Vaughan, the director of policy studies for the Center For Immigration Studies, which advocates for tight restrictions on immigration.

"What it looks like to me, the Trump Administration is not able to fully enforce cooperation with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to the extent they would like to, but it is able to fully enforce compliance with existing federal law that some sanctuary jurisdictions have had to change their policies in order to get their money," Vaughan said.

But other jurisdictions were cleared to get the money without having to change anything.

"The court in our cases, and in similar cases throughout the country, has found the attorney general is not authorized to impose these conditions," said O'Brien, the attorney for the mayors' group.

The Vermont settlement of the 2017 grants is among the last.

Even before the 2017 letters were sent, federal courts across the country had begun to rule against the Trump administration's efforts. And they continue.

A federal judge in Los Angeles ruled Feb. 15 that the Justice Department exceeded its authority and ordered a permanent, nationwide injunction against requiring police departments to cooperate with immigration authorities in order to receive the grants.

Oregon, the only one of the 29 jurisdictions not yet cleared for the 2017 grants, last fall filed its own lawsuit against the Justice Department. The lawsuit, which also covers grants for 2018, accused Trump and Matthew Whitaker, acting attorney general at the time, of trying to "impermissibly commandeer the resources" of Oregon and its largest city, Portland.

"For years, these grants have provided millions of dollars to law enforcement in Oregon," Rosenblum said in November. "But, suddenly these public safety funds have been withdrawn because Oregon will not submit to U.S. DOJ's demand that Oregon participate in its immigration enforcement efforts."

Contributing to this report were Associated Press writers Eliot Spagat in San Diego; Paul Elias in San Francisco; Susan Montoya Bryan in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon; and AP News Researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York.

Harper wants "to be on Broad Street" for World Series parade

By ROB MAADDI, AP Sports Writer

CLEARWATER, Fla. (AP) — Bryce Harper sounded like a typical Philadelphian talking about a goal every Phillies fan will endorse.

"I want to be on Broad Street on a frickin' boat or bus or whatever it is and hold a (World Series) trophy over my head," the six-time All-Star said Saturday after putting on his new No. 3 jersey.

The Phillies are counting on Harper to help them win only the third championship in franchise history. Philadelphia gave Harper a 13-year contract, the largest deal in baseball history at \$330 million. His arrival has fans scurrying to the box office. The team said 180,000 tickets were sold in less than two days after the agreement was reported Thursday afternoon.

"He's a magnetic personality and he plays the game with his heart on his sleeve and Philadelphia loves that," Phillies owner John Middleton said. "They love people who leave a little skin on the grass."

Harper was greeted by the Phillie Phanatic as he walked onto the first base dugout at the team's spring training ballpark. He got applause from team employees gathered for his introductory news conference.

Negotiations took far longer than expected, but Harper and his agent, Scott Boras, insisted an opt-out

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clause was never a hold up. Boras said Harper was his first client to instruct him not to seek one.

"I wanted to be able to dig my roots somewhere through the ups and downs of the team and the organization," Harper said. "It's going to be tough for our team to win every single year, I understand that. Even through the bumps and bruises, the goods and the bads, I want to be a part of that."

Middleton put pressure on himself early in the free agency process when he told a reporter the Phillies wanted to win so badly they would be "stupid" about money. Before signing Harper, general manager Matt Klentak acquired two-time All-Star shortstop Jean Segura and All-Star catcher J.T. Realmuto in trades and signed 2013 NL MVP Andrew McCutchen and 2011 All-Star reliever David Robertson.

"Does it look like stupid money to you?" Middleton said. "I think Matt has had a pretty good offseason. ... I wanted to signal that I was going to be aggressive. Matt made himself and me look really smart."

Harper chose No. 3 instead of the No. 34 he wore for the Washington Nationals because Hall of Famer Roy Halladay was the last player to wear No. 34 for the Phillies. He said he's enjoyed playing in Philadelphia and spoke to former Phillies outfielder Jayson Werth, who was his teammate in Washington for several seasons.

"You'll always be remembered for winning and what better place to do it than Philly," Harper said.

Harper has a .279 career average with 184 homers and 521 RBIs, including a .268 average with 14 homers, 32 RBIs in 47 games at Citizens Bank Park.

His contract tops the \$325 million, 13-year deal outfielder Giancarlo Stanton reached before the 2015 season with the Miami Marlins, who traded him to the New York Yankees in December 2017.

"What he's accomplished in his career at such a young age is truly remarkable," Klentak said of Harper. "We had some ups and downs in this process, but the commitment to reaching a deal for both parties was evident throughout. In almost all of our discussions with Bryce and (Harper's wife) Kayla, the conversation has been focused on family."

