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Groton United Methodist Women
Salad & Dessert Buffet
Wednesday, May 1st
from 11 am - 1 pm
Please join us for lunch or make your own to-go!

Men & Women \$8 - Children 6 and under free

at the Groton United Methodist Church
Proceeds to UMW Missions

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Groton Area's
KG Roundup
has been rescheduled to
April 30th
All scheduled times will stay the same. Please contact Heidi Krueger at the elementary school to confirm this new date.
605/397-2317



4255 6th

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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Thursday, April 25, 2019

10:00am: Golf: Girls Varsity Meet @ Redfield Golf Course

3:30pm: Track: 7th/8th Meet @ Milbank High School

Friday, April 26, 2019

1:00pm: Track: Varsity Meet @ Sisseton High School

Saturday, April 27, 2019

7 p.m.: Prom at Groton Area High School

Sunday, April 28, 2019

2 p.m. - 5 p.m.: Bridal Shower for Emily Kern at Emmanuel Lutheran Church

5:30 p.m.: Princesses Prom Grand March at the GHS Gym

Monday, April 29, 2019

2:00pm: Track: 7th/8th Meet @ Redfield Jr-Sr High School

Tuesday, April 30, 2019

8:30am- 3:30pm: KG Roundup (Screening) at Groton Area Elementary School

1:00pm: Track: Varsity Meet @ Milbank High School

DI Pork Loin Meal, 5-7 p.m., HS Gym.

7:00pm: Middle School Spring Concert

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.: United Methodist Women May Salad & Dessert Buffet at the UMC.

7 p.m.: Carnival of Silver Skates annual meeting at the warming house.

Thursday, May 2, 2019

10:00am: Golf: Girls Varsity Meet @ Lee Park Golf Course

DI Pork Loin Meal, 5-7 p.m., HS Gym.

7:00pm: High School Spring Concert and Awards Night

Friday, May 3, 2019

Howard Wood Relays in Sioux Falls

4:00pm: Track: Varsity Meet @ Sisseton High School

7:00pm: FFA Banquet Groton Area High School

Saturday, May 4, 2019

8 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Groton City-wide Rummage Sale

Howard Wood Relays in Sioux Falls

Sunday, May 5, 2019

5:00 p.m. Groton Softball, Baseball and T-Ball parent meeting at the Legion

**Come and go Bridal shower for Emily Kern, bride to be of Nathan Skadsen,
Sunday, April 28 2019 2-5 pm at
Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

Silver Skates Annual Meeting

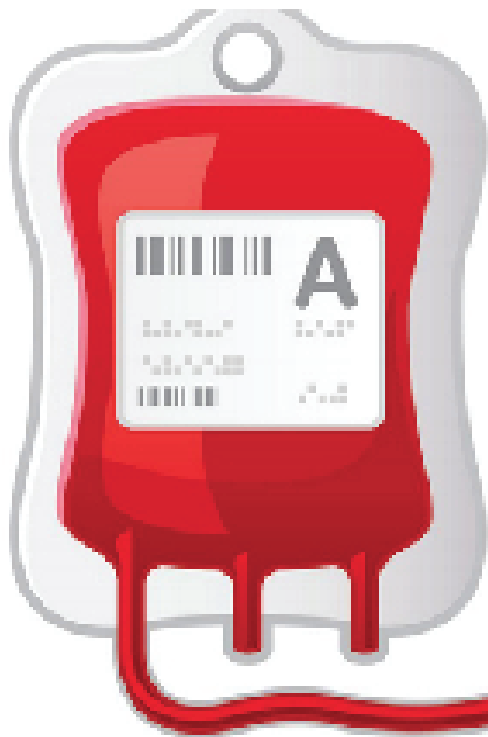
Does your child enjoy ice skating?

Do you like to see community traditions continue?

Do you have creative or organizational talents waiting to be shared with others?

Please join us for the Carnival of Silver Skates annual meeting on Wednesday, May 1 at 7:00 p.m. at the warming house.

Upcoming
**COMMUNITY
EVENTS**



**Be a hero.
Save a life.**

vitalant.

**Blood Drive
Monday, April 29
12:15 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Groton Community Center
Call 397-8498 or 397-7525 to sign up**

**Don't forget to fill out your Fast Track
Health History online the day of your
donation to speed up the process!
The link for your Fast Track Health
History can be found at
<https://www.vitalant.org/health>.**

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City mulls over water rate increase; school board will not extend school year

Ted Dickey from the DENR presented the drinking water facilities funding application financial analysis summary. He proposed that the city will need to set aside \$11.50 for loan repayment of the water tower funding project. Based on the current rate of 41.93 for 5,000 gallons, the city would need to increase the water rate to a minimum of \$45.20 for the first 5,000 gallons, but at that rate, the city would have no money left over for maintenance. The rate increase could be as much as \$53.43 for the first 5,000 gallons. The new tower will probably be a single pedestal instead of the current four legs with the pipe in the middle.

Ken Hier of Clark Engineering said the most likely place for the new tower will be just east of the reservoir. Hier said that some sort of temporary pumping station will need to be in place during the construction period.

City Attorney Drew Johnson said that he was hesitant in signing agreements right now until the 20 days after publication in case someone refers it to a vote.

The total project cost is \$2,078,000 with a loan of \$1,798,000 and the city having a \$280,000 match.

On another note, Hier said it will probably be at the end of May before work begins on the west side street project.

The Malt Beverage Licenses were renewed for Ken's Food Fair, MJ's Sinclair, Dolgen Midwest LLC (Dollar General) and Olde Bank 'n Cafe.

The first reading of an increase in the garbage rate by \$2.50 per month as the latest bid for the service increased by \$2.50 was approved.

The old sweeper will be surplus with a value of \$8,000. The new sweeper will be coming the first week in May.

Finance Officer Hope Block suggested switching to a Wells Fargo Business Credit Card. Currently the city is using a Chase Visa card, which has eliminated the perks and is also under the ID of the previous

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finance officer. Block said the new cards will be under the city's ID.

Meanwhile over at the high school, the Groton Area School Board decided not to extend the school year with the additional one and one-half days of missed school from the recent blizzard.

Superintendent Joe Schwan reported that the new school web site will be completed by the end of June and will be available on the App Store and Google Play.

The high school boiler replacement project will be progressing soon.

Elementary Principal Brett Schwan reported that the kindergarten class is back up to 43 students with the addition of one student.

The Groton Area Math Department placed first for the second consecutive year in the the Class A/AA at the NSU Mathematics Contest. Nearly 600 students from 30 schools in three states participated in the event.

A curriculum review presentation was held for the 6-12 language arts. Their recommended purchase of books was \$68,000. Each year for the next six years, new books will be shipped out so the students can highlight them and not worry about turning in the books.

The election results were canvassed at the end of the meeting.

- Paul Kosel

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Today in Weather History

April 24, 1948: A significant F2 tornado moved northeast from South of Castlewood to near Goodwin. Barns were destroyed on two farms. Also on this day, two other tornadoes were observed in South Dakota. One moved from Turner County on into Minnehaha County, injuring two people. The other touchdown 3 miles Southeast of Sioux Falls, destroying barns and other buildings on the west edge of Brandon.

1880: Several tornadoes affected parts of central and southwest Illinois. One tornado of F4 intensity touched down near Jerseyville and killed one person along the 18-mile path. Another F4 tornado passed just north of Carlinville and lifted near Atwater, destroying 50 buildings. Six people died in Christian County by an F5 tornado, which tracked from 9 miles southwest of Taylorville to near Sharpsburg.

1899 - Two women and one son lived to tell the story of being picked up by a tornado and carried more than a fourth of a mile, flying far above the church steeples, before being gently set down again. The young boy and one of the ladies said they had the pleasure of flying alongside a horse. The horse "kicked and struggled" as it flew high above, and was set down unharmed about a mile away. (The Weather Channel)

1908: Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes over across the Central Gulf Coast States claiming the lives of 310 persons. The state of Mississippi was hardest hit. A tornado near Hattiesburg, Mississippi killed 143 persons and caused more than half a million dollars damage. Four violent tornadoes accounted for 279 of the 310 deaths. The deadliest of the four tornadoes swelled to a width of 2.5 miles as it passed near Amite, Louisiana. The tornado also leveled most of Purvis Mississippi.

2010: April Tornado Outbreak- During a significant severe weather outbreak across the South on April 22-25, 142 tornadoes raked the region, including 77 on April 24 alone. Ten died from the long-track tornado that swept across Mississippi on April 24. A long-lived twister left a trail of destruction extending over 149 miles from Louisiana through Mississippi, resulting in 10 deaths and 75 injuries. This EF4 storm, which grew to a width of 1.75 miles, sported the fourth longest track in Mississippi history. This storm destroyed part of Yazoo City, Mississippi. The Swiss Reinsurance Company estimated insured damages with this outbreak at \$1.58 billion.

