

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 15, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 248 ~ 1 of 33

As of 5:30 this morning, there was no Aberdeen American News paper. No travel was advised until 6 a.m. today.

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Friday, March 15, 2019

Girls Varsity State Tournament @ Sioux Falls
Boys Varsity State Tournament @ Sioux Falls
No School, Groton Area School District - Spring Break

Help Wanted

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

Bates Township Equalization Notice

Bates Township Equalization Meeting Notice:

The Bates Township Board of Equalization will meet at the Clerk's home on Tuesday, March 19th, 2019 at 7 pm.

All persons disputing their assessments are requested to notify the clerk prior to the meeting.

Betty Geist
Bates Township Clerk
14523 409th Ave
Conde, SD 57434
(0313.0320)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$19.21. 17306

Bates Township ROW Maintenance

Bates Township Board of Supervisors reminds all landowners and tenants that the road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the township road. This ditch is to be maintained and mowed. Any crops planted in the road right-of-way will be mowed and expenses charged to the landowner.

Landowner is responsible for spraying all noxious weeds.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors

Betty Geist
Township Clerk
(0313.0320)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$20.11. 17307

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Tree pulls service from house

A tree fell down behind the house of Brad and Chelsey Sheridan, 207 N. 4th St., in Groton, resulting in some minor damage. The tree fell on the service line, ripping the meter socket from the house. The house still had power, but the City of Groton Electric Dept. and Locke Electric restored the line in less than half an hour.

CLOSED! Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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State Government Offices Open Friday Morning in 17 Counties; Remaining Offices to Open at Noon

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Kristi Noem has ordered that state government offices open Friday morning at the regular time in 17 South Dakota counties while offices in the other counties will open at noon.

Counties where state offices will open at the regular time are Bon Homme, Butte, Clay, Custer, Douglas, Fall River, Harding, Hutchinson, Lawrence, Lincoln, McCook, Meade, Minnehaha, Pennington, Turner, Union and Yankton.

State offices in the other South Dakota counties are scheduled to open at noon Friday.

Most state government offices have been closed for the last two days by order of the Governor due to the heavy snowstorm and flooding.

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.uslbm.com/careers or call Diane at 605-448-2929.

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Lana's Annals

**Lana
Greenfield
District 2
State
Representative**

Greetings to all. This has been another week of winter's challenges. It must not be as bad as we would deem, however, because South Dakota is not mentioned on the national level as having experienced any difficulties. That is ok; we will just remain a "best kept secret!" We have always taken care of ourselves, despite the calamities we sometimes face. That is what keeps us South Dakota strong!!

The close of session had its peaks and valleys. I am ecstatic that we were unwavering as a legislature, and the nursing homes will receive 10 per cent increase in funding and community service providers will average a 6.5 per cent raise. This is unprecedented but long overdue. I am so grateful also that the nursing home

funding will be ongoing. We worked very hard to make this become a reality. Will this be an instantaneous fix for all the funding problems? No, but it certainly presents a life line of several million dollars.

We also voted (in a very hard battle) to fund the pheasant habitat bill. This bill requested one million dollars to promote economic growth, and I was happy to vote in favor of it in lieu of the aforementioned victory. We definitely need more cover for our pheasants. It is a great industry and definitely a good tourist attraction.

We voted to increase funding for our state workers including schools at 2.5 per cent, and that amount never was disputed. Some of the other projects that the legislature favored funding are as follows: increasing campsites and improving Palisades Park, funding repair for Elm Lake Dam, building a new medical wing at Jamison Complex in our state prison (this has outlived its usefulness and is unsafe currently), building a metrology lab at Sturgis in order to have a climate controlled building for accuracy of weights and measures (an example would be in making sure that gas pumps are properly calibrated and fuel products are correctly measured), and some funding was designated for improving horse racing tracks at Pierre and Aberdeen (120,000 dollars). I was surprised that a few years ago the funds were swept from this sport and put toward some other project, which obviously was more needed at the time. We also voted to do some building at Ellsworth Air Base so we can be competitive in attaining the B-21 Raider bombers. We need to stay well-recognized as a prestigious base for housing these by 2020. If you remember, several years ago there was talk of closure of a base or two, and at that time, Senator Thune worked hard to make sure that did not happen to Ellsworth. If one looks at the projects mentioned, all areas of the state would be fairly treated as receiving important funding. Keep in mind, however, that all of these projects are still subject to approval. Therefore, we will wait until the legislation is reviewed and possibly signed.

I know many of you contacted me to try to secure my vote on hemp, and I voted affirmatively. It was vetoed, however, but we had more than enough votes to override the veto in the House. Not so in the Senate. The override lost by a small margin (needed 24 affirmatives and only received 20) so the bill is dead.

We had a very long day on March 12. We went into caucus that morning at 8:30 a.m. and started session shortly after. It was a day of conference committees, recessing, and re-convening over and over. We were still in the capitol the next morning until about 3 a.m. We wanted our business completed by going straight through in order to get home ahead of the storm. I arrived in Doland about 5:30 a.m. on Wednesday after driving through severe fog. It was not that bad as I am usually a night owl anyway. I was satisfied upon reaching my destination that I was certain every bill had gotten a complete hearing and not just a quick vote. It is great to work with people who try to be fair in that way. We do not always agree, but that is the process. I noticed that the general bill received good, solid support, and well it should have. Contrary to what a few would have you believe, we knew the new pieces that would tentatively (if signed) become a part of the general bill, as we were always included in listing our priorities and then discussing them to get a consensus. The rest of the budget could have been inspected anytime, or anyone is allowed to attend daily appropriations when departments come before the committee and verbalize their requests.

If you were watching bills this year, and they did not pass, take heart. They may need more work (such

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as the involuntary commitment bill) and more support before possibly coming back next year. Sometimes it just takes patience; the vaping bill, for example, needs more teeth, but at least we started the discussion. I am hearing that the industry itself may be working on discouraging young people from vaping by setting up different and creative rules; we shall see.

With all of that said, I am grateful and humbled to work for you. When we make laws, we try to consider the people it will affect, the unintended consequences which may occur, the appropriateness of taking the issue up at a state level, and how it will affect our state and future generations.

I will write a short, upcoming article in two weeks after veto day to let you know if any of the above bills faced victory or defeat.

Brock and I were interviewed as the first mother-son legislators. We have put the story on facebook, but you can also watch it on SDPB as it has been archived.

It was fun to be asked to do this interview.

Until next time, THINK SPRING!

Rep. Greenfield



This was a photo of Main Street in the state's capital city of Pierre Thursday morning. Farmers came to town with their equipment to help with the snow removal. (Photo credit: Rich Shangreaux.)

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A crew from Northern Electric braved the blizzard conditions yesterday afternoon to replace a broken pole north of Groton. According to Groton Police Officer Damian Bahr, Bob Swisher came with his tractor to move snow so they could do their work. This was located at 124th and SD37. (Photo by Damian Bahr)



hm HARR
Motors

**4255 6th Ave
SE, Aberdeen**

Hi, my name is Bary Keith, a Groton resident. I have just recently joined the Harr Motors sales team. I'm excited to start helping people get into the right vehicle for them. Right now, any vehicle purchased from me, until the end of April, will receive an Autostart at no charge. Give me a call (605-216-6952) or (605-725-8624) or stop out and see me at Harr Motors today!!!

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Somewhere under all of that snow is SD37 south of Groton. This was taken last night before sunset. Plows will be out in full force today opening roads and highways. (Photo by Kristen Gonsoir)



Meanwhile in the southeastern part of the state, flooding from heavy rain left Emergency Crews rescue people from a Sioux Falls neighborhood. (Photo Credit KELOLAND.COM)

A bombogenesis hits

The culprit was a sudden and severe drop in ground-level air pressure in Colorado, the most pronounced dive since 1950 and something “that will go down in the history books,” said Greg Carbin, chief of forecast operations for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Weather Prediction Center.

It was caused by a combination of the jet stream and normal conditions in the wind shadow of the Rockies. Air rushed into the low-pressure area and then rose into the atmosphere, causing severe weather.

Meteorologists call the rapid change in pressure a “bomb cyclone” or “bombogenesis.”

The window-rattling storm brought blizzards, floods and tornadoes, stretching from the northern Rocky Mountains to Texas and beyond.

Noem Orders Opening of Emergency Operations Center; Preparing Emergency Declaration

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem today ordered the opening of the state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Pierre to help coordinate the state’s response to ongoing blizzard and flood conditions and announced that the state is preparing an emergency declaration.

The EOC will be located at the Klein Building, located at 221 South Central Avenue in Pierre. The building houses the Department of Public Safety’s Office of Emergency Management. The center is expected to be open today (Thursday).

The EOC will be staffed by state Office of Emergency Management personnel. Additional state agencies report to the EOC as their resources are needed to assist county or city governments.

“Having the EOC open gives counties one place to go in state government with their questions or resource requests,” said Noem. “With the EOC, we have the needed state agencies at one site together to help better manage the response to this severe storm.”

Noem says the state will issue an emergency declaration for the storm. State government continues to provide resources as needed to counties and cities dealing with the local impacts of the storm. Agencies like the Departments of Public Safety and Transportation have been working with local entities on their particular requests.

“We expect several counties to approve emergency declarations once they have time following the immediate response to the storm,” said Noem. “Once that happens, the state will issue its own emergency declaration. In the meantime, we are staying in touch with all counties across the state and finding the resources they need to respond effectively and keep South Dakotans safe. The timeline on an emergency declaration has no impact on the type or resources available or the speed of delivery.”

Noem has requested that people stay at home Thursday to allow crews time to clean roads and streets.



This was Broadway Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenue in Groton, looking south. This was taken last evening about 6 p.m. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Life of Eunice Alberts



Services for Eunice Alberts, 86, of Groton will be 10:00 a.m., Saturday, March 16th at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Charlie Bunk will officiate. Burial will follow at Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the church on Friday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Eunice passed away Monday, March 11, 2019 at her home.