Harper is already recruiting perhaps the best player in baseball, Mike Trout, who is set to become a free agent after the 2020 season. Trout, a two-time AL MVP with the Los Angeles Angels, grew up near Philadelphia, attended the Phillies victory parade in 2008 as a 17-year-old and has season tickets for the Eagles.

"I'm making \$26 (million) a year. That's going to be able to bring some other guys in as well to build up this organization," Harper said. "There's another guy in about two years that comes off the books. We'll see what happens with that."

Harper gets a \$20 million signing bonus in equal installments, the first within 90 days of the deal's approval by the commissioner's office and the second this Nov. 1. He receives a \$10 million salary this year, \$26 million in each of the following nine seasons and \$22 million in each of the last three years. None of the money is deferred, and he gets a full no-trade provision.

His bonus provisions are \$50,000 each for All-Star, Gold Glove, Silver Slugger or League Championship Series MVP; \$100,000 for World Series MVP; \$500,000 for league MVP, \$50,000 for second and \$25,000 for third. He gets a hotel suite on road trips and the right to purchase a suite for games at Citizens Bank Park.

Harper has been an All-Star in six of seven big league seasons and was a unanimous pick for the NL MVP award in 2015.

Philadelphia forfeited its second-highest draft selection, currently No. 55, and \$500,000 of its 2019-20 international signing bonus pool allotment. Washington's compensation pick will be after the fourth round, about 140th.

AP Baseball Writer Ronald Blum contributed to this report.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Legalized sports betting unlikely in 3 largest US states

By GEOFF MULVIHILL, Associated Press

Over the past decade, teams from California, Florida or Texas have competed in more than half the championship series in the four major professional sports — including every NBA final.

That may be no surprise, considering the three states account for 27 percent of all franchises in those leagues. The sheer number of teams and their relative success make them fertile territory for legalizing sports gambling now that the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed every state to offer it.

“These states are the brass rings given the size of the populations and the potential opportunity,” said Sara Slane, a spokeswoman for the American Gaming Association.

So far, that ring remains elusive.

A 50-state review of sports gambling legislation by The Associated Press reveals that legalization efforts are nonexistent or very unlikely to happen anytime soon in the nation’s three most populous states, which together hold more than a quarter of the U.S. population.

The reasons vary. In California and Florida, powerful tribal interests that control most casino gambling are reluctant to reopen their agreements with the state and potentially share the gambling market with other players, including card rooms and race tracks.

In Texas, a combination of political clout from out-of-state casino interests and social conservatives who are morally opposed to gambling have effectively killed any prospects for legalized sports betting.

In all three states, any attempt to allow sports gambling would likely require a statewide vote to amend the constitution — a high hurdle for any issue, much less an expansion of gambling.

“The dynamic at work here is the larger the state, the larger the market, the larger the opportunity — the more complex the stakeholder environment and the more political stasis sets in,” said Chris Grove, managing director of gambling research firm Eilers and Krejcik.

Sports gambling is now legal in eight states, including Nevada, which had a monopoly before the high court ruling last spring.

Arkansas, New York and the District of Columbia also have legalized sports gambling in some form and are working on regulations before bets can be placed, while at least 22 other states are considering bills to legalize it. Advocates think the legislation has a realistic chance of passing in about half those states.

California, which alone accounts for one-eighth of the U.S. population and has 16 teams among the four major professional leagues, will not be joining the sports gambling states anytime soon.

Gambling there is largely controlled by casino-operating tribes that have compacts with the state. The tribes that are part of the California Nations Indian Gaming Association oppose an expansion of gambling even though it could bring more traffic to their casinos, said Steve Stallings, the group’s chairman.

The group is in the midst of a dispute with the state’s card rooms and doesn’t want to see more competition for the tribes by opening a debate over sports betting.

“We feel like protecting the industry in California is more important,” he said.

Just in case it does become legal, the United Auburn Indian Community struck a deal last year with a joint venture of casino company MGM and online gambling company GVC to run the sportsbook at its Thunder Valley Casino Resort, northeast of Sacramento.

Even so, the tribe doesn’t want that to happen, said Howard Dickstein, the lawyer who negotiated the deal on the tribe’s behalf.

“The tribe is not a strong advocate of legalizing sports betting under any circumstance,” he said. “The agreement with MGM is an insurance policy to become allied with a leader if and when it becomes legal in California.”

Dickstein said the tribe would welcome sports betting if it were clear that tribal casinos would control the market in California. But if betting is allowed at card rooms, racetracks or lottery retailers, it would not be so appealing for the casinos. Even if the tribes would receive a big piece of the action, it might mean renegotiating their agreements with the state that determine what is allowed at their casinos — and that could give the state an opportunity to insist on concessions.

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A similar dynamic is in play in other states, including Arizona and Minnesota, where bills that would allow tribes to operate sports betting are in danger, partly because many of the tribes oppose them.

In Florida, a major casino-operating tribe also is a key factor.