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Up to seven inches of rain drenched Virginia in three days. Morgantown WV received 4.27 inches in 24 hours, and flooding was reported in south central West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure produced high winds and severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains Region. Strong thunderstorm winds destroyed two mobile homes at Whitt TX injuring two persons. Winds associated with the low pressure system gusted to 70 mph at Guadalupe Pass TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)






1989 - Twenty cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 101 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Colorado to Wisconsin. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Sargeant NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern High Plains to north central Kansas. Thunderstorms spawned ten tornadoes, including one which injured four persons and caused 1.5 million dollars damage at Shattuck OK. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Wheeler TX, wind gusts to 85 mph southwest of Arnett OK, and 13.45 inches of rain near Caldwell TX, which resulted in the worst flooding in recent memory for that area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: The temperature soared to a maximum of 70 degrees in Juneau, Alaska. This is the earliest record of 70-degree reading to occur in Juneau.

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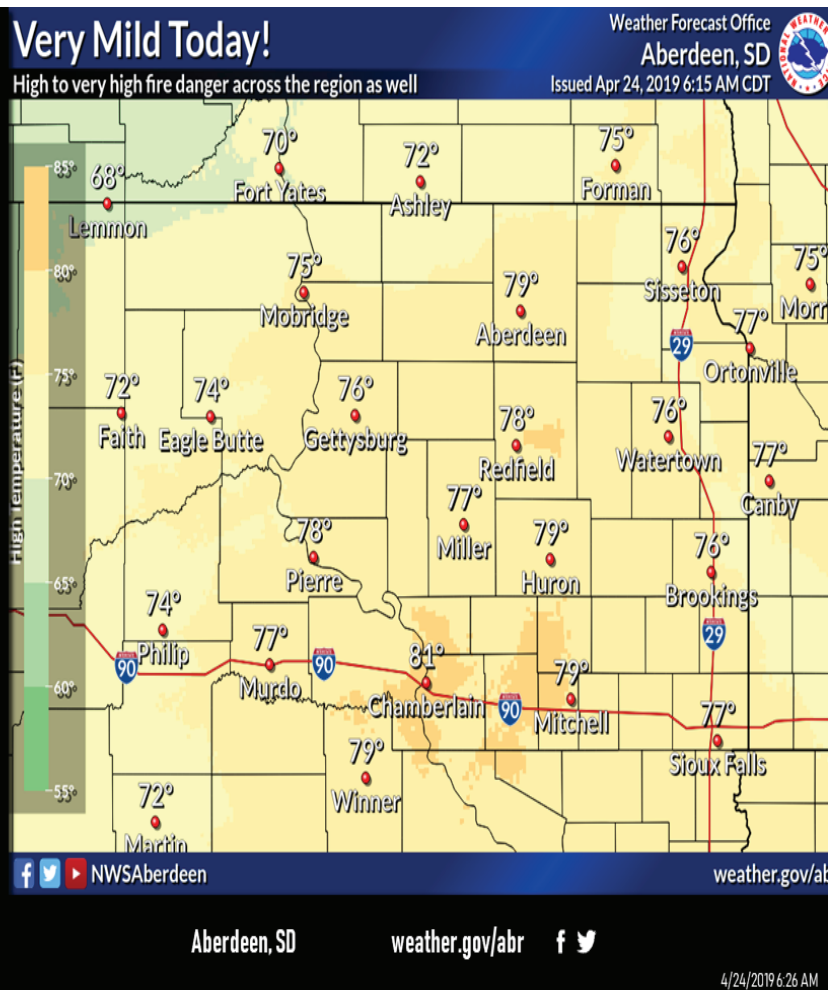
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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
Mostly Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny
High: 79 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 58 °F

**South Dakota
TORNADO DRILL
Today!**

10 am CDT:
Test Tornado **WATCH** Issued

10:15 am CDT:
Test Tornado **WARNING** Issued



Published on: 04/24/2019 at 7:33AM

Another very mild day is in store across the region, with highs rising into the 70s. Temperatures will gradually cool through the weekend though, so make the best of it! Also, with the breezy and gusty winds in place today, there will be high to very high fire danger across the area since the air mass will remain dry. Keep in mind that as part of Severe Weather Awareness Week in South Dakota, there will be a TEST Tornado Watch today at 10am CDT, following by a TEST Tornado Warning at 1015am CDT.

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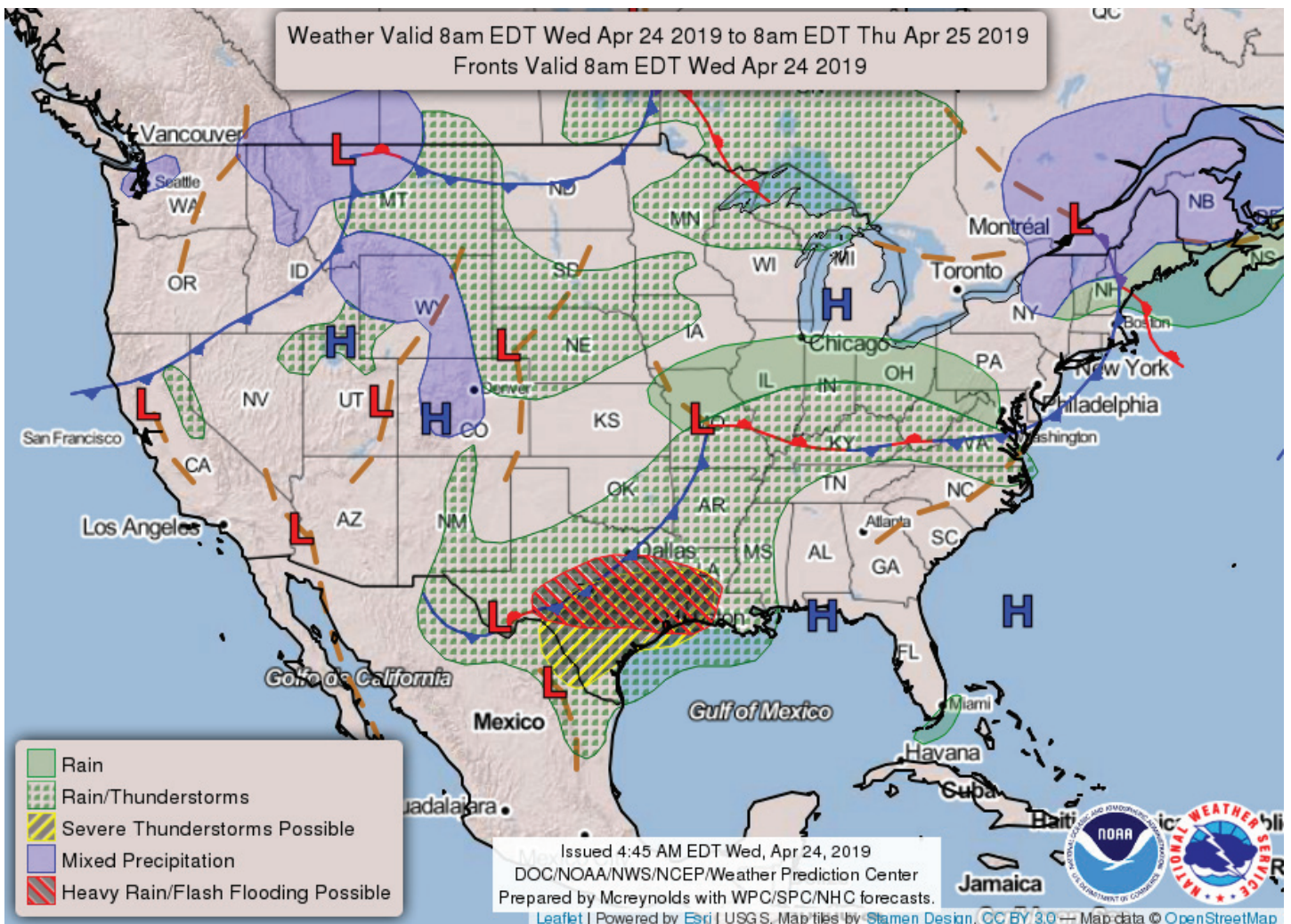
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 72 °F at 5:14 PM
Low Outside Temp: 39 °F at 6:01 AM
High Gust: 27 mph at 5:21 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 92° in 1962
Record Low: 17° in 1956
Average High: 62°F
Average Low: 35°F
Average Precip in April.: 1.25
Precip to date in April.: 1.42
Average Precip to date: 3.43
Precip Year to Date: 4.46
Sunset Tonight: 8:31 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:32 a.m.





CHOOSING A WIFE

Clothes make the man! was a popular saying years ago. Solomon, however, would strongly disagree. To the contrary, he would say that A worthy woman enhances her husbands reputation and well-being and status in the community. He does not imply, even slightly, that a wife exists only to serve a husband, but to do him good.

This worthy woman is more thoroughly described in Proverbs 31, and it is not by accident that in the Hebrew Bible, the Book of Ruth follows the book of Proverbs, a living example of what he is teaching. This wife of noble character stands as a model wife for the young man who one day will become a husband. A wife of noble character is the crown of her husband because she brings him esteem, honor, and worth in his community.