Eunice Marion was born on June 24, 1932 at home in Andover to Charlie and Gertrude (Kraai) Hein. She was baptized and confirmed at Zion Lutheran Church in Andover. Eunice attended rural school in Day County until the 6th grade, when the family moved to a different farm. The youngest daughter and 6 years younger than her brother Howard, she became the "pet" of her older brothers and they affectionately nicknamed her "Tootie". She graduated with honors from Andover High School in 1950. She continued her education at Northern State Teachers College where she earned her teaching degree. Eunice taught school in the communities of Wheaton, MN, Pierre and Aber-

deen. Eunice was united in marriage to Raymond Alberts on March 4, 1962 in Andover and together they were blessed with two daughters. Eunice enjoyed farm life, helping with the chickens, gardening, canning and freezing her harvest. Eunice and Ray could be seen at almost every auction sale in the area. Family genealogy was a particular interest and Eunice spent much time tracking family history, composing family history books and scrapbooking. Eunice returned to Northern State to renew her teaching certificate. She received her Bachelor of Science in Education on August 1, 1980.

Eunice was a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, where she was active with WELCA. She served on several boards, including President of Northern Plains Conference, Secretary of Mission Action and SD Syndical Board. Eunice volunteered as a 4-H leader for ten years and as Secretary for the Summer Festival and Brown County Fair Board. She also belonged to the Groton American Legion Auxiliary and Putney Ladies Aid for many years.

Celebrating her life are her daughters, Karen (Scott) Phillips of Colton, Diane (Dean) Heimann of Omaha, NE, grandchildren: Patrick Phillips, Kevin Phillips, Emily Heimann, Nathaniel Heimann and Raymond Phillips.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband Raymond in 2015, brothers Jerauld Hein, Bob Hein, Howard Hein, Chuck Hein and sister Christine.

Honorary Casketbearers will be Karl Alberts, Ka Alberts, Linda Gengerke, Mary Ann Thompson, Judy Thompson, Carol Osterman, Sherry Zoellner, Emily Heimann and Ella Johnson.

Casketbearers will be Patrick Phillips, Kevin Phillips, Raymond Phillips, Nathaniel Heimann, Scott Phillips, Dean Heimann and Wayne Hein.

Noem Signs Bill to Increase Hospital Billing Accountability Signs Eight Bills on Variety of Topics

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem yesterday signed SB70, a bill to increase accountability and fairness in medical billing practices.

“Because of a blind spot in the law, hospitals and other medical facilities have been able to leverage a patient’s horrible accident to add a few extra dollars to their bottom line,” said Noem. “This bill sets up a pro-patient approach, holding hospitals and medical facilities to a more accountable billing practice. This puts us one step closer to equal billing treatment for all patients.”

Under current law, hospitals and other medical facilities can refuse to bill insurance companies of patients who are potential plaintiffs in personal injury suits in order to ultimately get higher rates for service. SB70 amends current law to require hospitals to submit the patient’s medical bills to an insurer in the same manner as any other patient.

Governor Noem signed the following bills into law:

HB1032 – An act to revise provisions regarding money transmission

SB1 – An act to add a legislator to the membership of the Extraordinary Cost Oversight Board, to establish the board in statute, and to repeal the administrative rules creating the board

SB70 – An act to revise certain provisions regarding hospital liens

SB73 – An act to revise qualifications for sanitary district trustees

SB76 – An act to allow a candidate for legislative or county office to be considered for nomination to statewide office

SB 99 – An act to establish certain provisions regarding commercial security deposits

SB124 – An act to provide for the transportation of alcoholic beverages by retail licensees

SB154 – An act to authorize the production and transport of saltwater crustaceans

Red Horse delivers senior meals during blizzard

Beverly McGannon posted this on her facebook page: A big high-five to the Red Horse Café. Lisa and Darren called all of the senior citizens to see if they wanted a senior meal delivered today. I would’ve never dreamt of asking them to in this weather. They made hamburgers french fries and ice cream and delivered to everyone who wanted it and couldn’t get to the café. That’s what small-town living is all about. Darren had to go through with the big drift the snow plow left out in front, over his knees to get to my door and it was probably worse other places. Thank you thank you.

I-90 Westbound Only Opening from Wall to Rapid City Significant Flooding Continues

PIERRE, S.D. – Officials are opening the westbound lanes of Interstate 90 between Wall and Rapid City. Please note this is the westbound lanes only.

Interstate 90 eastbound lanes between Rapid City and Wall and both the eastbound and westbound lanes from Wall to Chamberlain will remain closed until sometime Friday. Please do not anticipate an opening and sit at the gates, it's dangerous and gets in the way of crews continuing to clear and treat the roadway.

High winds and heavy drifting on the Interstate, state and local highways all throughout the central and northeastern parts of the state are hampering clean-up efforts. Please do not try to go around the Interstate closure to other highways as many are still impassable and crews are still working to clear numerous and very large drifts and remove stranded vehicles.

There is still significant flooding in the south central, southeastern and eastern parts of the state, along with the snow and strong winds that have moved to the east. Drivers are asked to turn around and not drive through floodwaters as the roadway may be washed away underneath.

Even as travel advisories are lifted, motorists are cautioned to remember winter driving conditions still exist across the state and if you must travel to slow down, keep the cruise off and give plow drivers and emergency responders room to work.

Drivers are reminded to check www.safetravelusa.com/sd or call 5-1-1 before travelling to view road conditions, No Travel Advisories, flooded roadways and roads marked as impassable.

If you are travelling today, the departments of Transportation and Public Safety recommend motorists also take the following steps.

- Wear your seatbelt
- Travel during the day
- Drive with your headlights on (not daytime running lights) so you can be seen by other motorists from the front and rear
- Don't use cruise control on icy or snow-covered roads
- Use highly traveled roads and highways
- Keep family and friends informed of your travel schedule and route
- Call 5-1-1 or visit safetravelusa.com for road conditions
- Keep a winter weather survival kit in your car. The kit should include blankets, warm clothing, water, energy bars, a flashlight, a distress flag, a shovel and matches
- Travel with a charged cell phone, but don't rely on it to get you out of a bad situation
- § Change travel plans as weather conditions warrant

- If you do get stranded:
- § Stay in your vehicle
 - Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes an hour to stay warm
 - When the engine is running, open a window slightly to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Periodically clearing snow from the exhaust pipe will also help prevent carbon monoxide buildup
 - When it's dark outside, turn on the interior light so rescuers can see you
 - Put up a distress flag, or spread a large colored cloth on the ground to attract attention from rescuers

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Today in Weather History

March 15, 1941: Beware the Ides of March. The most severe blizzard in modern history strikes North Dakota and Minnesota. The blizzard began on a Saturday night while many are traveling, and thus claims 71 lives. Winds gust to 75 mph at Duluth, Minnesota, and reach 85 mph at Grand Forks, North Dakota. Snow drifts twelve feet high were reported in north central Minnesota. A cold front traveling 30 mph crosses Minnesota in just seven hours.

March 15, 2010: Snowmelt runoff from an extensive snow cover flooded many creeks, roads, along with thousands of acres of pasture and cropland throughout northeast South Dakota. There were numerous road closures. The flooding lasted through the end of the month and for many locations in April. The counties mainly affected were Brown, Marshall, Day, Spink, and Roberts. Numerous communities were affected including Aberdeen, Claremont, Waubay, Amherst, Kidder, and the Richmond Lake area. The Claremont, Amherst, and Britton areas were the hardest hit with flooded land and roads. Several farms were surrounded by water with some people stranded. Between Aberdeen and Britton, sixty percent of the area was under water. Thousands of acres of cropland will not be planted due to too much water with estimates that 20 to 25 percent of Brown county cropland would not be planted. Many people in northeast South Dakota have had too much water for many years. The road damage was extensive, and repairs will be in the millions of dollars. Many roads across the area will also have to be raised. Many people had extra-long commutes due to flooded streets with some people having to move out of their homes. Across Day and Marshall Counties, rising lakes threatened many homes and cabins with sandbagging taking place. Most lakes and rivers across northeast South Dakota were at or near record levels. Click [HERE](#) for pictures around northeastern South Dakota.

1938: A tornado hit McPaul, Iowa while moving from southeast to northwest. Another tornado raced through Batesville, Illinois at 60 to 65 mph. Another tornado causing F4 damage killed 10 and injured 12 in St. Clair County, Missouri. This tornado was part of an outbreak that produced four different tornadoes and was responsible for 11 deaths and 42 injuries.

1952: On Reunion Island, some 400 miles east of Madagascar 127.56 inches of rain fell in a three-day period in the spring of 1952. This set a world record for the most rainfall in a 72 hour period. Also from the 15th to the 16th 73.62 inches of rain fell in this 24 hours period at Cilaos, La Reunion Island in the South Indian Ocean to set a world record.

2004: Brownsville, Texas breaks a century-old record for the most significant daily rainfall accumulation for March with 3.23 inches.

1987 - A winter storm in the western U.S. produced heavy snow in central Nevada, with 23 inches reported at Austin. High winds raked the desert areas of southern California and southern Arizona. Winds gusted to 59 mph at Douglas AZ. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

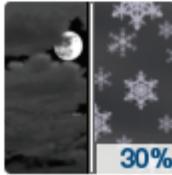
1988 - More than one hundred hours of continuous snow finally came to an end at Marquette MI, during which time the city was buried under 43 inches of snow. Unseasonably cold weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S., with forty-one cities reporting record low temperatures for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