Last year, voters agreed to make it tougher to expand gambling with a constitutional amendment that requires 60 percent voter approval for any future expansion of gambling in the state. The measure's supporters included Disney, whose Orlando resort is a major economic force, and the Seminole Tribe, which owns seven of Florida's eight tribal casinos.

State Senate President Bill Galvano, a Republican, said he believes sports betting could be legalized without voter approval, although he said he might ask for it, anyway. He said broader gambling legislation is being developed that would allow wagering, likely at racetracks, tribal casinos and perhaps in some form at sports venues.

"Sports betting has been taking place here, as it has other places, just not regulated and taxed," he said.

Any attempt to push through legalization in Florida without voter approval would hit opposition and likely trigger a lawsuit, said John Sowinski, who led the campaign for last year's constitutional amendment and leads the group No Casinos.

"Any sort of sober analysis of any type of gambling finds it doesn't add anything to the economy," he said. "It's basically parasitic."

In either case, Galvano said his bill is not likely to be a top priority during the 60-day legislative session that begins on Tuesday. Seminole Tribe spokesman Gary Bitner said in a text message that the tribe would not comment on the status of sports betting in Florida.

Texas, in addition to being home to eight teams in the four major professional sports, has hosted three Super Bowls, three NBA All-Star games and six NCAA men's Final Four basketball tournaments since 2004.

But the state is far less welcoming when it comes to gambling because of a mix of morality and money: Social conservatives assail it as a regressive tax on the poor, and the official Texas Republican Party platform opposes expanded gambling in any form.

A bill from a Democratic lawmaker seeking to legalize sports gambling has little chance this year in the Republican-dominated Legislature.

The biggest winners if Texas maintains the status quo are casinos in neighboring Oklahoma and Louisiana, whose operators are major contributors to Texas politicians.

Billionaire Tilman Fertitta, owner of the Golden Nugget casinos, has donated more than \$500,000 to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. Two Oklahoma casino empires, the Chickasaw Nation and Choctaw Nation, have given more than \$5 million combined to Texas officeholders and candidates since 2006.

Rob Kohler, a lobbyist who opposes gambling as a consultant for the Christian Life Commission, said the consistently winning argument in Texas has been that gambling preys upon the poor.

"Dollars don't come from the sky," he said. "They're coming out of people's pockets."

AP writer Paul Weber in Austin, Texas, contributed to this article.

Follow Mulvihill at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill>

Analysis: GOP senators struggle to escape no-win border vote

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — One by one, the Republican senators floated their ideas. They were trying to find a way out of a seemingly impossible dilemma: how to support President Donald Trump's U.S.-Mexico border wall without approving the national emergency declaration he invoked to build it.

And one by one, during a private lunchtime meeting that ran hot at times, they found no easy answers.

As a deadline for voting looms, it's increasingly clear that Republican senators are deeply uncomfortable with Trump's use of executive power to build the wall and desperate to devise a way around the vote.

Senators know whatever they decide will make history. It's the first time Congress is voting to terminate

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a national emergency. Even if Trump vetoes the measure, as expected, it will set precedent for other money grabs by future occupants of the White House.

This is why they tried to talk Trump out of invoking national emergency powers and why they're now in a no-win situation as they prepare to vote.

"People are caught between the need for border security — and agreeing with what the president's trying to do — but not how he's trying to do it," said Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the senior-most Republican senator.

In the days ahead, senators will be required to vote on a resolution, already approved by Democrats in the House, to terminate Trump's executive action.

Senate Republicans don't have the votes to stop what Trump is doing, nor do they necessarily want to. Many of their constituents want the wall, and senators, especially those up for re-election in 2020, don't want to run afoul of the president whose supporters they'll need.

But they're trying at least to provide some distance between Trump's effort to build the wall and what many see as executive overreach that could echo for years to come.

Trump, in a speech Saturday to conservatives, said: "A lot of people talk about precedent, precedent, that if we do this the Democrats will use national emergency powers for something we don't want. They are going to do that anyway folks. The best way to stop that is to make sure I win the election."

Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, presented colleagues during the lunchtime meeting with a proposal to revisit the 1976 National Emergencies Act, clawing back some of the authority Congress ceded decades ago that paved the way for Trump's action.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., has been working on a plan suggesting Trump could do away with his declaration completely by simply repurposing existing money to build the wall rather than invoking the emergency orders to take more dollars.

Other senators are swapping other ideas.

"This has been a little bit of a wake-up call," said Texas Sen. John Cornyn, a member of the GOP leadership.

Cornyn said most lawmakers were simply not aware that Congress over the years has been "so willing to delegate our authority" to the president. "I wouldn't be surprised if some changes are made," he said.

A guiding touchstone for some has been to draw on the principles of a conservative giant: What would the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia do?