It stands in direct contrast to a wife who shames her husband. The wife who shames her husband, lowers his status and brings shame on him with her lack of good judgment. Her influence on his reputation is like decay in his bones - the rotting away of his life because he is never able to rise above her reputation or influence in the community where they live. No matter how successful he may be, she brings him down because she lacks the character that God will honor and bless! She does what displeases God!

When we look deeply into the importance of this verse, we discover the importance of a noble wife. We are warned about the seriousness and importance of choosing a partner for life. A partner is not to be chosen because of beauty or glamour or wealth. Godliness and character must come first. Then, the things God blesses, will follow.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for this warning and the truth it contains. Thank You, also, that change is possible. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 12:4 A wife of noble character is her husbands crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/17/2019 Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program (Memorial Day)
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-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
- 06/22-23/2019 Groton Junior Legion Tournament
- 06/29/2019 Groton U10/U12 Round Robin Tournament
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest/Car Show (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/18/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Tournament
- 07/21/2019 Granary Ice Cream Social & Family Music Fest
- 08/02/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Wine on Nine
- 08/09-11/2019 State Junior Legion Tournament in Groton
- 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
- 09/08/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 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 (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday, Labor Day-Memorial Day, 6:30pm at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 4/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 5/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

07-24-30-48-67, Mega Ball: 9, Megaplier: 4

(seven, twenty-four, thirty, forty-eight, sixty-seven; Mega Ball: nine; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$192 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$150 million

Sioux Falls School District sees record year for snow days

By JONATHAN ELLIS Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — It's a known fact that each new generation of Americans has it easier than previous generations.

At least, that's what older folks often say.

But when it comes to walking to school in snow, some former Sioux Falls School District students might have a claim of legitimacy on this inter-generational boast. They often did have to walk to school in more snow.

That's because it appears that school cancelations were harder to come by 20 years ago, the Argus Leader reported.

The Argus Leader analyzed more than 20 years of school closures and historic weather data from the National Weather Service. From 1995 to 2013, the average amount of snow that Sioux Falls received on days canceled because of heavy snow was 9.2 inches. Since then, however, snow accumulations have averaged 3.7 inches on days canceled because of snow.

The numbers are based only on days canceled because of heavy snow and not for days canceled because of cold. Nor does the data include late starts or early dismissals.

The Sioux Falls School District is teetering on setting a record for snow days with the 2018-2019 school year. There have been four days called off because of cold or snow, plus three late starts and an early dismissal. Superintendent Brian Maher told the Argus Leader recently that the district would have a plan in the next couple of weeks on how to make up the lost time.

Maher added that calling off school is "polarizing" for families.

District spokeswoman Carly Uthe said there has not been a policy change in recent years regarding closures.

"As a district, our decision whether or not to hold school has always, and will always, be based on what is going to be the safest for our students given the current weather conditions at the time," she said in an email.

Of course, predicting the weather is always a gamble, and school officials like to make decisions before school is in session.

In 2000, then Superintendent Jack Keegan weighed closing school as a heavy snow storm was forecast for Sioux Falls. In the end, the city got a small amount of ice, but the snow sailed past Sioux Falls, falling elsewhere.

Keegan had enough time to call a late start as opposed to canceling school.

So for older students who remember trudging to school through snow, wondering why it wasn't canceled, it's true: You did have to go to school in the snow.

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

Sioux Falls churches help schools cover transportation costs

By SHELLY CONLON Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — About three years ago, Sioux Falls resident Megan Tuve's transmission went out on her car.

A single mom of two at the time, her focus was on keeping a roof over their heads and food on the table. She couldn't afford to spend anything beyond her basic needs, especially on unexpected car trouble, she said.

A check from her sons' principal to a local auto mechanic would change that and start a connection with Garfield Elementary that would bring Tuve's family a sense of stability she said she hadn't felt in years, the Argus Leader reported.

The check didn't come from Principal Kristin Skogstad herself, though. Instead, it came from a family fund Skogstad helped grow over the last three years with a group of community partners willing to stand in the gaps for a school with the highest mobility rate of students in the Sioux Falls School District.

Tuve has also received diapers for her 1-year-old daughter, clothes and a listening ear for the challenges of being a single parent.

"I would be totally devastated and lost in life without this school," Tuve said. "They're always here to help, no matter if it's a big issue or small issue. They're not afraid to help."

Garfield's parent-teacher group fizzled out a few years ago, and when Skogstad began sharing the needs of her students with local surrounding churches, two congregations stepped up in response.

Since then, the funds have been spent on everything from warm coats in the winter, to book orders, to paying for a diabetic student's extra insulin pen to keep at school, to mentorships and to taxi rides for students who have no other way to get to and from school.

And it's all for the sake of making sure Skogstad's most vulnerable have some place they can call home, she said.

"Every school in Sioux Falls right now is growing and changing, because our community is growing and changing," Skogstad said. "It's a wonderful place to be, but the core of Sioux Falls — I don't know if people understand some of the problems you see in a bigger community are starting to happen here."

Garfield has about 470 students, and with one of the larger attendance zones in the district, more than half qualify for busing, Skogstad said.

More than 25% of Garfield Elementary's students have experienced at least one transfer in or out of the campus, district data shows. And the school often hosts children living with other relatives, in nearby hotels or Children's Inn, the local domestic violence shelter, Skogstad said.

"We want to say yes to every need there is, but we really try to focus on those that are going to impact the whole child because we want to meet their academic and social needs at school," she said. "That ability to help with transportation has made an impact for students who might not be able to get here consistently."

At least eight other Sioux Falls elementary schools heavily rely on outside community partnerships, district spokeswoman Carly Uthe said. The rest have PTAs or PTOs or some type of other community partnership, she said.

And most recently, a united group of churches have created a local effort hope to low-income and struggling families by partnering with local schools. So far the group, Empower Sioux Falls, which started a couple years ago, has partnered with nine elementary schools and one middle school so far, said Brian Stroh, an Empower representative and executive pastor at Hillcrest Church.

One of the goals is to eventually partner with every school in the district and serve in similar capacity to those partnered with Garfield, though some of the churches have already been connected with their schools for years, Stroh said. Hillcrest has been partnered with Cleveland Elementary for about 10 years, and the church budgets thousands into its finances for Cleveland every year, he said.

"When we started with Cleveland, we were doing nothing in the community," Stroh said. "We asked ourselves in the leadership of the church, 'If we were to stop being a church, would anyone notice or

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anyone care outside of ourselves?' We had to say no."

It's a similar philosophy that's encouraged pastors and members at The Point is to Serve church and Trinity Baptist Church to serve at Garfield.

The job wasn't to instill religious ideals in classrooms or advocate for certain beliefs, church members said. It was to simply be the in-between for a district busting at the seams and teachers and students who needed a little additional help, they said.

In fact, representatives at both churches partnered with Garfield didn't know their donations were being used for transportation.

"And we don't even need to know that," said Allen Kjesbo, lead pastor at The Point is to Serve. "We serve at Garfield with no control. We give Kristin the check, and say, 'May God bless you.' They don't need to give us reports about what they do."

The church has a responsibility, he said, to offer a helping hand now as Sioux Falls grows, prepares to open more schools and welcomes new students by caring for the small, every day crises now in a community that's becoming more urbanized, instead of being reactionary to a possible system crisis later.

Even if Sioux Falls doesn't grow, issues surrounding families in need aren't going to disappear, Superintendent Brian Maher said.

"Any of our critical friends, those folks who are coming in and helping us — whether it's a church, Citi Bank, whoever — what we're really trying to do is align all of our systems of support," Maher said. "And that's best figured out at the building level."

Maher has seen the churches give what he called "phenomenal" help in his four years as head of the largest school district in the state and called them great partners who are helping curb social issues within the community. There's never been a conflict of church and state, and he called the partnerships "giving in its purest form."

"I tell people all the time that we're a reflection of our community," Maher said. "What's happening in our public schools is happening in our community."

And as he looks down the road, past the year 2021 or 2022 when the district opens its new high school and middle school campuses, Maher said the only ask from the community is to keep offering an extended hand.

"We just did a big ask in terms of providing more space," Maher said. "And we've done a big ask before. I think about what the city has provided us for school resource officers. Thirty years ago, who would've thought about that? I think there are a lot of things community-wise that happen in our school systems, but what's harder to see are all of the partners we have."

Traci Jensen, a social worker and the district's homeless liaison, works with about 1,000 Sioux Falls students each year who experience homelessness, those who often have the highest mobility rates, she said.

She's been with the district for 13 years, and regularly sees how a lack of a home campus or lack of stability at school can interrupt a student's ability to learn. If students are moving from school to school, they can lose potentially anywhere from three to six months of education, she said.

The No. 1 way to end generational poverty is education, and promoting educational stability is what the district is all about, she said. For every student the district is able to assist in providing that school stability, the action makes a lifelong impression on that child, she said, and it shows when students show up to school more often or when teachers notice more smiles in the kids who didn't have to change schools.

"There are different ways you can measure it, but can you actually measure it? Probably not," Jensen said. "But it's definitely very meaningful when our community and our schools surround our students and our families to support them."

Back at Garfield, life without the help she gets from Garfield would be 10 times worse, Tuve said as she sat in Skogstad office recently to talk about her children.