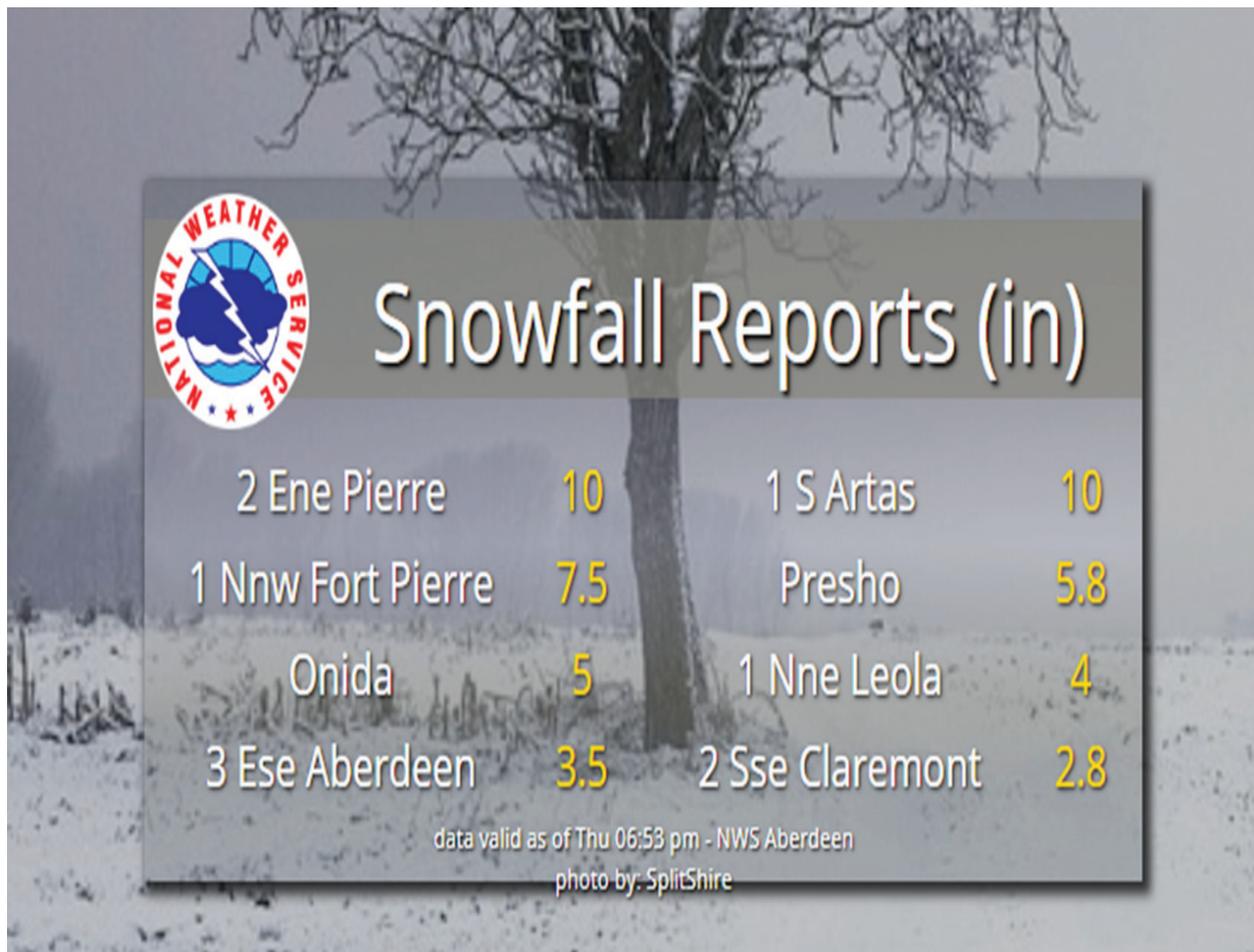
1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Alabama to the Middle Atlantic Coast. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 at Virginia Beach VA. Low pressure in southeastern Ontario produced high winds in the northeastern U.S. Winds gusted to 70 mph at Saint Albans VT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Low pressure crossing the Upper Mississippi Valley produced high winds from the Northern and Central Plains to the Great Lakes Region and Ohio Valley. Winds gusted to 73 mph at Iowa City IA, and wind gusts reached 79 mph at Waukesha WI. Winds of 75 mph were reported around Rapid City SD, with gusts to 100 mph. Up to a foot of snow was reported in western Iowa, western Minnesota, and extreme eastern North Dakota. Blizzard conditions were reported in northeastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Snow	Chance Snow then Slight Chance Wintry Mix	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 30 °F	Low: 12 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 31 °F



Published on: 03/14/2019 at 8:01PM

The combination of snow and very strong winds created very hazardous travel conditions across the area Wednesday night and Thursday. Here's an idea of how much snow fell... <https://www.weather.gov/source/crh/snowmap.html?sid=abr>

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 32 °F at 12:35 PM

Low Outside Temp: 25 °F at 10:24 PM

High Gust: 45 mph at 1:23 PM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 79° in 2015

Record Low: -29° in 1897

Average High: 39°F

Average Low: 20°F

Average Precip in Mar.: 0.44

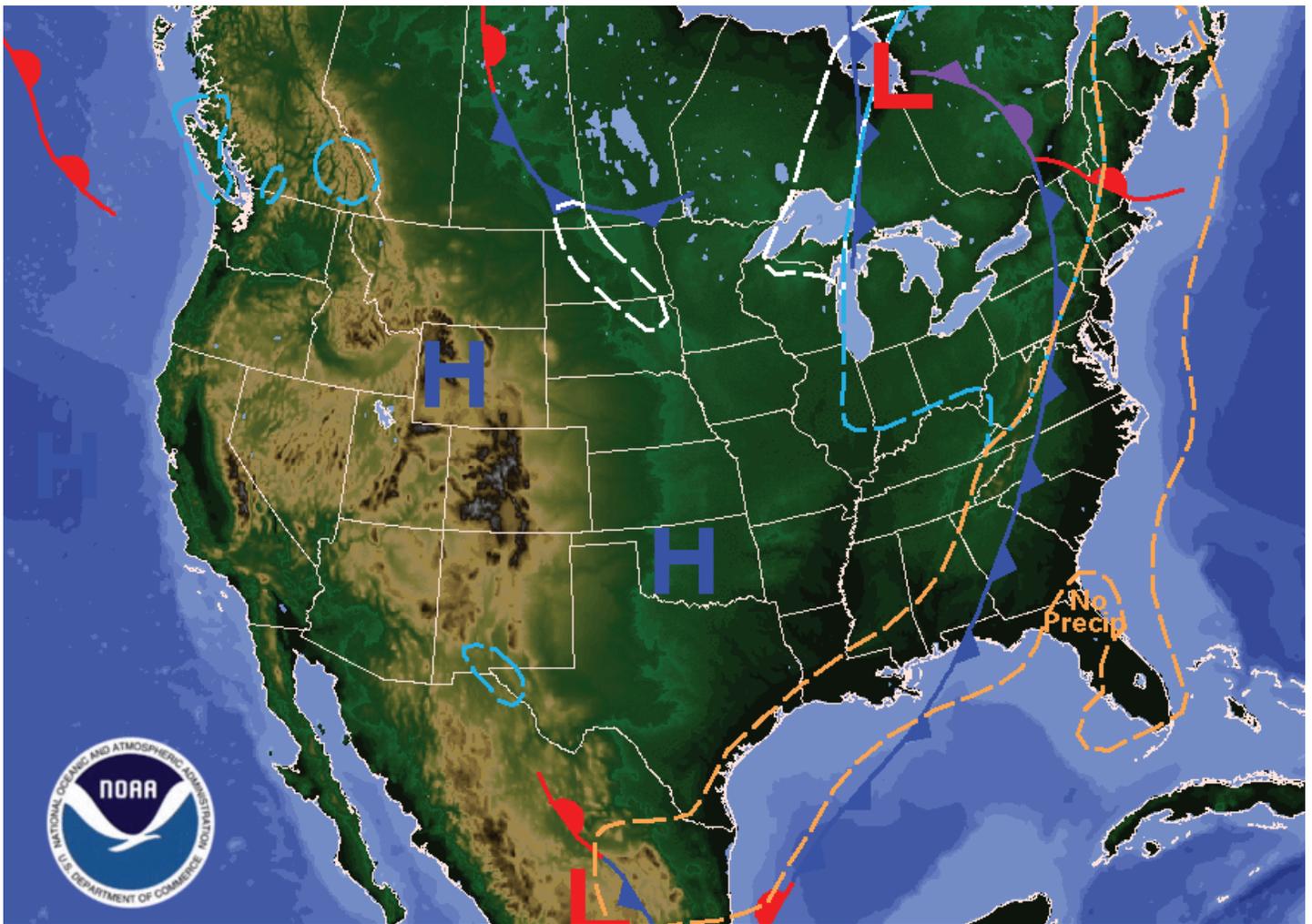
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.46

Precip Year to Date: 2.19

Sunset Tonight: 7:39 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Mar 15, 2019, issued 4:10 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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WHAT MATTERS MOST

It is common to hear a Christian say that the most important day of my life was the day I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. Its also common to hear them say that it wasnt long before I began to face the same old problems, was tempted and fell back into my sinful ways. How amazing that, centuries ago, Solomon gave us some sound, solid advice for the new Christian as well as Christians of all ages and stages in their walk with the Lord. What was it?

Above all else care for your loved oneswork hardexercise dailybe a good person! No! Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

If there is any verse that we as Christians must take to heart, it is a verse that warns us to guard our hearts! There is so much more to our hearts than the sentimental side that we read of in novels and hear of in songs. The heart is where life begins and ends; it is where habits, values, wills, and emotions begin. In our hearts is where we find the answers to who we are and what the difference is between ourselves and others, and what matters most, and what we will give our lives to and for. It is from our hearts that the real me springs forth when we least expect it, and causes us to want to hide from embarrassment when we are finally uncovered.

What fills our hearts eventually flows into our lives and the lives of others. This overflow is who we are. If we fill our hearts with His love, grace, hope, and wisdom, others will see Him.

Prayer: Father, may we relentlessly guard our hearts against anything that would destroy us and our walk with You. Give us your strength to stand firm! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 4:23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

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

Late-winter storm moves to Upper Midwest; flooding remains

By **JOSH FUNK** and **BLAKE NICHOLSON** Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A late-winter storm system continued its trek across the Midwest, expecting to send rain and snow into Minnesota and Illinois on Friday after leaving devastating flooding in parts of eastern Nebraska and Iowa.

The quickly rising floods evacuated people from their homes, washed out roads in communities, and left farmers worried all the water would drown livestock. The National Weather Service said the system would move into southern Minnesota and parts of Illinois, including Chicago, with rain later turning to snow. But the effects aren't expected to be as bad as what was seen farther west and south on Thursday, said meteorologist Paul Fajman in Omaha.

"With the frozen ground and amount of rain our area had, it was just a perfect set of circumstances that led to the flooding we're seeing in Nebraska and Iowa," Fajman said.

On Wednesday, a blizzard crippled parts of Wyoming, Colorado and western Nebraska.

The heavy rain that fell on top of melting snow in Plains states this week flowed directly into swollen rivers because most of the ground is still frozen. Residents of communities that had to evacuate because of flooding will be cleaning up the damage for some time.

"It was ugly. It still is," Jim Freeman said after using a chainsaw to cut up a chunk of ice that floodwaters left in his driveway. "There's a lot of damage."