Republicans have railed against executive reach long before Trump. They criticized President Barack Obama's executive actions, particularly those involving the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, that shielded young immigrants in the country illegally, known as Dreamers, from deportation.

Now, though, Republicans are loath to allow Trump to go even further, by encroaching on the authority the Constitution specifically grants Congress for appropriating funds.

Trump's declaration allows him to dip into billions of Defense Department dollars for already-approved military construction projects and shift that money, along with other funds, toward the border wall. Senators worry what the next presidents will do, invoking such power grabs for Democratic priorities to fight climate change or lessen the strains of income inequality.

"Many folks don't like the idea of the precedent it sets, but they realize it's the centerpiece of President Trump's (2016 campaign) - what he ran on - and it causes a little bit of heartburn," said Sen. Mike Braun, a newly elected conservative from Indiana.

"I kind of would fall in that camp," he said. Braun said he probably will back the president. He supports Trump and believes there's a crisis on the border. But he said the reach of executive authority does "give you pause."

Senators are quickly running into the procedural roadblocks that show how difficult it will be to change course.

Because the resolution is a first of its kind, efforts to alter it are posing all sorts of parliamentary questions that have yet to be answered. Even if the senators can agree with an alternative plan, they'll also have to clear the procedural hurdles that so far have been high. And, for now, it's unclear if they can come up with an idea that does both.

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"There're procedural problems that we haven't figured out yet," Cornyn acknowledged.

When Vice President Mike Pence and administration officials visited senators privately on Tuesday to buck up support for Trump's action, it provoked a lively discussion.

The White House officials made the case for the border emergency and insisted Trump's action would not open the floodgates for future presidents to take similar steps for their priorities.

The senators peppered the vice president with questions. And the next day at their own private lunch — and in public — they started airing their work arounds.

"Everybody's blaming the president," Grassley said. "The president doesn't deserve any blame. Congress delegated this authority to him. So we're delegating away our legislative authority. We've probably done too much of it."

EDITOR'S NOTE — AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro has covered Congress since 2010.

Follow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/lisamascaro> and https://twitter.com/AP_Politics

Many 'still hurting' nearly 5 months after Hurricane Michael

By MIKE SCHNEIDER, Associated Press

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP) — Paulina "Bela" Sebastiao would give almost anything to be able to do a load of laundry without having to drive miles from her Mexico Beach home. Anthony Campbell would appreciate having a gas station closer than an hour away from his house in Parker. And Patrick Muth just hopes it doesn't rain when it's time to go to work: His "office" in Panama City consists of a desk surrounded by rubble under an open sky.

Life is still a struggle in the county hardest hit by Hurricane Michael, which carved a wide swath of destruction through the Florida Panhandle when it roared ashore on Oct. 10 with winds of 155 mph (250 kph).

Drivers who have lived in the area for years second-guess themselves about whether they're going the right way — the street signs, trees, and houses that once served as points of reference are gone. Many doctors' offices haven't reopened and one of the county's two hospitals was closed, even though Bay County residents are experiencing hurricane-related health problems such as respiratory illness.

Students in schools damaged by the storm have moved into other facilities, dropping enrollment by 14 percent. Bay County had about 183,000 residents before the storm, and about 7,800 people were estimated to be homeless in January.

Shopping for groceries is burdensome since many retailers haven't reopened yet. Many of those that have are selling limited goods from pop-up trailers parked in front of their damaged properties.

Garbage collectors aren't even close to removing the 15 million cubic yards (11.5 million cubic meters) of Sheetrock, insulation, tree limbs and appliances strewn everywhere by the storm.

Amid such disruption, once-mundane everyday tasks now require a combination of planning, patience and luck.

"It's just a hassle," said Campbell, who is retired. "With everyday life ... everything is different. You have to readjust."

After Hurricane Michael destroyed the Mexico Beach house of Bela and Jaques Sebastiao, they lived in a tent in their front yard and then a camper. They recently received a trailer from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but it took more than a month before they were allowed to move in since they needed a special tank for sewage. The trailer had a shower and not being able to use it for weeks was "torture," they said.

The Sebastiaos, along with two other neighbors, were the only residents who had returned to their beachside street in Mexico Beach, where homes were either blown off their foundations during the hurricane or intentionally knocked down after the storm because they were deemed too damaged. Every two weeks, they drive hundreds of miles (kilometers) to their son's place in Georgia to do laundry.

"We don't have any showers, no laundry, no supermarkets," Jaques Sebastiao said in the days before

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they could move into their trailer.

In some cases, county residents have been hindered in their efforts to rebuild and repair. Mexico Beach — which became the poster child of the storm with its rows of empty cement foundations where houses once stood — had a moratorium on new construction until mid-February to allow new flood maps to be designed.

Even with the green light to go ahead, residents are having difficulty getting commitments from in-demand contractors, said Campbell, whose home developed mold after a dispute with his insurance company delayed repairs.