Her oldest son is now 12, and her middle child is in fifth grade. In the time since her eldest started at Garfield, her family has moved at least four or five times, she said.

And for a while, as Tuve handled transition after transition, she was afraid of reaching out. She was afraid

of judgment and struggled to figure out how to get her oldest son to enjoy school, she said.

Mornings were spent screaming and fighting with her oldest to get him out the door, but the minute he arrived at Garfield, his attitude changed, Tuve said.

"Out of all four of my mom's kids, I'm the only one who graduated high school," Tuve said. "Education is so important to me, and Garfield helps instill that in these kids. What's your motto, Mrs. Skogstad?"

"Every student, every day," Skogsted replied.

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

Ellsworth Air Force Base to receive first B-21 Raider planes

By SETH TUPPER Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — John Thune was on a Sioux Falls golf course during a May 2005 weekend when he received a call he'd been dreading.

His chief of staff phoned to say Ellsworth Air Force Base was on a closure list that the Department of Defense would publish the following week.

Thune had been a U.S. senator only four months, after narrowly defeating incumbent Minority Leader Tom Daschle.

Ellsworth was one of the biggest issues in the campaign. Each candidate claimed he was better able to protect the base and the combined total of nearly 7,000 military and civilian jobs the base supported in the Rapid City area.

When the call came about Ellsworth's potential closure, it was put up or shut up time for Thune, who cut his golf game short.

"I immediately left, went into the office and spent the next six hours on the phone trying to reverse it, calling everybody I knew, mostly politicians," Thune told the Rapid City Journal in a recent interview.

Nobody offered to help. It was a rude awakening for Thune, who was an up-and-coming Republican with a national profile after toppling Daschle in 2004 and narrowly losing to Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson in 2002.

"We realized there was not going to be a political solution to this," Thune said. "Nobody was going to say, 'Gee whiz, you fought and bled for us in back-to-back Senate races, so we're going to take care of you.' We realized we were going to have to win this one on the merits. So that's when we just really went to work."

Later in 2005, a team of South Dakotans including Thune convinced the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure Commission, known by the acronym BRAC, to remove Ellsworth from the closure list.

With that burst of intense work over, the long-term work to safeguard Ellsworth's future began, not only by Thune but also by the state's other two congressional delegates, the governor, the Legislature, business leaders and local government officials in Box Elder and Rapid City, the Ellsworth Task Force and, eventually, the Ellsworth Development Authority.

Over the next 14 years, the efforts of those and other Ellsworth boosters brought improvements to the base including a new wastewater treatment plant, a financial services center, a drone unit, an expanded training airspace and safer accident potential zones. It was all part of a coordinated effort to make Ellsworth as BRAC-proof as possible.

Then, on March 27 of this year, the Air Force announced Ellsworth as the preferred location to receive the first B-21 Raider planes when they're ready to fly, perhaps sometime during the mid-2020s, after which the B-1s at Ellsworth will be gradually phased out. The Air Force also said Ellsworth will be the training unit for the new bombers.

Ellsworth boosters from Thune on down characterized the announcement as a pivotal moment. For them, it was a manifestation of the stable future they've been working to create for Ellsworth since the dark days of 2005.

The plan to close Ellsworth included transferring its B-1 bombers to Dyess Air Force Base in Texas. Dyess did better than Ellsworth on a Defense Department scoresheet, and one of the most important categories

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on the scoresheet was training airspace.

At the time, the Air Force said the airspace available to Dyess was better and twice as large as that available to Ellsworth. Luckily for South Dakota, the Dyess airspace was mired in a lawsuit during the BRAC process, which helped Ellsworth backers overcome the deficiency.

Thune and his staff members who worked on Ellsworth issues, including Qusi Al-Haj in Rapid City, knew Ellsworth's airspace would continue to be a liability in future base-closure considerations. So in February 2006, Thune announced a plan to nearly quadruple the size of that airspace.

"The airspace had to be fixed going forward," Thune said. "It was a 10-year war."

Wrangling the factions affected by the proposal proved challenging. Ranchers had concerns about living and working under the roar of bomber planes. General aviators were worried about losing access to the skies and being inconvenienced by Air Force training flights. And the Federal Aviation Administration was faced with managing the competing interests in an airspace overlapping several FAA regional territories and parts of Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas.

Thune and his staff worked through the objections in meeting after meeting, year after year, with representatives of the various interests. In 2015, with the airspace proposal entering a final phase of consideration that included a decision by the FAA, Thune rose to the chairmanship of the Senate Commerce Committee, after serving as its ranking member. Thune said his leadership posts meant "the FAA was interested in being helpful" to him.

The expanded airspace, known as the Powder River Training Complex, won approval from the Air Force and FAA and began hosting training flights in 2015.

Dennis Daugaard, who served as lieutenant governor from 2003 to 2011 and governor from 2001 until earlier this year, said the airspace expansion was critically important.

"By far, the Powder River Training Complex expansion was the big win in terms of preserving the base," Daugaard said in a recent Journal interview. "Sen. Thune really deserves a lot of credit for that."

While Thune's office was beginning its push to expand Ellsworth's airspace, he and the rest of the congressional delegation — consisting at the time of Sen. Tim Johnson and Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, both Democrats — along with state and local officials were angling for a consolidated Air Force Financial Services Center at Ellsworth. The base was chosen for the mission in 2006, bringing travel-voucher processing from other locations to Ellsworth.

One reason Ellsworth boosters coveted the financial services center was because it represented an extra mission for Ellsworth, which at the time of the BRAC process in 2005 was a base with a sole mission of flying B-1s.

Efforts to add additional missions paid off again in 2010 when Ellsworth was chosen to host a drone unit, the 89th Attack Squadron. The drones have been used in the Middle East, where they are put into the air before a remote pilot at Ellsworth takes over the controls.

Meanwhile, the congressional delegation worked to secure funding for physical improvements on the base. From the time of Ellsworth's 2005 placement on the BRAC list until 2011, when Congress banned earmarks, Sen. Johnson inserted \$96.23 million worth of earmarks into appropriations bills for projects at Ellsworth, including housing, a headquarters facility and other structures.

Johnson retired in 2015 and was succeeded in the Senate by Mike Rounds, who was governor during the 2005 BRAC scare. Herseth Sandlin lost her 2010 re-election bid to Republican Kristi Noem, and Noem left the House this year when she became governor. She was succeeded in the House by Republican Dusty Johnson.

Pat Burchill, chairman of the Ellsworth Development Authority, said Thune's continued presence in Congress has been a boon to the base.

"One person has been the hub of all the spokes in the wheel," Burchill said, "and that person is Senator Thune. He's been the constant."

Efforts to safeguard Ellsworth at the local level coalesced into the Ellsworth Development Authority, which was created in 2009.

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Mark Merchen, now a business consultant in Rapid City, was working for West River Electric Association in 2005 and was representing the association on the board of a community improvement initiative known as Black Hills Vision. When Ellsworth was put on the BRAC list, then-Gov. Rounds asked Black Hills Vision to formulate a "Plan B" for the base's land, buildings and infrastructure in case it closed.

Merchen led the Plan B effort, and when Ellsworth was removed from the BRAC list, the Plan B discussions shifted to safeguarding Ellsworth's future.

Taking inspiration from the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority, which was created in 2006 by the Rounds administration to facilitate the conversion of the closed Homestake gold mine to a deep underground science laboratory, Merchen and other local leaders hatched the idea of creating an authority to aid Ellsworth.

They pitched the idea to Gov. Rounds, who in 2009 was mired in budget difficulties brought on by the Great Recession. Rounds asked then-Lt. Gov. Daugaard to spearhead the creation of the Ellsworth Development Authority, and Daugaard worked with legislative leaders to win approval of the authorizing legislation in 2009.

Merchen said support from local business leaders was crucial during the authority's earliest days. He was loaned out by West River Electric to be the authority's executive director for its first several years, and numerous local businesses helped with the authority's early office and administrative expenses.

"I give all the credit in the world to the community for always believing this was an important thing for everybody to be a part of," Merchen said.

One of the first projects undertaken by the authority was the construction of a wastewater treatment plant to be shared by Ellsworth and its neighbor city, Box Elder. The authority issued \$24 million in bonds for the project, which are being paid off with fees from Ellsworth and Box Elder. Construction of the plant was finished in 2014.

Another project of the authority is the prevention and removal of non-conforming uses, such as housing projects, on land in the designated accident potential zones around the base.

The authority's current executive director, Scott Landguth, said the authority has spent nearly \$20 million on its land program, at first utilizing state funding, and then a program that pairs 75 percent federal funding with a 25 percent state match.

Some of the money has been used to buy easements on ranch land bordering the north side of the base, to ensure that no non-conforming structures, such as a residential housing project, are ever built on that land.

The money has also been used to acquire land in accident potential zones south of the base in Box Elder. Those land acquisitions have included the purchase of several hundred mobile homes that have since been removed, after residents were given up to a year to relocate. After buying and clearing land, the authority puts easements on it to prevent future non-conforming uses and then seeks to sell the land back into private ownership. The authority has also worked with Box Elder to transfer land for public use.