Many of the homes in Freeman's neighborhood in Fremont, Nebraska, were inundated by the water that flowed in from the Platte River.

Evacuations also occurred in several other eastern Nebraska communities and in some areas of western Iowa. The weather service said flooding will likely continue on some rivers, including the Missouri River, into this weekend.

Fajman said parts of northeastern Iowa also can expect more flooding Friday and into the weekend. On Thursday, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds signed an emergency disaster proclamation and activated the state emergency operations center, and all or part of nine state parks were closed due to rising floodwaters.

Emergency crews responded after a vehicle was swept off a road in Norfolk, Nebraska, and rising water along the Elkhorn River prompted evacuations in the city of 24,000 people. The missing motorist had not been found by late Thursday.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem closed all state offices Thursday as the blizzard conditions moved in, and later in the day ordered the opening of the state's Emergency Operations Center to handle the response to the blizzard and flooding. The state was preparing an emergency declaration, Noem said. The Red Cross opened shelters in Sioux Falls and Yankton.

Rainfall records were set Wednesday in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Sioux City, Iowa.

"We've got a lot of water, and it's got to find a way to get out of here," said Tracy West, mayor of Lennox, South Dakota.

The system was moving out of the central Plains on Thursday, but weather service meteorologist Peter Rogers said flooding is likely to persist into the weekend in parts of South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa, with deeply frozen ground preventing rain and snowmelt from soaking into the soil.

The massive late-winter storm hit Colorado on Wednesday, causing widespread power outages, forcing the cancellation of hundreds of flights and wreaking havoc on roadways. A wind gust clocked in at 97 mph (156 kph) in Colorado Springs.

The culprit was a sudden and severe drop in ground-level air pressure in Colorado, the most pronounced dive since 1950 and something "that will go down in the history books," said Greg Carbin, chief of forecast operations for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Prediction Center.

It was caused by a combination of the jet stream and normal conditions in the wind shadow of the Rock-

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ies. Air rushed into the low-pressure area and then rose into the atmosphere, causing severe weather. Meteorologists call the rapid change in pressure a "bomb cyclone" or "bombogenesis."

The window-rattling storm brought blizzards, floods and tornadoes, stretching from the northern Rocky Mountains to Texas and beyond.

In the Texas Panhandle, a utility worker was killed Wednesday while working to restore power amid strong winds pushed in by the storm. And in New Mexico, 36 miners at a nuclear waste repository were trapped underground in an elevator for about three hours because of a power outage caused by the extreme weather.

The storm also contributed to the death of Daniel Groves, a Colorado State Patrol officer who was hit and killed by a car as he helped another driver who had slid off Interstate 76 near Denver.

About 50 National Guard soldiers and airmen used specialized vehicles with tank-like treads to rescue 75 people stranded in their cars during the storm.

Five people were hurt and 150 dairy cows had to be euthanized when a tornado hit the small town of Dexter, New Mexico, on Tuesday. A tornado touched down Thursday in western Kentucky, damaging utility lines and trees. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

In Michigan, a tornado touchdown was reported Thursday in Vernon, southwest of Flint, and in nearby Durand. Michigan State Police said first-responders confirmed at least 21 homes were damaged, but no injuries were immediately reported.

Nicholson reported from Bismarck, North Dakota. Also contributing were Associated Press reporters Dan Elliott in Longmont, Colorado; David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa; Bob Moen and Mead Gruver in Cheyenne, Wyoming; Gretchen Ehlke in Milwaukee; James Anderson and Thomas Peipert in Denver; Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis; Margery A. Beck and Nelson Lampe in Omaha, Nebraska; Seth Borenstein in Washington; David Warren in Dallas; and Kathleen Foody in Denver.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

05-12-27-28-35

(five, twelve, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$165,000

Lotto America

18-42-44-48-52, Star Ball: 8, ASB: 3

(eighteen, forty-two, forty-four, forty-eight, fifty-two; Star Ball: eight; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$16.73 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Powerball

18-36-45-47-69, Powerball: 14, Power Play: 3

(eighteen, thirty-six, forty-five, forty-seven, sixty-nine; Powerball: fourteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$448 million

Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Named Regional Railroad of the Year

RAPID CITY, S.D.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar 14, 2019--Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad, Inc. (RCPE), a subsidiary of Genesee & Wyoming Inc. (G&W) (NYSE:GWR), was named Regional Railroad of the Year by Railway Age magazine this week, an award for outstanding achievement in innovation, marketing, customer service and safety.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/>

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home/20190314005159/en/

Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad was named Regional Railroad of the Year by Railway Age magazine this week (Photo: Business Wire)

RCPE's achievements include completing 2016-2018 with zero Federal Railroad Administration-reportable employee injuries, investing more than \$80 million in infrastructure, growing revenues 20 percent since 2015 and attracting more than \$300 million in new customer investments along the rail line.

"This is well deserved recognition for the railroad's 175 employees," says Michael Miller, G&W's president, North America. "RCPE's success has been a true public-private partnership among the railroad, customers and government to invest and grow together. We committed to investing and improving service levels, and customers committed to growing their business with us. State and federal grants helped the railroad increase its capacity and upgrade the line, which were key to attracting new investment in the region."

The 670-mile freight line runs from Tracy, Minn., to Rapid City, S.D., passing through Brookings, Huron, Miller, Highmore, Pierre and Wall, S.D., with branches from Redfield to Mansfield, S.D., as well as from Rapid City to both Colony, Wyo., and Chadron, Neb. Commodities hauled include grain, bentonite clay, cement, ethanol and fertilizer.

The railroad began operations June 1, 2014, following RCPE's purchase of the west end of the former Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern rail line from Canadian Pacific.

See the Railway Age story here: <https://www.railwayage.com/freight/railway-ages-2019-short-line-and-regional-railroads-of-the-year-lirc-rcpe/>

About G&W

G&W owns or leases 120 freight railroads organized in eight locally managed operating regions with 8,000 employees serving 3,000 customers.

G&W's six North American regions serve 41 U.S. states and four Canadian provinces and include 114 short line and regional freight railroads with more than 13,000 track-miles. G&W's Australia Region serves New South Wales, the Northern Territory and South Australia and operates the 1,400-mile Tarcoola-to-Darwin rail line. The Australia Region is 51.1% owned by G&W and 48.9% owned by a consortium of funds and clients managed by Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets. G&W's UK/Europe Region includes the U.K.'s largest rail maritime intermodal operator and second-largest freight rail provider, as well as regional rail services in Continental Europe. G&W subsidiaries and joint ventures also provide rail service at more than 40 major ports, rail-ferry service between the U.S. Southeast and Mexico, transload services, contract coal loading, and industrial railcar switching and repair.

"Safe Harbor" Statement under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995: Statements in this press release regarding Genesee & Wyoming's business which are not historical facts are "forward-looking statements" that involve risks and uncertainties. For a discussion of such risks and uncertainties, which could cause actual results to differ from those contained in the forward-looking statements, see "Risk Factors" in the Company's Annual Report or Form 10-K for the most recently ended fiscal year.

Sioux Falls woman pleads not guilty to child porn charges

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls woman has pleaded not guilty to receiving and distributing child pornography.

Forty-nine-year-old Sharon Dvorak was indicted by a federal grand jury earlier this month for distribution and receipt of child pornography in July 2018. She made an initial appearance in federal court Monday.

The U.S. Attorney's Office says the maximum penalty for the federal charge is up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

A look at attacks on houses of worship over last decade

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By The Associated Press undefined

Houses of worship around the world, a place of reflection and peace, have been targeted for attack by extremists. Here are some of the deadly assaults over the last decade:

Oct. 31, 2010: Al-Qaida in Iraq militants attack Our Lady of Salvation Catholic Church in Baghdad during Sunday night mass, killing 58 people in the deadliest assault targeting Christians since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion there. Al-Qaida in Iraq later became the Islamic State group.

Dec. 15, 2010: Two suicide bombers from the Sunni extremist group Jundallah blow themselves up near a mosque in southeastern Iran, including six Revolutionary Guard commanders.

July 16, 2010: Jundallah group kills 27 and injures 270 after it carries out a double suicide bombing against another Shiite mosque in southeastern Iran.

Aug. 5, 2012: Six members of the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin, in Oak Creek, are fatally shot by a white supremacist, Wade Michael Page. Page was shot by a responding officer and later killed himself.

Nov. 18, 2014: Two Palestinians using axes, knives and a gun kill four Jewish worshippers and an Israeli police officer in an attack on a Jerusalem synagogue.

Jan. 30, 2015: Suicide bombing at a Shiite mosque in the Pakistani town of Shikarpur kills 71. Jundallah claims responsibility.

March 20, 2015: Islamic State suicide bombers attack a pair of mosques in Yemen's capital, unleashing monstrous blasts that ripped through worshippers and killed 137 people.

June 17, 2015: Nine black worshippers including a pastor are killed by Dylann Roof, a 21-year-old white supremacist, after he prayed with them in Charleston, South Carolina. Roof was convicted of federal hate-crime and obstruction-of-religion charges and sentenced to death.

Sept. 24, 2015: A suicide bomber strikes a mosque in Yemen's rebel-held capital, killing 25 worshippers during prayers for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

Nov. 12, 2016: Suicide bomber from Islamic State group kills over 50 at the shrine of Shah Noorani, in Pakistan's Baluchistan province.

Dec. 11, 2016: Suicide bomber strikes inside a Cairo chapel adjacent to St. Mark's Cathedral, seat of Egypt's ancient Coptic Orthodox Church. The Islamic State group claimed the attack, which killed at least 25 people.

Feb. 16, 2017: Suicide bomber detonates his explosives vest among the devotees at the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Pakistan's Sindh province, killing 98.

April 9, 2017: Twin suicide bombings rock churches in the Egyptian coastal city of Alexandria and Tanta, killing at least 45 people. The attack was claimed by the Islamic State group.

Nov. 5, 2017: Dressed in black tactical-style gear and armed with an assault weapon, 26-year-old Devin Kelley opened fire at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, killing 26 people and wounding about 20 others.

Nov. 24, 2017: Militants kill 311 worshippers in a mosque attack in north Sinai, the deadliest such terrorist attack in Egypt's modern history.