Principals and teachers at Bay County schools are on the lookout for students who are wearing dirty clothes or missing shoes. Northside Elementary School in Panama City was given industrial washers and dryers so students can get their clothes cleaned, and staffers have filled a broom closet with donated shoes and clothing.

"We have so many students who are living from place to place and the faculty is living place to place," said Principal Amy Harvey. "Academics has to be important, but we want to make sure these kids are emotionally OK before we can teach them anything."

Since his trucks weren't damaged, Muth kept operating his plumbing business with barely a hiccup, and he's already planning to rebuild his office space. But given the extensive damage to plumbing everywhere, his regular customers don't always realize it may take weeks before he can get to them. When making service calls, he calls ahead to make sure the roads are clear and there is gas available in the area.

"It's just not going to be what it was for a long time," Muth said. "All of it has changed."

For law enforcement, the biggest problems since the storm are the pervasiveness of unlicensed contractors and the illegal dumping of debris on the sides of roads. Otherwise, though, the hundreds of officers from outside agencies who came to Bay County in the weeks after the storm helped keep the crime rate down, said Bay County Sheriff Tommy Ford.

Would-be criminals are perhaps discouraged by signs like the one on two wooden boards covering windows at R & D Auto Electric in Parker. They read, "Stay out. You look, we shoot!"

"Make no mistake. Things are very tough here, and there are people who are living in very difficult circumstances," Ford said. "We are still hurting and we're going to be hurting for a long time."

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

Crew capsule rockets toward space station with test dummy

By **MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — America's newest capsule for astronauts rocketed Saturday toward the International Space Station on a high-stakes test flight by SpaceX.

The only passenger was a life-size test dummy, named Ripley after the lead character in the "Alien" movies. SpaceX needs to nail the debut of its crew Dragon capsule before putting people on board later this year.

This latest, flashiest Dragon is on a fast track to reach the space station Sunday morning, just 27 hours after liftoff.

It will spend five days docked to the orbiting outpost, before making a retro-style splashdown in the Atlantic next Friday — all vital training for the next space demo, possibly this summer, when two astronauts strap in.

SpaceX founder and chief executive Elon Musk said the launch was "super stressful" to watch, but he's hopeful the capsule will be ready to carry people later this year.

"To be frank, I'm a little emotionally exhausted," Musk told reporters barely an hour after liftoff. "We have to dock to the station. We have to come back, but so far it's worked ... we've passed the riskiest items."

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine called it "a big night for the United States of America."

"We're on the precipice of launching American astronauts on American rockets from American soil again for the first time since the retirement of the space shuttles in 2011," said Bridenstine, who got a special

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tour of the launch pad on the eve of launch, by Musk.

An estimated 5,000 NASA and contractor employees, tourists and journalists gathered in the wee hours at Kennedy Space Center with the SpaceX launch team, as the Falcon 9 rocket blasted off before dawn from the same spot where Apollo moon rockets and space shuttles once soared. Across the country at SpaceX Mission Control in Hawthorne, California, company employees went wild, cheering every step of the way until the capsule successfully reached orbit.

Looking on from Kennedy's Launch Control were the two NASA astronauts who will strap in as early as July for the second space demo, Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken. Shortly after liftoff, Musk asked them, "How do you feel about flying on it?"

It's been eight years since Hurley and three other astronauts flew the last space shuttle mission, and human launches from Florida ceased.

NASA turned to private companies, SpaceX and Boeing, and has provided them \$8 billion to build and operate crew capsules to ferry astronauts to and from the space station. Now Russian rockets are the only way to get astronauts to the 250-mile-high outpost. Soyuz tickets have skyrocketed over the years; NASA currently pays \$82 million per seat.

Boeing aims to conduct the first test flight of its Starliner capsule in April, with astronauts on board possibly in August.

Bridenstine said he's confident that astronauts will soar on a Dragon or Starliner — or both — by year's end. But he stressed there's no rush.

"We are not in a space race," he said. "That race is over. We went to the moon and we won. It's done. Now we're in a position where we can take our time and make sure we get it right."

SpaceX already has made 16 trips to the space station using cargo Dragons. The white crew Dragon is slightly bigger — 27 feet (8 meters) tip to tip — and considerably fancier and safer. Musk said the redesigned capsule has "hardly a part in common" with its predecessor.

It features four seats, three windows, touch-screen computer displays and life-support equipment, as well as eight abort engines to pull the capsule to safety in the event of a launch emergency. Solar cells are mounted on the spacecraft for electrical power, as opposed to the protruding solar wings on cargo Dragons.

"It's an incredibly sleek looking vehicle from the inside and it's very easy to operate," Hurley told reporters just hours before liftoff. He marvels at how the Dragon has just 30 buttons and touch screens, compared with the space shuttle cockpit's 2,000 switches and circuit breakers.