In all, the authority has done deals on 70 properties totaling 4,000 acres, and the authority continues to seek deals with willing sellers. It was once estimated that the total cost for all the needed easements, land acquisitions and structure removals in the accident potential zones would reach \$35 million; with the \$20 million already spent and \$4 million in additional funding already obtained, approximately \$11 million may still need to be obtained and spent.

Besides major projects, the four-employee authority also works to ease the everyday concerns that afflict the base's leadership, such as arranging a deal for base personnel to obtain Rapid City library cards, and working with Douglas School District officials to solve busing problems for Air Force parents and students.

Landguth said commanders at Ellsworth often lean on the authority for help, and they advise their successors to do the same.

"The comment I've heard is that they've all said to one another as they come in, 'If you have a problem, talk to the authority,'" Landguth said.

Since the Air Force awarded Virginia-based Northrop Grumman a contract to build a next-generation, long-range strike bomber in 2015, many have assumed that existing B-1 bases including Ellsworth would

host the new bombers.

A degree of certainty was added to that expectation with the Air Force's March 27 announcement that Ellsworth is the preferred base to receive the first B-21s. The selection was made by outgoing Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson, whose previous job was president of the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in Rapid City.

Wilson's nomination as Air Force secretary in 2017 is one aspect of safeguarding Ellsworth that Thune does not receive or take credit for. He and his staff have said they had nothing to do with the choice of Wilson as nominee, but they were happy to have her in the job at a time when B-21 basing decisions were being considered.

The arrival of the B-21 could bring new challenges to Ellsworth, possibly including more scrutiny of the base's training airspace. To avoid conflicts with commercial flights, the training airspace is currently capped at 26,000 feet, except for higher-altitude waivers granted for periodic large-force exercises. It's anticipated that the B-21 may routinely need a higher altitude ceiling, which could require more talks with the FAA.

That's a better problem than a BRAC listing, and with everything that has been done to make Ellsworth harder to close, the specter of future BRAC proceedings seems less threatening.

"What a difference 14 years makes," Thune said.

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

Special Advocate program provides voice for children in need

By BECKY KINDVALL Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Seventh Circuit CASA Program volunteers want to make sure that children in abusive situations have a voice.

The Seventh Circuit Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program has been advocating for abused and neglected children in the community since 1986, making it the first CASA Program in the state of South Dakota.

The CASA Program believes that every child deserves a safe, permanent, nurturing home and recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers to advocate in court for the best interest of abused and neglected children. The goal of the CASA Program is to have a "voice" in court for every child who needs one. Currently, there are more than 321 children waiting for their Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteer.

"We're always looking for direct advocates and we're always recruiting. We do three to four volunteer training sessions a year. So we're always hoping to connect with people who would want to become advocates," CASA Executive Director Kehala Two Bulls told the Rapid City Journal.

The CASA Program has many staff, volunteers and board members who do work throughout the year advocating for children in the community. They host their annual Fire & Ice Gala to celebrate all that these members do. This is their largest fundraiser of the year and is a formal dinner and live/silent auction where ticket-holders have the chance to win a one-carat loose diamond, donated by Riddles Jewelry. Their goal for this fundraiser is to raise at least 20% of their annual operating budget.

"Our impact is pretty big because we are volunteer-centered and our volunteers are out there doing amazing work and we're supporting them in that effort. Every bid that someone makes during the event goes to our mission. We use the money for things like rent, training volunteers, and recruitment," she said.

There are many ways the community can be a part of the efforts of the CASA Program. Monetary donations are helpful, and volunteers for advocates are always needed.

"You can donate arts and crafts supplies for the kids. A lot of businesses in town donate passes so that our volunteers can take the children to see plays or visit Reptile Gardens. We want to give these kids quality experiences that we would want our own children to have," she said.

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

Rapid City robotics team to compete in world tournament

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Six students from a Rapid City high school are heading to Kentucky to compete in an international robotics tournament.

The Rapid City Stevens High School students are among robotics teams from more than 40 countries who will attend the VEX Robotics World Championship in Louisville this week. The tournament draws students from middle schools, high schools and universities to design and build a robot to compete in an engineering challenge.

Senior Ian Helgeson told the Rapid City Journal that the team has been working on its robot since September.

"It's a pretty special privilege," he said. "It's only 520 teams out of the entire world that get to go, so it's really cool to be able to do this."

Jason Reub, a teacher and the Rapid City team's coach, said participating in the tournament helps students apply math and science concepts, but also gives students an opportunity to develop team-building skills.

The robotics team fundraised about \$9,000 this year, Reub said. They are sponsored by about 30 groups, from the Black Hills Orthopedic and Spine Center to Coca-Cola.

The students will compete in preliminary rounds Thursday and Friday to win a spot in the final round, which will be held Saturday.

"I think we're definitely going to be able to compete against the best of them," Helgeson said.

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

Boy Scouts could be hit with more sex abuse claims

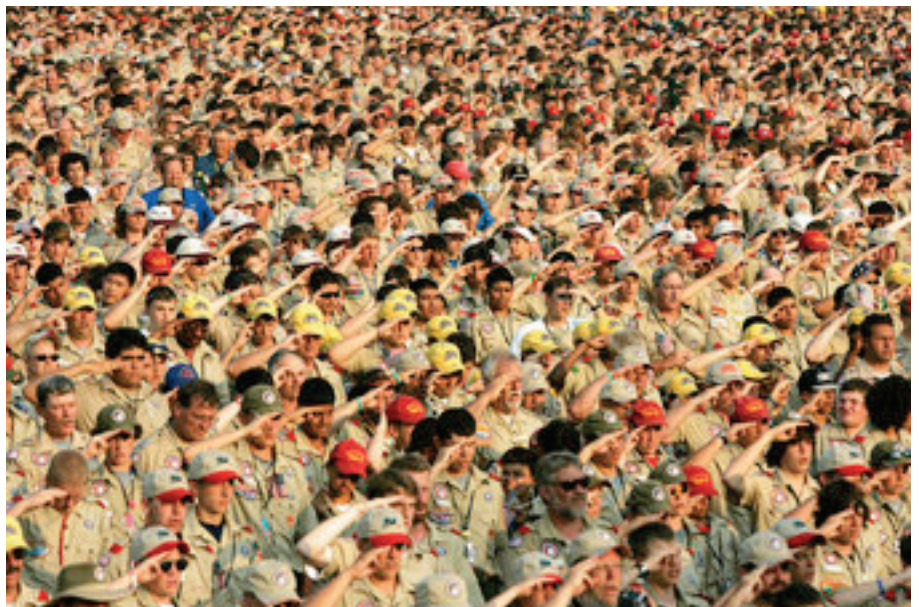
By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The lawyers' ads on the internet aggressively seeking clients to file sexual abuse lawsuits give a taste of what lies ahead this year for the Boy Scouts of America: potentially the most fateful chapter in its 109-year history.

Sexual abuse settlements have already strained the Boy Scouts' finances to the point where the organization is exploring "all available options," including Chapter 11 bankruptcy. But now the financial threats have intensified.

The reason: States have been moving in recent months to adjust their statute-of-limitations laws so that victims of long-ago sexual abuse can sue for damages. New York state has passed a law that will allow such lawsuits starting in August. A similar bill in New Jersey has reached the governor's desk. Bills also are pending in Pennsylvania and California.

In New York and elsewhere, lawyers are hard at work recruiting cli-



FILE - In this July 31, 2005 file photo, Boy Scouts salute as they recite the Pledge of Allegiance during the Boy Scout Jamboree in Bowling Green, Va. In 2019, financial threats to the Boy Scouts have intensified as multiple states consider adjusting their statute-of-limitations laws so that victims of long-ago child sex-abuse have a chance to seek redress in the courts. (AP Photo/ Haraz N. Ghanbari)

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ents to sue the Boy Scouts, alleging they were molested as youths by scoutmasters or other volunteers.

Plaintiffs' lawyers "recognize that this is a very unique and lucrative opportunity," said attorney Karen Bitar, who formerly handled sex-crime cases as a prosecutor in Brooklyn before going into private practice.

Attorney Tim Kosnoff, a veteran of major sexual abuse lawsuits against the Roman Catholic Church, said Tuesday that he and his team have signed up 186 clients from dozens of states in just the past few weeks who want to be part of litigation against the Boy Scouts. Kosnoff said 166 of them identified alleged abusers who have not been named in any of the Boy Scout files made public in past years.

Boy Scouts spokeswoman Effie Delimarkos said the organization continues to evaluate its financial situation, and she defended its current abuse-prevention policies. The organization serves more than 2.2 million youths.

A bankruptcy by the Boy Scouts could be unprecedented in its complexity, potentially involving plaintiffs in virtually every state, according to several lawyers. It would be national in scope, unlike the various Catholic Church bankruptcy cases in the U.S., which have unfolded diocese by diocese.

"A Boy Scout bankruptcy would be bigger in scale than any other sex abuse bankruptcy," said Seattle-based attorney Mike Pfau, whose firm is representing more than 300 victims in New York state.