Dec. 17, 2017: Islamic State attack on a church in Pakistani city of Quetta kills 16 people.

Oct. 27, 2018: A gunman believed to have spewed anti-Semitic slurs and rhetoric on social media entered Tree of Life Congregation synagogue in Pittsburgh and opened fire, killing 11 and wounding six, including four police officers.

Jan. 27, 2019: Two suicide attackers detonate two bombs during a Mass in a Roman Catholic cathedral on the largely Muslim island of Jolo in the southern Philippines, killing 23 and wounding about 100 others. Three days later, an attacker hurls a grenade in a mosque in nearby Zamboanga city, killing two religious teachers.

March 15, 2019: At least 40 people are killed in an attack at mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch.

Mass shootings at New Zealand mosques kill 49; 1 man charged

By MARK BAKER and NICK PERRY Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — Mass shootings at two mosques full of worshippers attending Friday prayers killed 49 people on what the prime minister called “one of New Zealand’s darkest days,” as authorities charged one person, detained three others and defused explosive devices in what appeared to be a carefully planned racist attack.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said the events in Christchurch represented “an extraordinary and unprecedented act of violence” and acknowledged many of those affected may be migrants and refugees. In addition to the dead, she said more than 20 people were seriously wounded.

“It is clear that this can now only be described as a terrorist attack,” Ardern said.

Police took three men and a woman into custody after the shootings, which shocked people across the nation of 5 million people. One of the suspects was later charged with murder.

While there was no reason to believe there were more suspects, Ardern said the national security threat level was being raised to the second-highest level.

Authorities have not specified who they detained, but said none had been on any watch list. A man who claimed responsibility for the shootings left a 74-page anti-immigrant manifesto in which he explained who he was and his reasoning for the attack. He said he was a 28-year-old white Australian and a racist.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison confirmed that one of the four people detained was an Australian-born citizen.

Police Commissioner Mike Bush said Friday night that a man had been charged with murder. He did not mention the other three suspects and did not say whether the same shooter was responsible for both attacks.

Ardern at a news conference alluded to anti-immigrant sentiment as the possible motive, saying that while many people affected by the shootings may be migrants or refugees “they have chosen to make New Zealand their home, and it is their home. They are us.”

As for the suspects, Ardern said “these are people who I would describe as having extremist views that have absolutely no place in New Zealand.”

Bush said police had found two improvised explosive devices in one car, a clarification from an earlier statement that there were devices in multiple vehicles. He said they had disabled one and were in the process of disabling the second.

The deadliest attack occurred at the Masjid Al Noor mosque in central Christchurch at about 1:45 p.m. At least 30 people were killed there.

Witness Len Peneha said he saw a man dressed in black enter the mosque and then heard dozens of shots, followed by people running from the mosque in terror.

Peneha, who lives next door to the mosque, said the gunman ran out of the mosque, dropped what appeared to be a semi-automatic weapon in his driveway, and fled. He said he then went into the mosque to try and help.

“I saw dead people everywhere. There were three in the hallway, at the door leading into the mosque, and people inside the mosque,” he said. “It’s unbelievable nutty. I don’t understand how anyone could do this to these people, to anyone. It’s ridiculous.”

He said he helped about five people recover in his home. He said one was slightly injured.

“I’ve lived next door to this mosque for about five years and the people are great, they’re very friendly,” he said. “I just don’t understand it.”

He said the gunman was white and was wearing a helmet with some kind of device on top, giving him a military-type appearance.

A video that was apparently livestreamed by the shooter shows the attack in horrifying detail. The gunman spends more than two minutes inside the mosque spraying terrified worshippers with bullets again and again, sometimes re-firing at people he has already cut down.

He then walks outside to the street, where he shoots at people on the sidewalk. Children’s screams can

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be heard in the distance as he returns to his car to get another rifle.

The gunman then walks back into the mosque, where there are at least two dozen people lying on the ground. After walking back outside and shooting a woman there, he gets back in his car, where the song "Fire" by English rock band "The Crazy World of Arthur Brown" can be heard blasting from the speakers. The singer bellows, "I am the god of hellfire!" and the gunman drives away. The video then cuts out.

There was a second shooting at the Linwood Masjid Mosque that killed at least 10 people.

Mark Nichols told the New Zealand Herald he heard about five gunshots and that a Friday prayer-goer returned fire with a rifle or shotgun.

Nichols said he saw two injured people being carried out on stretchers past his automotive shop and that both people appeared to be alive.

The police commissioner warned anybody who was thinking of going to a mosque anywhere in New Zealand on Friday to stay put.

The man who claimed responsibility for the shooting said he came to New Zealand only to plan and train for the attack. He said he was not a member of any organization, but had donated to and interacted with many nationalist groups, though he acted alone and no group ordered the attack.

He said the mosques in Christchurch and Linwood would be the targets, as would a third mosque in the town of Ashburton if he could make it there.

He said he chose New Zealand because of its location, to show that even the most remote parts of the world were not free of "mass immigration."

New Zealand is generally considered to be a welcoming country for immigrants and refugees. Last year, the prime minister announced the country would boost its annual refugee quota from 1,000 to 1,500 starting in 2020. Ardern, whose party campaigned on the promise of raising the intake of refugees, dubbed the planned increase "the right thing to do."

A cricket match between New Zealand and Bangladesh scheduled to start Saturday was canceled after the Bangladesh cricket team had a narrow escape.

Players and members of the team's coaching staff were reportedly on their bus, approaching the Masjid Al Noor mosque in Hagley Park when the shooting broke out.

Batsman Tamim Iqbal tweeted "entire team got saved from active shooters. Frightening experience and please keep us in your prayers."

Mass shootings in New Zealand are exceedingly rare. The deadliest in modern history occurred in the small town of Aramoana in 1990, when gunman David Gray shot and killed 13 people following a dispute with a neighbor.

Perry reported from Wellington. Associated Press writers Kristen Gelineau in Sydney, Rod McGuirk in Canberra, Australia, and Chris Blake in Bangkok contributed to this report.

Israel says it struck 100 Hamas targets after rocket attack

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and FARES AKRAM Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli warplanes on Friday struck some 100 Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in response to a rare rocket attack on the Israeli metropolis of Tel Aviv. Rocket fire persisted into the morning, setting the stage for additional possible reprisals.

The army said that its targets had included an office complex in Gaza City used to plan and command Hamas militant activities, an underground complex that served as Hamas' main rocket-manufacturing site, and a center used for Hamas drone development.

In Gaza, health officials reported four people wounded, including a husband and wife in the southern town of Rafah. There were no further details. The office building struck by Israel had been used by Hamas' office of prisoner affairs.

The sudden outbreak of violence comes at a sensitive time for both sides, and it appeared that Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers had incentives to end the fighting.

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in the midst of a tight re-election battle. A tough response would draw international criticism and domestic accusations that he is acting out of political motivations ahead of the April 9 vote. But a restrained response will draw criticism from his fellow hard-line rivals.

Hamas, meanwhile, is coping with its own domestic troubles. Israel and Egypt have maintained a crippling blockade on Gaza since Hamas took over the territory in 2007. The blockade, along with sanctions by the rival Palestinian Authority and Hamas' own mismanagement, have fueled an economic crisis that has driven unemployment over 50 percent.

Shortly before the rocket attack, Hamas police on Thursday violently broke up a rare protest by demonstrators angry about the dire living conditions in Gaza.

The crackdown triggered heavy criticism on social media, raising the possibility that the rocket fire was a diversionary tactic. The organizers of a weekly protest along the Israeli border said they would cancel the demonstration in the wake of the escalation.

The fighting came as Egyptian mediators were trying to extend a cease-fire between the bitter enemies, which last fought a war in 2014. The Egyptians left Gaza late Thursday.

Hamas, which typically claims responsibility for its military actions, denied involvement in the rocket attack on Tel Aviv and even said it had undermined its interests. But Israel's military said it had concluded the group was behind the attack.

"The IDF holds the Hamas terror organization responsible for all events transpiring in the Gaza Strip and emanating from it," the military said in a statement.

The late-night attack Thursday on Tel Aviv, Israel's densely populated commercial and cultural capital, marked a dramatic escalation in hostilities. It was the first time the city had been targeted since a 2014 war between Israel and Gaza militants.

Following the first Israeli airstrikes, several additional rounds of rocket fire were launched into Israel. The military said several rockets were intercepted by its air defense systems, and there were no reports of injuries.

The initial blasts from the Israeli airstrikes in southern Gaza were so powerful that smoke could be seen in Gaza City, 25 kilometers (15 miles) to the north. The Israeli warplanes could be heard roaring through the skies above Gaza City.

Israel and Hamas are bitter enemies and have fought three wars since the Islamic militant group seized power in Gaza in 2007. Smaller flare-ups have occurred sporadically since Israel and Hamas fought their last war, in 2014.

Despite its denial, Hamas is one of the only groups in Gaza with the means to strike Tel Aviv. A smaller militant group, the Iranian-backed Islamic Jihad, also possesses a large arsenal of rockets, though it too denied involvement.

Smaller Salafi groups inspired by the Islamic State group also operate in Gaza, though it is unclear whether they have powerful rockets capable of striking so deep inside Israel.

Brig. Gen. Ronen Manelis, the chief Israeli military spokesman, said the army had been caught off guard by Thursday night's rocket barrage and had no advance intelligence.

Israeli Cabinet Minister Naftali Bennett, a hard-line rival of Netanyahu's, called on the prime minister to convene a gathering of his Security Cabinet and demand the army "present a plan to defeat Hamas."

Earlier this week, Israel struck Hamas targets in Gaza in response to rocket fire on southern Israel, near the border. Late Thursday, local media said that Egyptian mediators left the territory.

At the time, Netanyahu issued a warning to Hamas, rejecting suggestions that Israel would be reluctant to take tough action in Gaza ahead of national elections next month.

"I suggest to Hamas, don't count on it," he told his Cabinet. "We will do anything necessary to restore security and quiet to the area adjacent to the Gaza Strip and to the south in general."

—
Akram reported from Gaza City, Gaza Strip.

Aid worker: Survivors say 45 migrants died in Mediterranean

By AMIRA EL MASAITI Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco (AP) — Forty-five migrants died trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Spain, including pregnant women, a Spanish rights activist said Thursday, quoting survivors. Morocco reported that at least 21 other migrants were rescued at sea.