For the test, the Ripley dummy was strapped into the far left seat, wearing the company's snappy white spacesuit. The other seats were empty, save for a small plush toy resembling Earth that was free to float upon reaching zero-gravity. "Super high tech zero-g indicator added just before launch!" Musk tweeted. True to his word, the toy rose weightlessly above the seat once the capsule was in orbit.

As many as seven astronauts could squeeze in, although four will be the norm once flights get going, allowing for a little cargo room. About 450 pounds (200 kilograms) of supplies are going up on this flight.

The capsule is designed to dock and undock automatically with the space station. Cargo Dragon must be maneuvered with the station's robot arm.

Like Ripley, the capsule is rigged with sensors. Engineers will be carefully watching sound, vibration and other stresses on the spacecraft, while monitoring the life-support, communication and propulsion systems. Some of the equipment needs more work — possibly even redesign — before serving human passengers.

"We're going to learn a ton from this mission," said NASA's commercial crew program manager, Kathy Lueders.

Flight operations team members — some of them new to this — also need the six-day trial run, according to Kennedy Space Center's director, Robert Cabana.

The objective is to make the next demo flight, with Hurley and Behnken, as safe as possible. The more immediate goal is to avoid harming the space station and its three occupants: an American, Canadian and Russian.

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"Seeing a success like this definitely gives us a lot of confidence in the future," Behnken said.

At Saturday's post-launch news conference, Musk said he'd be happy to fly on the revamped Dragon. "You guys think it's a good vehicle, right?" he asked Behnken and Hurley, seated alongside him. Musk jokingly said they better wait a week, until the Dragon returns, before responding.

Despite SpaceX's success at recovering and reusing its rockets, NASA is insisting on brand new boosters from SpaceX for the crew capsule flights. The first-stage booster used Saturday landed on a floating platform in the Atlantic, following liftoff. SpaceX plans to recycle the newly flying capsule for a high-altitude abort test this spring, along with a booster launched and retrieved a week ago.

Musk anticipates eventually selling Dragon rides to private citizens, much as the Russians have done, first to the space station and then perhaps beyond. "That would be pretty cool," he said.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, March 3, the 62nd day of 2019. There are 303 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 3, 1974, a Turkish Airlines DC-10 crashed shortly after takeoff from Orly Airport in Paris, killing all 346 people on board.

On this date:

In 1791, Congress passed a measure taxing distilled spirits; it was the first internal revenue act in U.S. history.

In 1845, Florida became the 27th state.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed a measure creating the National Academy of Sciences.

In 1931, "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the national anthem of the United States as President Herbert Hoover signed a congressional resolution.

In 1934, bank robber John Dillinger escaped from the Lake County Jail in Crown Point, Indiana, along with another prisoner, Herbert Youngblood.

In 1943, in London's East End, 173 people died in a crush of bodies at the Bethnal Green tube station, which was being used as a wartime air raid shelter.

In 1959, the United States launched the Pioneer 4 spacecraft, which flew by the moon. Comedian Lou Costello died in East Los Angeles three days before his 53rd birthday.

In 1960, Lucille Ball filed for divorce from her husband, Desi Arnaz, a day after they had finished filming the last episode of "The Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Show" ("Lucy Meets the Mustache") on Arnaz's 43rd birthday.

In 1966, death claimed actor William Frawley at age 79 and actress Alice Pearce at age 48 in Hollywood.

In 1985, coal miners in Britain voted to end a year-long strike that proved to be the longest and most violent walkout in British history.

In 1991, motorist Rodney King was severely beaten by Los Angeles police officers in a scene captured on amateur video. Twenty-five people were killed when a United Airlines Boeing 737-200 crashed while approaching the Colorado Springs airport.

In 2002, voters in Switzerland approved joining the United Nations, abandoning almost 200 years of formal neutrality.

Ten years ago: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, during a visit to Israel, promised to work with the incoming government, but said movement toward establishment of a Palestinian state was "inescapable." Sydney Chaplin, Charles Chaplin's son and himself a Tony-winning actor, died in Rancho Mirage, Calif. at age 82.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a

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White House meeting to make the “tough decisions” needed to move forward on talks with the Palestinians. Oscar Pistorius pleaded not guilty to murdering his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, on Valentine’s Day 2013, marking the start of the Olympian’s murder trial in South Africa. (Pistorius is serving a 13-year sentence for murder after his original manslaughter conviction was overturned and his original six-year sentence was increased.)

One year ago: Actor David Ogden Stiers, best known for playing a surgeon on the “M.A.S.H.” television series, died at his Oregon home at the age of 75. Coastal communities in the northeastern United States saw damaging high tide flooding and the lingering effects of powerful, gusting winds in the aftermath of a vicious nor’easter. Roger Bannister, the British athlete who, while a medical student, became the first person to run a mile in under 4 minutes, died in Oxford, England at the age of 88.