Jeffrey Schwartz, a New York-based bankruptcy expert with the firm McKool Smith, said the Boy Scouts don't have a particularly large flow of cash and might be forced to sell off property in bankruptcy. The Boy Scouts have extensive land holdings, including camping and hiking terrain.

"They'll play for time," Schwartz said. "If their defense costs and settlement costs are greater than their membership fees, it could be a death spiral."

However, Dallas-based trial attorney Michelle Simpson Tugel, part of a team representing numerous sex abuse survivors, said bankruptcy might benefit the Boy Scouts and reduce any payouts to plaintiffs.

"It can be a tool that these institutions use to shield assets and avoid having to reveal some information," she said. "In many ways, it's a disservice to victims."

Illustrating the depth of its problems, the Boy Scouts filed lawsuits last year against six of its own insurers, saying they have improperly refused to cover some of the sex abuse liabilities incurred by the organization. The insurers say the coverage obligation is voided because the Boy Scouts failed to take effective preventive measures such as warning parents that scouts might be abused. The suits are still pending.

The intensifying pressures on the Boy Scouts coincide with the mounting threats to the U.S. Catholic Church in regard to its own long-running sex abuse scandal. Catholic bishops will be meeting in Baltimore in June to discuss the next steps.

Both the church and the Boy Scouts are iconic, historically well-respected institutions now known as having been magnets for pedophiles trying to exploit the trust of boys and their parents.

"When you cloak people in badges of respect, you create the perfect opportunity for bad people to get access to children," said Chris Hurley, whose Chicago law firm is representing 11 former scouts in sex abuse trials scheduled on a monthly basis this year.

Another common denominator for the Catholic Church and Boy Scouts: Both kept voluminous secret files with names of suspected abusers, yet balked at sharing the information with the public.

Since the 1920s, the Boy Scouts have been compiling "ineligible files," which list adult volunteers considered to pose a risk of child molestation. About 5,000 of these files have been made public as a result of court action; others remain confidential.

Delimarkos said when any BSA volunteer is added to the database for suspected abuse, "they are reported to law enforcement, removed entirely from any Scouting program and prohibited from re-joining anywhere."

Minnesota-based attorney Jeff Anderson, who had led many lawsuits against the Catholic Church, released a court deposition in New York on Tuesday in which an expert hired by the Boy Scouts said she tallied 7,819 individuals in the "ineligible files" as of January, as well as 12,254 victims.

Anderson expressed hope that litigation triggered by New York's new Child Victims Act would increase pressure on the Boy Scouts to make public more of the still-confidential files.

Some of the files were ordered released after a 2010 sexual abuse case in Portland, Oregon, that led to a nearly \$20 million judgment against the Boy Scouts on behalf of a man molested by a Scout leader in the 1980s.

Paul Mones, the plaintiff's lawyer in that case, said there are no overall figures on Boy Scout abuse settlements because the details are kept confidential.

Both the Boy Scouts and the Catholic Church say they now have policies in place to sharply curtail abuse that abounded in past decades. In the Boy Scouts' case, the steps included requiring criminal background checks for all staff and volunteers, and requiring two or more adult leaders be present with youth at all times during scouting activities.

This story has been corrected to show that Effie Delimarkos is a spokeswoman, not a spokesman.

New Zealand and France to call for an end to online terror

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Wednesday that she and French President Emmanuel Macron will host a meeting in Paris next month seeking to eliminate acts of violent extremism and terrorism from being shown online.

Ardern said she and Macron will ask world leaders and chief executives of technology companies to agree to a pledge called the "Christchurch Call," named after the New Zealand city where dozens of people were killed in attacks on mosques last month.

Ardern didn't release any details of the pledge, saying they were still being developed.

She said she'd been talking with representatives from companies including Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and Google along with world leaders and felt they could reach consensus by keeping the pledge tightly focused.

"This isn't about freedom of speech," Ardern said. "It's specifically focused on eradicating those extreme acts of terrorism online."

The man accused of fatally shooting 50 people in two Christchurch mosques on March 15 livestreamed the attack on Facebook after mounting a camera on his helmet. The chilling 17-minute video was copied and viewed widely on the internet even as tech companies scrambled to remove it.

Ardern said the shooter had used social media in an unprecedented way to promote an act of terrorism and hate. She said nobody would argue that a terrorist had the right to livestream the murder of 50 people.

"No tech company, just like no government, wishes to see violent extremism and terrorism online," Ardern said. "And so we have a starting point that is one of unity."

In an opinion piece in the Washington Post last month, Facebook founder and chief executive Mark



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern speaks to media at her electorate office in Auckland, Wednesday, April 24, 2019. Ardern said that she and French President Emmanuel Macron will host a meeting in Paris next month seeking to eliminate acts of violent extremism and terrorism from being shown online. (Jason Oxenham/New Zealand Herald via AP)

Zuckerberg called for governments and regulators to play a more active role from in policing the internet. "As part of this, we have a responsibility to keep people safe on our services," Zuckerberg wrote. "That means deciding what counts as terrorist propaganda, hate speech and more. We continually review our policies with experts, but at our scale we'll always make mistakes and decisions that people disagree with." In his op-ed, Zuckerberg didn't directly address problems with livestreaming, although he did say it was impossible to remove all harmful content from the internet.

Ardern said Macron had played a leadership role among the Group of Seven major economies in trying to eliminate online terrorism, and his role would complement her experience from the recent Christchurch attacks when they co-chair the May 15 meeting.

Straight talk on race becoming a must for white candidates

By ERRIN HAINES WHACK AP National Writer

After touring the National Lynching Memorial recently, former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper spoke of the "shame" he felt that some white people "kind of looked the other way during these lynching incidents."

Former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke of Texas has acknowledged he "clearly had advantages" as a white man. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts has said that any struggle she faced as a single mom was much more challenging for black women. U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio has talked about not knowing many black people when he was growing up. And Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, recently said, "Any white candidate needs to show a level of consciousness around issues like white privilege."

Such candor surrounding race is becoming what Democratic strategist Joel Payne called a "woke litmus test" for any white person who wants to win the Democratic presidential nomination. In a field celebrated for its historic racial and gender diversity, white candidates are talking about systemic racism and white privilege to connect with voters of color and prove that America's racial divisions aren't lost on them.

"All candidates, especially nonethnic minority candidates, need to be fluent in the issues that matter most to black America — police brutality, criminal justice reform, reparations, social justice," said Payne, an alumnus of Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

White presidential candidates are among the contenders who will have another chance to connect with voters of color on Wednesday at the She the People forum in Houston. The event, which is focused on women of color, includes O'Rourke, Warren and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont as speakers.

There are clear risks to Democrats who embrace talk of white privilege. Candidates could lose the moderate white men who live in suburbs and whose support will be necessary to defeat President Donald Trump. Republicans, including Trump, often blast Democrats for playing into "identity politics" when they



Democratic presidential hopeful John Hickenlooper, back, hugs Colorado state Sen. Rhonda Fields, D-Aurora, during a meeting with survivors of victims of mass shootings in Colorado Tuesday, April 16, 2019, in Denver. Fields lost her son and his fiancée in a shooting in 2005. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski)

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talk about race.

Joe Biden's presidential bid, which is expected to launch on Thursday, could test whether it's politically wise for candidates to speak so openly about race. Although he has positioned himself as a champion of racial equality, the former vice president is expected to wage a campaign aimed at winning back the working-class white voters who swung to Trump in 2016.

Given his decades in public life, Biden faces unique vulnerabilities on race that he will have to address early on in his campaign. He will likely face questions about his opposition to busing during the desegregation era. And he will face scrutiny for his role in Supreme Court confirmation hearings that undermined Anita Hill's credibility nearly three decades ago along with his support of the 1994 crime bill that contributed to the racial disparities in prison sentencing at the center of the mass incarceration debate.

Not all candidates have talked so personally about race. Sanders, who struggled to win black voters in 2016, hasn't talked in depth about whether he has been treated better by society because he's a white man.

Asked recently whether she has experienced privilege as a white person, Democratic candidate Kirsten Gillibrand of New York said, "I guess I don't see it that way." The U.S. senator from New York acknowledged persistent gender and racial bias. But pointing to her legislative accomplishments, she said, "A lot of that success was actually because I'm a woman."

"I have great skills and listening, of finding common ground, of bringing people together," she said. "I think those are some of my superpowers."

Democratic strategist Jamal Simmons cautioned white candidates against "overdoing" talk about privilege and identity. But he said those who are turned off by such rhetoric "are probably not reliable voters for Democrats" in a general election.

The conversations about white privilege are an acknowledgment of the role black voters will play in the Democratic primary next year. For one, the primary features several candidates of color, including Sens. Kamala Harris of California, Cory Booker of New Jersey and former Obama Cabinet secretary Julián Castro. Each of them will make hard pitches to diverse voters and are also attending She the People.

The large size of the Democratic field and the way the primaries will unfold could also put voters of color in a more powerful position. After majority-white states Iowa and New Hampshire vote next year, the contest will swiftly move to more diverse places like Nevada, South Carolina, California, Texas and Georgia.