Helena Maleno, who runs the Tangiers-based group Walking Borders, said she based her figure on accounts from seven female survivors of the smuggling boat that floundered and took on water Wednesday.

"Survivors told me they had about 13 women on board. Many were pregnant," Maleno said by telephone. "There was also one young girl, between 12 and 14 years old, who didn't survive."

The information was not immediately confirmed by Morocco. A Moroccan official said the Royal Marines rescued at least 21 migrants on Thursday, a day after their rubber dinghy floundered. One body was recovered, he said, but he was unaware of the total number of dead.

The official, who had information about the sinking, wasn't authorized to discuss it. He said the migrants, all sub-Saharan, were in a critical state when pulled from the water north of Nador.

Spain's Maritime Rescue Service said it offered Moroccan authorities logistical help for the search and rescue operation on Wednesday and Thursday.

Maleno said she was contacted Wednesday morning by a family member but was only able to make contact with the small boat at 3:45 p.m. that day. The migrants told her they were having trouble keeping their boat afloat. Just over two hours later she said that migrants told her by phone: "We are sinking, the Zodiac is full of water." Then she said she heard screams.

Spain's maritime rescue said a plane from the European border and coast guard agency and the Algerian coast guard had also joined in the search. It did not explain why they did not reach the boat in time.

Spain became the leading migrant entry route into Europe last year with over 57,000 unauthorized arrivals, according to the European Union. Morocco is the main departure point.

Around 2,300 people died crossing the Mediterranean Sea last year, according to the International Organization for Migration.

Joseph Wilson and Renata Brito in Barcelona contributed to this report.

Democratic field taking shape with O'Rourke entry

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — The contours of the Democratic presidential primary came into clearer focus this week with Texan Beto O'Rourke's entry into the race — one of the final puzzle pieces in a contest that will be shaped by questions about race and gender, political ideology and generational change.

The sprawling Democratic field features candidates ranging from 37 to 77 years old; liberals and moderates; senators, governors and mayors; and an unprecedented number of women and minorities. Former Vice President Joe Biden is the only major contender still on the sidelines and has suggested he could remain there for several more weeks.

The field has been awaiting O'Rourke's decision for months. He narrowly lost the Senate race in conservative Texas in November but became a political celebrity in the process, demonstrating an easy connection with voters and an eye-popping ability to raise money from small donors.

But the anticipation over O'Rourke, who served three terms in Congress, has rankled some in the party, who contend a woman or a minority would not be seen as a viable presidential candidate on the heels of a defeat.

"I wouldn't be surprised if there was an assumption of competence, an assumption of quality and a desire for him to run again, as a man," said MJ Hegar, who lost a close congressional race in Texas in the fall. "A question for me, as a woman, is 'Why did you lose?'"

O'Rourke enters a race with no clear front-runner. Biden and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders have topped early polling, reflecting the reservoir of goodwill each has with a sizable share of the primary electorate

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but hardly guaranteeing either an easy path to the nomination.

With the first primary contest still 11 months away, huge uncertainties hang over the field. Among them: Which candidates can raise enough money to sustain a long and grueling campaign?

Sanders set the pace for grassroots donations, pulling in \$6 million during his first day as a candidate, according to his campaign. In the final weeks of the first fundraising quarter of the year, many wealthy donors are waiting to make commitments.

"You really have to have a plan to stay alive," said Joel Benenson, a Democratic pollster who worked for Barack Obama's and Hillary Clinton's presidential campaigns. "This is not just about having one demographic group. You're going to have to have broad reach to stay alive."

The debates, which begin in June, also loom as the first real test of how the candidates will draw contrasts with one another. Thus far, the Democrats have refrained from challenging one another in public, arguing that party unity will be crucial in the general election campaign against President Donald Trump.

"If you don't end up being the nominee, let's have none of this lingering acrimony after the nominee has been selected," New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker said Thursday. "Everybody needs to unify around the candidate because that's where the strength of the Democratic Party is."

It was notable that O'Rourke's entry into the race was accompanied by a notable uptick in the kind of political shadowboxing the candidates have largely avoided, showing he has the attention of his competitors.

Just after O'Rourke announced his campaign Thursday morning, another Texan running for president, Julian Castro, released a list of endorsements from Democrats in the state. California Sen. Kamala Harris announced she plans to headline a rally in Texas later this month. And she sent a fundraising appeal that singled out O'Rourke by name and pointedly mentioned the "record number of women and people of color" running for the Democratic nomination.

O'Rourke, 46, said he knows that being a white man in a party eager to promote women and minorities may be a challenge.

"I totally understand people who will make a decision based on the fact that almost every single one of our presidents has been a white man, and they want something different for this country," O'Rourke said in a Vanity Fair cover story published on the eve of his campaign announcement. "And I think that's a very legitimate basis upon which to make a decision. Especially in the fact that there are some really great candidates out there right now."

Some Democrats welcomed O'Rourke's entry into the race. He received a handful of endorsements from congressional colleagues, who praised his unifying message.

Jennifer Palmieri, a former adviser to Obama and Clinton, said the Texan's raw talent would help raise the bar for the rest of the field.

"Good candidates make each other better, and it raises the level of competition," Palmieri said.

With O'Rourke officially in the race, Biden is the only major player left to declare. A few long-shot candidates, most notably Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, may also still get in before the field is set.

Biden's team has yet to formally hire any staff. But his advisers have been signaling to Democratic operatives in Iowa and New Hampshire that the former vice president is ready to make the leap, likely in early April. He'll deliver a speech on Saturday before a friendly audience of Delaware Democrats.

"He wants to do it," said Rep. Cedric Richmond of Louisiana, who is a former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and a Biden supporter. "He just wants to cross every T and dot every I."

Stacey Abrams, the popular Democrat who narrowly lost the Georgia governor's race in November, has also stoked speculation about a 2020 White House run. However, people close to Abrams say she is more likely to pursue a Senate campaign.

Abrams and Biden met privately Thursday in Washington.

Trump is closely monitoring the Democratic primary, including O'Rourke's announcement. He jabbed at O'Rourke's animated speaking style, saying, "He's got a lot of hand movement. Is he crazy or is that just how he acts?" and predicted victory over the eventual Democratic nominee.

"Whoever it is, I'll take him or her on," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

Associated Press writers Will Weissert in Austin, Texas, Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, and Juana Summers and Elana Schor in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Turkey's Erdogan condemns New Zealand mosque attack

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has condemned the attacks on mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch calling it the "latest example of rising racism and Islamophobia."

Tweeting in English and Turkish on Friday, Erdogan said: "On behalf of my country, I offer my condolences to the Islamic world and the people of New Zealand, who have been targeted by this deplorable act."

He also wished a speedy recovery to the wounded.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has said 40 people were killed in the attack on two mosques.

Turkey's private NTV news channel quoted Turkish embassy officials as saying there are no Turkish citizens among the dead.

NKorean official: Kim rethinking US talks, launch moratorium

By ERIC TALMADGE Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will soon decide whether to continue diplomatic talks and maintain his moratorium on missile launches and nuclear tests, a senior North Korean official said Friday, adding that the U.S. threw away a golden opportunity at the recent summit between their leaders.

Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui, addressing a meeting of diplomats and foreign media, including The Associated Press, in Pyongyang said the North was deeply disappointed by the failure of the two sides to reach any agreements at the Hanoi summit between Kim and President Donald Trump.

She said Pyongyang now has no intention of compromising or continuing talks unless the United States takes measures that are commensurate to the changes it has taken — such as the 15-month moratorium on launches and tests — and changes its "political calculation."

Choe, who attended the Feb. 27-28 talks in Hanoi, said Kim was puzzled by what she called the "eccentric" negotiation position of the U.S. She suggested that while Trump was more willing to talk, an atmosphere of hostility and mistrust was created by the uncompromising demands of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton. She said statements by senior Trump advisers since the summit have further worsened the climate.

Even so, she said personal relations between the two leaders are still good "and the chemistry is mysteriously wonderful."

She said it was entirely up to Kim whether to continue the launch and test moratorium, and said she expects he will "clarify his position" within a short period of time.

"On our way back to the homeland, our chairman of the state affairs commission said, 'For what reason do we have to make this train trip again?'" she said. "I want to make it clear that the gangster-like stand of the U.S. will eventually put the situation in danger. We have neither the intention to compromise with the U.S. in any form nor much less the desire or plan to conduct this kind of negotiation."

Choe questioned the claim by Trump at a news conference after the talks in Hanoi broke down that the North was seeking the lifting of all sanctions against it, and said it was seeking only the ones that are directed at its civilian economy. After the summit had ended, State Department officials clarified that was indeed the North's position, but said the lifting of economic sanctions was such a big demand that it would essentially subsidize the North's continued nuclear activity.

Choe said it was the U.S. that was being too demanding and inflexible and called the demand that denuclearization come before sanctions are eased "an absurd sophism." She added that while South Korean President Moon Jae-in has tried to help bring the U.S. and North Korea together to talk, the South is "a

player, not an arbiter" because it is an ally of Washington.

She said even though the people, military and officials of the munitions industry have sent Kim thousands of petitions to never give up the nuclear program, he went to Hanoi to build trust and carry out mutually agreed commitments "one by try and step by step."

"What is clear is that the U.S. has thrown away a golden opportunity this time," she said. "I'm not sure why the U.S. came out with this different description. We never asked for the removal of sanctions in their entirety."

"This time we understood very clearly that the United States has a very different calculation to ours," she added.

She refused to comment directly when asked by one of the ambassadors about news reports the North may be preparing for another missile launch or satellite launch.

"Whether to maintain this moratorium or not is the decision of our chairman of the state affairs commission," she said, using one of Kim's titles. "He will make his decision in a short period of time."

Journalists were not allowed to ask questions during the briefing, which lasted nearly an hour.

Talmadge is the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram: @EricTalmadge

Senate votes against Trump border emergency

By **LISA MASCARO, ALAN FRAM and CATHERINE LUCEY** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a stunning rebuke, a dozen defecting Republicans joined Senate Democrats to block the national emergency that President Donald Trump declared so he could build his border wall with Mexico. The rejection capped a week of confrontation with the White House as both parties in Congress strained to exert their power in new ways.