Today’s Birthdays: Singer-musician Mike Pender (The Searchers) is 78. Movie producer-director George Miller is 74. Actress Hattie Winston is 74. Singer Jennifer Warnes is 72. Actor-director Tim Kazurinsky is 69. Singer-musician Robyn Hitchcock is 66. Actor Robert Gossett is 65. Rock musician John Lilley is 65. Actress Miranda Richardson is 61. Rock musician John Bigham is 60. Radio personality Ira Glass is 60. Actress Mary Page Keller is 58. Olympic track and field gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey is 57. Former NFL player and College Football Hall of Famer Herschel Walker is 57. Actress Laura Harring is 55. Contemporary Christian musician Duncan Phillips (Newsboys) is 55. Rapper-actor Tone Loc (lohk) is 53. Actress Julie Bowen is 49. Country singer Brett Warren (The Warren Brothers) is 48. Actor David Faustino is 45. Gospel singer Jason Crabb is 42. Singer Ronan Keating (Boyzone) is 42. Rapper Lil’ Flip is 38. Actress Jessica Biel is 37. Rock musician Blower (AKA Joe Garvey) (Hinder) is 35. Musician Brett Hite (Frenship) is 33. Pop singer Camila Cabello is 22. Actor Thomas Barbusca (TV: “The Mick”) is 16. Actress Reyllynn Caster is 16.

Thought for Today: “America is a tune. It must be sung together.” — Gerald Stanley Lee, American clergyman and author (1862-1944).

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Keep Your Hearts on Fire for God!

by Paul Irvin Kosel

Video can be found on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/kCEkq4SoGwE>

It's cold outside. Jokes float around on social media about how cold it is in South Dakota. We are looking at record lows this morning, but not only is there cold in the air, there is a chill in the hearts of many Christians. 49 percent of American Christians say they rarely go to church. Perhaps a spiritual Polar Vortex is setting in. Many say they don't go to church because of "practical issues": They are too busy, have a crazy work schedule, or describe themselves as "too lazy" to go. Others said they just don't care about attending services as much as doing other things. So there remains a chill in the heart of many Americans, and while we bundle up when we go outside with coats, gloves and hats, the American Christian is starting to look more like Jack Frost.

So what is the temperature of your heart? Jesus said in Matthew 24:12 says, "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

When this record-breaking deep freeze hit, I was reading the book of Romans—and Romans 12:11 jumped off the page. The apostle Paul told his followers that in order to please God they needed to be "fervent in spirit" (NASB). The Greek word for "fervent," *zeo*, means "to boil with heat." We have a responsibility to stay hot for God no matter how cold our spiritual environment is.

But how do you stay "on fire" for the Lord? How can you raise your spiritual temperature at a time when many people's faith has gone from lukewarm to freezing? Here are some steps you can take to reach the boiling point:

On the road to Emmaus after the resurrection, in Luke 24, two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus. Jesus joined them, but they did not recognize him. Jesus began to preach to them. When they finally arrived at Emmaus they recognized Jesus and said, in verse 32, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" That is what the word of God will do to you. The Word will set your heart ablaze. Read it daily. Meditate on it.

Many, many years ago, before we had fuel or propane or natural gas piped into the homes, people kept warm with fire wood. They had to go out and cut down trees, cutting them into small logs for the fire place. Without these dry wood logs, you could quickly freeze to death. And it was something you had to keep doing. You just couldn't put in a few logs and expect it to last the day. You had to tend it - to keep the fire burning. You cannot survive spiritually without regular communion with the Lord. Oswald Chambers put it bluntly: "Prayer is the vital breath of the Christian; not the thing that makes him alive, but the evidence that he is alive." Prayer is powerful. Remember the parable that Jesus told about the persistent widow in Luke 18 and how Jesus told his disciples that they should always pray and not give up. James said in 5:16 "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."

Rejoicing in the Lord is actually something we don't do a lot of. You might be surprised to hear those words, but let me ask this question - when was the last time you truly rejoiced in the Lord - said a loud Amen. said PRAISE THE LORD! Philippians 4:4 said, Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again: Rejoice! and that is followed by an exclamation mark. You see, when you rejoice in the Lord, it will melt the icicles that are forming in your heart - discouragement, fear and anxiety. You need to sing and shout! When you praise God with exuberance, new strength will arise. Make a decision that you will praise God in a more vocal, uninhibited way this year than ever before. If you need help praising God, play a recording by one of your favorite Christian artists and sing along. So then we can join in the words of Psalm 113: Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord!