In a recent interview, Buttigieg said being "pro-racial justice should not be skin off the back of any white voter."

"There's certainly an environment where sometimes these ideas are pitted against each other, where it's suggested, for example, that connecting with white working-class voters somehow means that you have to walk away from our commitment to racial justice — but our commitment to racial justice is part of the bedrock of the moral authority of the Democratic Party," Buttigieg said.

But when asked whether he had experienced white privilege, he said that "part of privilege is not being very conscious of it, right?"

He added: "You're much more conscious when you're at a disadvantage than ... when you are on the beneficial side of a bias. But there's no question that that's a factor that has impacted people in many different ways."

Rashad Robinson, executive director of the online civil rights organization Color of Change, said candidates must go further than being comfortable discussing white identity. They must be able to translate privilege into policies that address inequality, he said.

"I don't need you simply talking about these issues," said Robinson, who has talked to several 2020 Democrats. "I need you using your power to act on them. That, for me, is going to be the measure and the test."

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

___ Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Sri Lanka asks for resignations of top security officials

By KRISHAN FRANCIS Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka's president has asked for the resignations of the defense secretary and national police chief, a dramatic internal shake-up after security forces shrugged off intelligence reports warning of possible attacks before Easter bombings that killed over 350 people, the president's office said Wednesday.

It wasn't immediately clear who would be replacing them, but President Maithripala Sirisena said during a televised speech Tuesday that he planned to change the head of the defense forces within 24 hours.

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, which struck Christians worshipping in three churches and people at three luxury hotels. Authorities remain unsure of its involvement, though many suspect experienced foreign militants were advising, funding or guiding the attackers.

Sri Lanka's junior defense minister has blamed breakaway members of two obscure local extremist Muslim groups, and said many of the suicide bombers were highly educated and came from well-off families.

"Their thinking is that Islam can be the only religion in this country," Ruwan Wijewardene told reporters. "They are quite well-educated people," he said, adding that at least one had a law degree and some may have studied in the UK and Australia.

Leaders have vowed to overhaul the country's security apparatus after acknowledging that some intelligence units were aware of possible attacks before the Easter bombings.

U.S. Ambassador Alaina Teplitz told reporters that "clearly there was some failure in the system," but said the U.S. had no prior knowledge of a threat before the attacks, the worst violence in the South Asian island nation since its civil war ended a decade ago.

Teplitz called that breakdown in communication "incredibly tragic."

Government statements about the attacks have been confused and sometimes contradictory, with police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara telling reporters Wednesday that there were nine suicide bombers — two more than officials said one day earlier.

One of the additional suicide bombers was the wife of another bomber, Gunasekara said. The woman, two children and three policemen died in an explosion as authorities closed in on her late Sunday, hours after attacks were launched against three churches and three hotels. The ninth suicide bomber has not been identified, though two more suspects were killed in a later explosion on the outskirts of Colombo.

Gunasekara said 60 people have been arrested so far. A team of FBI agents and U.S. military officials were helping in the investigation, Teplitz said.

Officials say all of the main suicide bombers were Sri Lankan.

"We are conducting investigations at the moment to see if there is any direct link to any international organizations," Wijewardene said.



A priest conducts religious rituals during a mass burial for Easter Sunday bomb blast victims in Negombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday, April 24, 2019. (AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe)

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The Islamic State group's Amaq news agency released an image it said showed the attackers' leader standing amid seven others with covered faces. It provided no other evidence for its claim.

The group, which has lost all the territory it once held in Iraq and Syria, has made a series of unsupported claims of responsibility for various attacks around the world.

Sri Lankan authorities had earlier blamed a local extremist group, National Towheed Jamaar, whose leader, alternately named Mohammed Zahran or Zahran Hashmi, became known to Muslim leaders three years ago for his incendiary online speeches. On Wednesday, Wijewardene said the attackers had broken away from National Towheed Jamaar and another group, which he identified only as "JMI."

Teplitz declined to discuss whether U.S. officials knew about National Towheed Jamaar or its leader before the attack. "If we had heard something, we would have tried to do something about this," Teplitz said.

The country has been on heightened alert since the attacks, with police setting off a series of controlled explosions of suspicious objects. No more bombs were found Wednesday.

On Tuesday, in an address to Parliament, Wijewardene said "weakness" within Sri Lanka's security system had led to the failure to prevent the bombings.

"By now it has been established that the intelligence units were aware of this attack and a group of responsible people were informed about the impending attack," Wijewardene said. "However, this information has been circulated among only a few officials."

In a live address to the nation late Tuesday, President Maithripala Sirisena said he also was kept in the dark on the intelligence about the planned attacks and vowed to "take stern action" against officials who failed to share the information. He also pledged "a complete restructuring" of the security forces.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Wijewardene also edged away from Tuesday comments that the bombings were retaliation for the March 15 mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand, that killed 50 people. He told reporters Wednesday that the mosque attack may have been a motivation for the bombings, but that there was no direct evidence of that.

An Australian white supremacist was arrested in the Christchurch shootings.

While Sri Lanka's recent history has been rife with ethnic and sectarian conflict, the Easter Sunday attacks came as a shock.

Sri Lanka is dominated by Sinhalese Buddhists, but the country of 21 million also has a significant Tamil minority, most of whom are Hindu, Muslim or Christian.

Tamil Tiger rebels were known for staging suicide bombings during their 26-year civil war for independence, but religion had little role in that fighting. The Tigers were crushed by the government in 2009. Anti-Muslim bigotry fed by Buddhist nationalists has swept the country since the war ended but Sri Lanka has no history of Islamic militancy. Its small Christian community has seen only scattered incidents of harassment.

Associated Press journalists Bharatha Mallawarachi and Jon Gambrell contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. SRI LANKA EASTER BOMBINGS DEATH TOLL RISES TO 359

The country's leaders vowed to overhaul the security apparatus amid a series of intelligence lapses before the attacks.

2. CRUCIAL SUMMIT IN FAR-EASTERN RUSSIA

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is in Vladivostok for a much-anticipated meeting with President Vladimir Putin amid deadlocked diplomacy on Pyongyang's nuclear program.

3. "WOKE LITMUS TEST" FOR CAUCASIAN POLITICIANS

2020 presidential candidates are talking about systemic racism and white privilege to connect with voters of color and prove that America's racial divisions aren't lost on them.

4. DETAILS ON FIRING OF FBI DIRECTOR

President Trump seethed after James Comey pointedly refused to tell lawmakers whether any members of the Trump campaign were or were not under criminal investigation — including the president himself.

5. WHO IS FACING POTENTIAL BANKRUPTCY

Adjustments to states' statute-of-limitations laws so victims of long-ago sexual abuse can sue for damages have lawyers are hard at work recruiting clients to sue the Boy Scouts, with expected settlements putting the organization's finances at risk.

6. THE STIGMA OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

Thousands of Iraqi families face crushing discrimination because their male relatives were seen as affiliated with or supporting IS when the extremists held large swaths of the country.



Relatives carry a coffin for burial during a mass burial for Easter Sunday bomb blast victims in Negombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday, April 24, 2019. (AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe)

7. INCREASING THREAT FOR AFGHAN CITIZENS

Afghan and international forces killed more civilians than the Taliban and other militants in the first three months of this year,

8. QUARTERLY REPORT BRINGS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOEING 737 MAX

Investors will be looking beyond profit and revenue numbers to clues about the fate of the company's best-selling plane and how close engineers are to fixing its flight-control software at the center of investigations into two deadly crashes.

9. MORE STATES GETTING READY TO ALLOW SPORTS BETTING

Governors in Montana and Iowa are considering measures that would allow residents to wager on sports, while approval from Indiana lawmakers is imminent.

10. "JEOPARDY!" CONTESTANT ECLIPSES \$1 MILLION MARK

James Holzhauer, a professional gambler from Las Vegas, already has the top five one-day scores in the history of a game that has aired regularly since 1984.

North Korea's Kim upbeat as he arrives for Putin summit

By IULIA SUBBOTOVSKA, HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (AP) — Smiling and upbeat, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday stepped off his khaki-green armored train in far-eastern Russia for a much-anticipated summit with President Vladimir Putin that comes amid deadlocked diplomacy on his nuclear program.

Kim, dressed in a black coat and a fedora, first met with Russian officials at Russia's Khasan train station near its border with the North, before traveling on to the Pacific port city of Vladivostok for a summit with Putin on Thursday.

Speaking to Russia's state-owned Rossiya-24, Kim said that he is hoping for a "successful and useful" visit and would like to discuss with Putin the "settlement of the situation in the Korean Peninsula" as well as bilateral ties with Russia.

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Kim sat down with local officials as well as a Russian deputy foreign minister in Khasan before traveling on. It was his first visit to Russia as North Korean leader; his late father, Kim Jong Il, visited in 2011.

"I have heard a lot about your country and have long dreamt of visiting it," Kim was quoted as saying. "It's been seven years since I took the helm, and I've only just managed to visit."

Kim evoked his father's "great love for Russia" and said that he intends to strengthen the ties between the two countries.