The 59-41 tally Thursday, following the Senate's vote a day earlier to end U.S. involvement in the war in Yemen, promised to force Trump into the first vetoes of his presidency. Trump had warned against both actions. Moments after Thursday's vote, the president tweeted a single word of warning: "VETO!"

Two years into the Trump era, a defecting dozen Republicans, pushed along by Democrats, showed a willingness to take that political risk. Twelve GOP senators, including the party's 2012 presidential nominee, Mitt Romney of Utah, joined the dissent over the emergency declaration order that would enable the president to seize for the wall billions of dollars Congress intended elsewhere.

"The Senate's waking up a little bit to our responsibilities," said Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., who said the chamber had become "a little lazy" as an equal branch of government. "I think the value of these last few weeks is to remind the Senate of our constitutional place."

Many senators said the vote was not necessarily a rejection of the president or the wall, but protections against future presidents -- namely a Democrat who might want to declare an emergency on climate change, gun control or any number of other issues.

"This is constitutional question, it's a question about the balance of power that is core to our constitution," Romney said. "This is not about the president," he added. "The president can certainly express his views as he has and individual senators can express theirs."

Thursday's vote was the first direct challenge to the 1976 National Emergencies Act, just as Wednesday's on Yemen was the first time Congress invoked the decades-old War Powers Act to try to rein in a president. Seven Republicans joined Democrats in halting U.S. backing for the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in the aftermath of the kingdom's role in the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Even though there's not likely to be enough numbers to override a veto, the votes nevertheless sent a message from Capitol Hill.

"Today's votes cap a week of something the American people haven't seen enough of in the last two years," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, "both parties in the United States Congress standing up to Donald Trump."

The result is a role-reversal for Republicans who have been reluctant to take on Trump, bracing against his high-profile tweets and public attacks of reprimand. But now they are facing challenges from voters

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— in some states where senators face stiff elections -- who are expecting more from Congress.

Centrist Maine GOP Sen. Susan Collins, who's among those most vulnerable in 2020, said she's sure the president "will not be happy with my vote. But I'm a United States senator and I feel my job is to stand up for the Constitution, so let the chips fall where they may."

Trump's grip on the party, though, remains strong and the White House made it clear that Republicans resisting Trump could face political consequences. Ahead of the voting, Trump framed the issue as with-him-or-against-him on border security, a powerful argument with many.

"A vote for today's resolution by Republican Senators is a vote for Nancy Pelosi, Crime, and the Open Border Democrats!" Trump tweeted. "Don't vote with Pelosi!" he said in another, referring to the speaker of the House.

A White House official said Trump won't forget when senators who oppose him want him to attend fundraisers or provide other help. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly on internal deliberations.

"I don't think anybody's sending the president a message," said Jim Risch of Idaho, the GOP chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He blamed the media for "reaching" to view every action "through the prism of the presidency, and that isn't necessarily the way it works here."

Trump brought on the challenge months ago when he all but dared Congress not to give him the \$5.7 billion he was demanding to build the U.S.-Mexico wall or risk a federal government shutdown.

Congress declined and the result was the longest shutdown in U.S. history. Against the advice of GOP leaders, Trump invoked the national emergency declaration last month, allowing him to try to tap some \$3.6 billion for the wall by shuffling money from military projects, and that drew outrage from many lawmakers. Trump had campaigned for president promising Mexico would pay for the wall.

The Constitution gives Congress the power of the purse, and lawmakers seethed as they worried about losing money for military projects that had already been approved for bases at home and abroad. The Democratic-led House swiftly voted to terminate Trump's order.

Senate Republicans spent weeks trying to avoid this outcome, up until the night before the vote, in a script that was familiar -- up until the gavel.

The most promising was an effort from Sen. Mike Lee of Utah for legislation that would impose limits on future presidential actions. That would give senators some solace as they allowed Trump's order to stand. GOP senators huddled with Vice President Mike Pence and seemed optimistic the White House might support their plan. Then Trump called Lee in the middle of a private Republican lunch meeting and, in the time it took the senator to step out of the room to take the call, it was over. Trump was opposed.

Lee and other senators were peeling off against the president. In a last-ditch effort the night before the vote, Lindsey Graham and other senators dashed to the White House to try once again for Trump's support to broker an alternative plan. Trump was frustrated by their arrival. They mostly failed.

Trump did tweet ahead of the vote that he would be willing to consider legislation to adjust the 1976 law at some later time.

That was enough of a signal for GOP Sen. Thom Tillis, who faces a potentially tough re-election in North Carolina, to flip his vote, according to a person unauthorized to discuss the private thinking and granted anonymity.

Tillis had been one of the first senators to say he would oppose the declaration, writing in a Washington Post opinion column last month that there'd be "no intellectual honesty" in backing Trump after his repeated objections about executive overreach by President Barack Obama. But on Thursday, he did.

Trump's public support in that tweet also helped bring on board several other Republicans, including Ted Cruz and Ben Sasse, who had been part of the private huddles, the person said.

For some, said Sen. John Thune, the GOP whip, "the emergency declaration was just a bridge too far."

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Jill Colvin, Padmananda Rama and Andrew Taylor in Washington and Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, contributed.

Institute founded by Sanders' wife, son is shutting down

By STEVE PEOPLES and STEPHEN BRAUN Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The Sanders Institute, a think tank founded by Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders' wife and son, is shutting down, at least for now, amid criticism that the nonprofit has blurred the lines between family, fundraising and campaigning.

The Vermont-based institute has stopped accepting donations and plans to suspend all operations by the end of May "so there could not even be an appearance of impropriety," Jane Sanders told The Associated Press.

The unexpected move by the institute's board of directors comes as Bernie Sanders, a leading candidate for the 2020 Democratic nomination, prepares for a wave of intense scrutiny into his political network and his family's role in its operation.

As a candidate in 2016, Sanders criticized Hillary Clinton over her family's nonprofit, saying the foundation run by Clinton's husband and daughter amounted to a back door for foreign leaders and others seeking to buy access and influence. The Sanders Institute could open the Vermont senator to charges of hypocrisy.

The institute was founded to promote liberal policies less than two years ago by Sanders' family with the backing of pro-Sanders celebrities and advocates— though Sanders himself had no formal role. While it operates at a fraction of the scale of the Clinton Foundation, it has accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars during its brief existence and has declined to disclose its donors.

Jane Sanders, who also serves as a chief adviser to her husband's presidential campaign, is not compensated for her role at the institute. Her son, David Driscoll, is paid \$100,000 a year as co-founder and executive director. Driscoll previously was an executive for Nike and the Vermont snowboarding firm Burton, but had no previous nonprofit experience, according to his LinkedIn profile.

The lack of transparency and the family ties have drawn criticism from good-government advocates. "For a politician who runs on fairness and socialist principles, this looks like the old political games," said Lawrence R. Jacobs, director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. "It's a product of running a political operation in which family rules the roost."

Jane Sanders said the institute will not accept more money so long as her husband is a presidential candidate. Driscoll and the organization's two other employees would be laid off with no severance by the end of May, and its Burlington, Vermont, office would be closed, she said. Sanders said questions of nepotism have no merit because the senator himself played no role in the organization, which was led by an independent board of directors.

"I think that was the most important thing to do — to not accept donations, because nobody should think that they're giving money to an organization and that gains them access or favor to anybody else and anybody running for office," she said in an interview this week. She added: "It just seemed the responsible thing to do."

In her own founding role at the institute, Jane Sanders acted as the organization's curator, both online and in person. She was the star of the organization's December "Gathering" in Burlington, an assemblage of progressive speakers that included her husband as well as environmentalist Bill McKibben and actor Danny Glover.

Her continued involvement with the institute and her active role in her husband's campaign could have raised questions about the nonprofit's tax status under federal law. The institute was founded under Section 501c3 of the U.S. tax code, which prohibits it from substantial involvement in influencing legislation or participating "in any campaign activity for or against political candidates."

The institute's only available federal tax return showed it raised \$459,000 in 2017. Jane Sanders told the AP that the group raised about \$730,000 last year, much of it in "small donations from about 10,000 donors."

When she unveiled the think tank in June 2017, Jane Sanders said she and her husband had donated \$25,000. The institute also received a \$105,000 loan from the Sanders-affiliated political action nonprofit,

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Our Revolution, which was repaid last summer.

"We haven't disclosed names and contribution amounts because we've relied mainly on small donor contributions from thousands of people. The bulk of our donations come from donors that contribute less than \$100," Driscoll said. "Some of our biggest contributors were organizations that came on to partner with us for the Sanders Institute Gathering, such as National Nurses United, Healthy Housing Foundation and Our Revolution."

Sanders' Senate campaign has stressed that both Our Revolution and the Sanders Institute have independent boards and are not directed either by his presidential campaign or his Senate office. But some figures have crossed easily between the groups. Institute fellow and Ohio state Sen. Nina Turner recently resigned as president of Our Revolution to be co-chairwoman of Sanders' presidential campaign. Turner could not be immediately reached for comment.

Some in the Sanderses' orbit expressed disappointment at the shutdown, suggesting concerns about nonprofits and disclosure were unfair and unnecessary.

Glover, a founding board member, defended the Sanders family's involvement but acknowledged that critics within the Democratic Party would question the legitimacy of the institute whether the criticism was fair or not.

"It's sometimes important to play it safe," Glover said in an interview. "This is a very dangerous moment."

One of the many fellows at the institute, the former public policy director for the California Nurses Association, Michael Lighty, said he was proud of the policy work the institute spearheaded. As a fellow he worked on an exhaustive report examining the cost of Sanders' "Medicare for All" plan that was later presented to members of Congress.

The report was one of several accomplishments highlighted by the institute, which also produced a six-video series about climate change, a video series on threats to voting rights and additional content on student loan forgiveness and federal budget priorities.

"From my point of view, we went very far in terms of policy development and promotion," Lighty said in an interview. "In this political environment, the optics sometimes come to the fore in ways I wish they didn't. ... The dissolution will be seen by good-government people as a good thing."

Braun reported from Washington.

APNewsBreak: Feds to ease land restrictions across US West

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Trump administration is finalizing plans to ease restrictions on oil and gas drilling and other industries that were meant to protect an imperiled bird species that ranges across the American West, federal officials said Thursday.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management Acting Director Brian Steed told The Associated Press the changes would protect greater sage grouse while addressing concerns that existing policies governing millions of acres of federal land were too restrictive.