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We need to break free of bad habits. Paul told the Thessalonians, "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). Are you doing anything that is extinguishing the Spirit's flames in your life? Many Christians remain perpetually immature, unable to grow spiritually, because they won't let go of lustful habits or addictions. If you choose to live in bondage, you will never be hot for God. Matthew wrote in Chapter 7, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

As modern-day believers in Christ, we, too, make a mockery of worship when we live in open sin. Do we come before the Lord with a false face, week in and week out, looking the part without acting it? Allow Zephaniah to remind you how seriously God takes your life and your relationship with Him. And if you have failed, remember the message of Zephaniah 3—God is always a God of restoration and hope.

Another thing that will cause a heart to grow cold is resentment. Resentment is the bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly. There are times when we feel we have been treated unfairly. This will cause "most people's love will grow cold" as recorded in Matthew 24:12. Don't be a part of that cooling trend. Nothing puts out the flame of God's love faster than bitterness. Don't allow unforgiveness to freeze your soul. Guard your heart and deal with offenses quickly. The words of James 3 say it best, "But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic." It comes down to two things - the way of God or the way of the world. One is hot, the other is not.

Have you ever noticed in a fire that when the embers are far apart, the fire starts to go out. Each one, separately, on its own, will slowly go dark and cold. But if you take those embers and move them together, something happens! The flames return. This is why we should never live the Christian life in seclusion. God called us to be in community. Paul said in Romans 15 "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As the air gets colder and colder outside, the molecules move slower and slower. You might have strong faith inside, but your heart is not pumping the blood fast enough and soon the extremities of your body begin to get cold - much like frost bite. People have lost fingers, toes and ears to frost bite, and if left in the elements long enough, the body freezes from the outside to the inside. So what are you doing with your spiritual gifts? Real spiritual passion is ignited when you serve others. Every Christian has a spiritual gift—and you are no exception. But if you are not using your gifts, then frost bite will begin to set in. You must face your fears and stretch your faith as you begin to step out, but soon you will find there is no greater joy than being an instrument of the Holy Spirit to bless people. And when the oil of His anointing flows through you, your spiritual temperature will go up.

I'm sure we all know people who live the life. They love hunting. They love fishing. They love camping. They love shopping. They love the things of this world. Do you notice something missing. They love doing all of those things, but they are missing, "They love God." God is not a part of their life. God is never spoken from their lips. It's what I can get that is more important. That's where we come into the picture. There is nothing more exciting, in my opinion, than leading a person to faith in Christ. Yet statistics show that 95 percent of Christians have never led one soul to salvation. I guarantee if you step out of your timidity and share the gospel with a neighbor, a co-worker, a server at a restaurant or a stranger on the subway, your spiritual temperature will instantly rise 30 degrees—and you will want to share with someone else. Again,

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from the book of James, we read in chapter 2, "If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?"

But it's the word of Matthew 5:16 that really talk about our faith and deeds: "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Make no mistake, we are living in a cold world that wants to draw our love of God away from us and turn our hearts cold and dark. Be of like mind - give praise to God. 1 John 3:1 says, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him."

We know God and he knows us. During this cold, winter weather, let us be reminded that the flame of God must burn inside of us. We must be willing to Rejoice in word. Sing praises to him. All glory and honor be to God. Our God is an awesome God. No matter what a person has done in their life - no matter how dark the heart may be, with God, nothing is impossible and He will rekindle that flame and restore you to the true kinship of God. We are all God's children. I want everyone to say Amen! and I mean, AMEN!!!!!!!

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, you are our advocate with the Father. You take our petitions to the Almighty One and you know what we need even before we ask. We ask you Lord to begin the warm days ahead when the death of our area will start turning into life. That the wildlife and animals can find food under all of this snow cover. Encourage each one of us to help out the wildlife, by exposing the ground and giving them food. You have given us the ability to help out the less fortunate, and that includes the animals as well.

We also pray, Lord, that you be with the the many snow plow drivers who are working so many hours to keep our roads ind drivable condition. We pray for the bus drivers who are transporting teams to basketball games. We pray for the mailmen who have to endure the tough country roads to deliver the mail. There are so many people doing so much to help us during the severity of this winter. Bless each and everyone of them, Lord.

We ask you Lord to give the leaders of our local, state and national government entities wisdom to make the right decision. Decisions that affect each and everyone one of us.

And as for our family, friends, community and church members, we ask you Lord a blessing on each one. For those who have strayed away from the church, allow our light of faith to stir up the flame of love and excitement. Teach us to give you holy praise. Teach us to sing in your glories praise. Teach us to help one another, that together, we be stronger in the faith you have instilled in each one of us.

Thank you Lord, for the many blessings you have given us.

We pray this all in the name of Jesus, our Lord, who has also taught us to pray:

Our Father, which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth,

As it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

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But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

And may the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face shine upon you be gracious to you.
May the Lord look upon you with his favor, and give you His peace, love and forgiveness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirt. Amen.