Critics say the changes will lead to more disturbances of grouse habitat, undermining efforts to shore up the bird's population.

A formal announcement is expected Friday.

The changes address a suite of sweeping land management plans for portions of 11 Western states that were adopted in 2015 under former President Barack Obama to keep the struggling bird from slipping toward extinction.

The ground-dwelling sage grouse is known for an elaborate mating ritual in which males puff out air sacs in their chest to attract female birds. They've seen steep declines due to energy development, disease and other factors.

The birds once numbered in the millions but the most recent estimates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service places the population at between 200,000 to 500,000.

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The 2015 plans capped years of negotiations involving government, industry and advocacy groups. They were intended to prevent grouse from being listed as a threatened or endangered species. Such a designation could have brought severe limitations on grazing, energy development and other activities across the bird's range, which covers some 270,000 square miles (700,000 square kilometers).

Under President Donald Trump, Interior Department officials have vowed to lift obstacles to drilling. Grouse protections have long been viewed by the energy industry as an obstacle to development.

Steed said the broad revisions to the Obama-era plans were meant to move beyond what he called a "one-size-fits-all" approach under the old rules. He said the changes give more flexibility to land managers and states concerned about balancing economic development with protections for the bird.

"Our intent was not to throw out the plans, but to make them better respond to the needs on the ground," Steed said. "We're doing that in a very careful way to ensure that the bird's protections are still in effect."

The new plans are expected to remove the most protective habitat designations for about 13,000 square miles (34,000 square kilometers) of public land. Those areas, considered essential to the species' survival, were a centerpiece of the Obama policy.

The Trump administration also would drop some requirements to prioritize leasing for oil and gas outside sage grouse habitat and allow for more waivers for drilling.

Opponents are expected to challenge the changes in court. Brian Rutledge with the Audubon Society said the changes will make it harder to stop the long-term decline of sage grouse by giving oil and gas companies access to crucial grouse habitat.

"It's a free for all, based on prioritizing fossil fuel extraction over any other use of the federal landscape," Rutledge said.

But state officials including Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, a Democrat, signaled their support of the changes.

"We look forward to working with the BLM and our local communities to move important conservation measures forward to protect greater sage grouse in Colorado," Polis said in a statement.

In Wyoming, one of the most important remaining strongholds for the species, Republican Gov. Mark Gordon said the changes would "provide predictability" for economic development while conserving grouse.

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

Asian shares shrug off Wall St losses as China ends congress

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Shares were higher Friday in Asia after a day of lackluster trading on Wall Street.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index jumped 1 percent to 21,501.48 as the Bank of Japan ended a policy meeting by keeping its key interest rate at minus 0.1 percent, maintaining its stance of extreme monetary easing and lavish stimulus.

Chinese shares surged as the annual session of its ceremonial congress ended with Premier Li Keqiang pledging support for the slowing economy.

Li said the country would cut fees and taxes, delivering help worth almost 2 trillion yen (about \$300 billion) to companies, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

"We are going to cut value-added tax rates for manufacturing and other basic sectors, as well as for small and medium-sized companies, the largest providers of jobs in our country, in a meaningful way," Xinhua quoted him as saying.

The Shanghai Composite index jumped 1.5 percent to 3,036.76 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 1 percent to 29,124.18.

Investors spent Thursday in a wait-and-see mode, keeping a close watch on global trade issues and continuing to mostly brush off the chaos surrounding Britain's exit from the European Union, its key trading bloc.

U.S. stocks indexes barely budged Thursday as the market's three-day winning streak stalled.

The benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index 0.1 percent to 2,808.48. The Dow Jones Industrial

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Average was flat at 25,709.94. The Nasdaq composite dropped 0.2 percent to 7,630.91, while the Russell 2000 index of smaller companies gave up 0.4 percent, to 1,549.63.

Facebook fell 1.8 percent after the New York Times reported that its data-sharing practices are now under criminal investigation.

The investigation into how it sells data is the latest in a list of privacy scandals the social media company faces. Its privacy practices have already been scrutinized by The Federal Trade Commission. The company and its CEO have also faced Congressional inquiries.

Boeing fell 1 percent. The stock has slumped throughout the week as nations and airlines grounded its newest 737s over safety concerns. A second deadly crash over the weekend involving its 737 Max 8 and safety concerns stunted the company's stock gains.

The Commerce Department said sales of new U.S. homes slumped 6.9 percent in January, a possible sign that would-be buyers paused during the government shutdown even as mortgage rates continued to decline. The report also showed sales prices declined 3.8 percent. Homebuilder stocks were mostly trading lower following the report.

Investors are still waiting for some more news on U.S.-China trade negotiations.

A report by Bloomberg said a possible summit meeting of President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping had been pushed back to April and that it would be clear if a deal could be reached on their dispute over Beijing's industrial strategies and other issues within several weeks.

ELSEWHERE IN ASIA: South Korea's Kospi advanced 0.7 percent to 2,169.91 and the S&P ASX 200 rose 0.2 percent to 6,190.50. India's Sensex surged 0.7 percent to 38,015.13. Shares rose in Taiwan and most of Southeast Asia but fell in Thailand.

CURRENCIES: The dollar weakened to 111.67 Japanese yen from 111.70 yen on Thursday. The euro rose to \$1.1319 from \$1.1304.

ENERGY: The price of U.S. crude oil added 1 cent to \$58.62 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose 0.6 percent Thursday to settle at \$58.61 a barrel.

Brent crude, used as an international standard, was flat at \$67.23 per barrel.

AP Business writers Damien J. Troise and Alex Veiga contributed.

Today in History By the Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, March 15, the 74th day of 2019. There are 291 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 15, 44 B.C., Roman dictator Julius Caesar was assassinated by a group of nobles that included Brutus and Cassius.

On this date:

In 1493, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus arrived back in the Spanish harbor of Palos de la Frontera, two months after concluding his first voyage to the Western Hemisphere.

In 1820, Maine became the 23rd state.

In 1913, President Woodrow Wilson met with about 100 reporters for the first formal presidential press conference.

In 1916, a U.S. expeditionary force led by Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing entered Mexico on an ultimately futile mission to capture Pancho Villa, whose raiders had attacked Columbus, New Mexico, killing 18 U.S. citizens.

In 1919, members of the American Expeditionary Force from World War I convened in Paris for a three-day meeting to found the American Legion.

In 1937, America's first hospital blood bank was opened at Cook County Hospital in Illinois.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied bombers again raided German-held Monte Cassino.

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In 1956, the Lerner and Loewe musical play "My Fair Lady," based on Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," opened on Broadway.

In 1977, the U.S. House of Representatives began a 90-day closed-circuit test to determine the feasibility of showing its sessions on television. The situation comedy "Three's Company," starring John Ritter, Joyce DeWitt and Suzanne Somers, premiered on ABC-TV.

In 1985, the first internet domain name, symbolics.com, was registered by the Symbolics Computer Corp. of Massachusetts.

In 1998, CBS' "60 Minutes" aired an interview with former White House employee Kathleen Willey, who said President Bill Clinton had made unwelcome sexual advances toward her in the Oval Office in 1993, a charge denied by the president. Dr. Benjamin Spock, whose child care guidance spanned half a century, died in San Diego at 94.

In 2005, Former WorldCom chief Bernard Ebbers was convicted in New York of engineering the largest corporate fraud in U.S. history. (He was later sentenced to 25 years in prison.)

Ten years ago: A chorus of outrage on Capitol Hill greeted news that some \$165 million in executive bonuses were being paid by bailed-out insurance giant American International Group. The space shuttle Discovery was launched on a mission to the international space station that had been delayed five times. Mauricio Funes won El Salvador's presidential election. Tony Award-winning actor Ron Silver died in New York City at age 62.

Five years ago: Malaysia's prime minister, Najib Razak, said a Malaysian jetliner missing for a week had deliberately diverted and continued flying for more than seven hours after severing contact with the ground, meaning it could have gone as far northwest as Kazakhstan or into the Indian Ocean's southern reaches. Comedian David Brenner, 78, died in New York.

One year ago: A pedestrian bridge that was under construction collapsed onto a busy Miami highway, crushing vehicles beneath massive slabs of concrete and steel; six people died and 10 were injured. The Trump administration accused Moscow of an elaborate plot to hack into America's electric grid, factories, water supply and even air travel; the U.S. also targeted Russians with sanctions for alleged election meddling for the first time since President Donald Trump took office. Federal health officials took the first step to slash levels of addictive nicotine in cigarettes, a move designed to help smokers quit and prevent future generations from getting hooked. All seven service members aboard a U.S. helicopter were killed when the aircraft crashed in Iraq; officials said there were no indications that the crash had been caused by hostile fire.

Today's Birthdays: Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is 86. Actor Judd Hirsch is 84. Jazz musician Charles Lloyd is 81. Rock musician Phil Lesh is 79. Singer Mike Love (The Beach Boys) is 78. Rock singer-musician Sly Stone is 76. Rock singer-musician Howard Scott (War; Lowrider Band) is 73. Rock singer Ry Cooder is 72. Actress Frances Conroy is 66. Actor Craig Wasson is 65. Rock singer Dee Snider (Twisted Sister) is 64. Actor Joaquim de Almeida is 62. Actress Park Overall is 62. Movie director Renny Harlin is 60. Model Fabio is 58. Singer Terence Trent D'Arby (AKA Sananda Maitreya) is 57. Rock singer Bret Michaels (Poison) is 56. Rhythm-and-blues singer Rockwell is 55. Actor Chris Bruno is 53. Rock singer Mark McGrath (Sugar Ray) is 51. Actress Kim Raver is 50. Rock musician Mark Hoppus is 47. Country singer-musician Matt Thomas (Parmalee) is 45. Actress Eva Longoria is 44. Rapper-musician will.i.am (Black Eyed Peas) is 44. Rock DJ Joseph Hahn (Linkin Park) is 42. Rapper Young Buck is 38. Actor Sean Biggerstaff is 36. Rock musician Ethan Mentzer is 36. Actor Kellan Lutz is 34. Actress Caitlin Wachs is 30.

Thought for Today: "You can't copy anybody and end with anything. If you copy, it means you're working without any real feeling." — Billie Holiday, American singer (1915-1959).