Kim arrived in Vladivostok aboard his armored train early evening on Wednesday. He was greeted by a military orchestra before he got into his personal limousine that traveled with him, and drove away. He is expected to attend a dinner reception hosted by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Trutnev, according to South Korean media.

After his summit with Putin, Kim may tour neighboring facilities or landmarks before departing for home on Friday. Primorye governor Oleg Kozhemyka told Rossiya-24 that Kim would be meeting "ordinary people" who all favor closer ties with the North.

Kim would also be offered traditional Russian dishes as borscht, pelmeni, or meat dumplings and caviar — though he brought his own cooks with him, Kozhemyka added.

Separately in Moscow, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu hosted his North Korean counterpart to discuss "international security," the Russian military said on Wednesday.

Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov told Russian media the summit will focus on North Korea's nuclear program, noting that Russia will seek to "consolidate the positive trends" stemming from President Donald Trump's meetings with Kim.

In February, Kim's second summit with Trump in Hanoi ended without any agreement because of disputes over U.S.-led sanctions. There have since been no publicly known high-level contacts between the U.S. and North Korea, though both sides say they are still open to a third summit.

Kim wants the U.S. to ease the sanctions to reciprocate some partial disarmament steps he took last year. But the U.S. maintains the sanctions will stay in place until North Korea takes more significant denuclearization steps.

Some experts say Kim could try to bolster his country's ties with Russia and China. Others say it's not clear how big of a role Russia can play in efforts to restart the nuclear negotiations. The summit could allow Putin to try to increase his influence in regional politics and the standoff over North Korea's nuclear program.

"Kim wants to show that he's cooperating with Russia too, rather than looking to only the U.S. and China. But I think it's not easy for Russia and China to provide North Korea with practical assistance that



In this image taken from the RU-RTR Russian television, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un smiles as he leaves a train in Vladivostok railway station in Vladivostok, Russia, Wednesday, April 24, 2019. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Russia by train on Wednesday, a day before his much-anticipated summit with President Vladimir Putin that comes amid deadlocked diplomacy on his nuclear program. (RU-RTR Russian Television via AP)

leads to the inflow of dollars," said Chon Hyun-joon, a former senior researcher at the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

North Korea has increasingly expressed frustration at the deadlocked negotiations. Last week, North Korea tested a new weapon and demanded U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to be removed from nuclear talks.

Putin's adviser added that the Kremlin would try to help "create preconditions and a favorable atmosphere for reaching solid agreements on the problem of the Korean Peninsula."

Ushakov pointed at a Russia-China roadmap that offered a step-by-step approach to solving the nuclear standoff and called for sanctions relief and security guarantees to Pyongyang. He noted that the North's moratorium on nuclear tests and scaling down of U.S.-South Korean military drills helped reduce tensions and created conditions for further progress.

Ushakov said that Putin-Kim summit's agenda will also include bilateral cooperation. Russia's trade with North Korea is minuscule at just \$34 million last year, mostly because of the international sanctions against Pyongyang.

Russia would like to gain broader access to North Korea's mineral resources, including rare metals. Pyongyang, for its part, covets Russia's electricity supplies and investment to modernize its dilapidated Soviet-built industrial plants, railways and other infrastructure.

A city of more than half a million, Vladivostok was in gridlock on Wednesday as traffic was blocked in the city center because of Kim's visit.

Maritime authorities said that the waters around Russky Island, off the southern tip of Vladivostok, would be temporarily closed to all maritime traffic. The island has a university with a conference hall and is seen as a likely summit venue.

Local media reported that some platforms at Vladivostok's main train station would be closed for several days, and that buses will be rerouted from the train station Wednesday. News website Vl.ru reported on road construction to even out the entrance at the train station, possibly to allow Kim's limousine to drive straight off the platform.

Kim and Kim reported from Seoul, South Korea; Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed to this report.

Castro's sluggish 2020 start tests strategy for high office

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Julián Castro's run for president followed a fast rise in the Democratic Party: a big-city Latino mayor of San Antonio at age 34, an Obama Cabinet member and a contender for Hillary Clinton's running mate in 2016.

But signs of an upward trajectory have been hard to spot in his presidential campaign, which on Wednesday returns to Texas — where, even on his own turf, Castro's challenges have been laid bare.

He's been overshadowed by former congressman Beto O'Rourke, who remains a sensation in Texas after his narrow U.S. Senate loss to Republican Ted Cruz. He's drawn smaller crowds than rival candidates who've swung through the Lone Star State. His fundraising has been sluggish, in part because of his earlier choices. Although Democrats long regarded Castro as their brightest star in Texas, time and again he resisted calls to run for statewide office and must now build a supporter list from scratch.

Bigger-name candidates are also struggling for a foothold in a crowded 2020 field, and Castro aides point to a donor uptick in April. But the slow start has nonetheless puzzled some supporters and left a former up-and-comer who delivered Democrats' keynote speech at their 2012 convention in the back of the pack, not even guaranteed of making the first debates.

"I'd have to say that I'm surprised," said Democratic U.S. Rep. Colin Allred of Texas, a friend of Castro's who worked for him when Castro was President Barack Obama's secretary of Housing and Urban Development. "That a former mayor of a major city, a Cabinet secretary, someone who has executive experience,

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who is young, who fits that important demographic, who is intelligent, qualified — that he hasn't generated more coverage and interest."

On Wednesday, Castro will join much of the Democratic primary field in Houston for a candidate forum hosted by She The People, an advocacy group focused on political leadership for women of color. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont will also hold his first rallies in Texas since his last run for president in 2016.

Sanders led the 2020 Democratic field with \$18 million raised in the first quarter. Castro pulled in just \$1.1 million, which was less money raised in three months than the reported single-day hauls of some other candidates, including Pete Buttigieg, the early breakout sensation of the race who is mayor of South Bend, Indiana, which is a fraction the size of San Antonio.

The slow start is testing Castro's trust in the long game that brought his carefully plotted career to this stage. At an event in New York on Monday night, Castro brushed off why he's been overshadowed by Buttigieg, who, like Castro, is young and a Harvard graduate. He said voters will come around to seeing he better represents a new era of leadership.

"I'm not interested, necessarily, in being the front-runner in April of 2019. What I want is to be the front-runner in the spring of 2020, when the voting actually starts," he said.

At 44, Castro is among the youngest in the field and the only Latino, and he projects a steady calmness that is the opposite of President Donald Trump's stormy bluster. He remains the only candidate to roll out an immigration policy plan, was the first to visit Puerto Rico and has pledged to campaign in all 50 states.

But to some, he's also seen as too careful or quiet in a field of bigger names. He remains shy of the 65,000 donors needed to lock in a spot on the debate stage, though he still has a good chance of getting there. He raised more than a half-million dollars in the first two weeks of April, about half of what he raised in the first quarter total.

Aides say that there's no need for urgency and that Castro plans to begin talking about education and housing, which plays to his experience in Washington.

"This is not the first time in Julián's life he has been told he's going to have to compete with people who have resources he doesn't have. So we came in knowing that," Castro campaign manager Maya Rupert said.

Domingo Garcia, the national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, said the ethnic diversity of the country needs to be represented on the debate stage.

"But he still needs to find kind of a breakout moment and an issue that really galvanizes his base and his candidacy," he said.

Jennifer Hernandez is as natural a supporter of Castro as they come. She voted for him as San Antonio mayor, graduated from his high school and made time on a work night to attend one of his rallies. But she's still undecided.

"I'm also looking at Beto and Biden, of course," she said, referring to former Vice President Joe Biden,



Julian Castro, a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate acknowledges supporters after delivering comments during a rally in San Antonio, Wednesday, April 10, 2019. (AP Photo/Eric Gay)

who is expected to enter the race. Castro is "from here, he knows the people here, we know him. That's why we're here, to support him. The other candidates come here, I'll be there, too."

Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/pauljweber>

Migrants fearful after hundreds arrested in Mexico raid

By MARK STEVENSON and SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

TONALA, Mexico (AP) — Central American migrants traveling through southern Mexico toward the U.S. on Tuesday fearfully recalled their frantic escape from police the previous day, scuttling under barbed wire fences into pastures and then spending the night in the woods after hundreds were detained in a raid.

In the Chiapas state town of Tonalá, migrants flocked to one of the few places they felt they could be safe — the local Roman Catholic church — only to start with fear at the sound of a passing ambulance's siren.

"There are people still lost up in the woods. The woods are very dangerous," said Arturo Hernández, a sinewy 59-year-old farmer from Comayagua, Honduras, who fled through the woods with his grandson. "They waited until we were resting and fell upon us, grabbing children and women."

Mexican immigration authorities said 371 people were detained Monday in what was the largest single raid

so far on a migrant caravan since the groups started moving through the country last year.

The once large caravan of about 3,000 people was essentially broken up by the raid, as migrants fled into the hills, took refuge at shelters and churches or hopped passing freight trains. A brave few groups straggled along the highways, but with dozens of police and immigration checkpoints, they were bound to be caught.

Journalists from The Associated Press saw police target isolated groups at the tail end of the caravan near Pijijiapan Monday, wrestling migrants into police vehicles for transport and presumably deportation as children wailed.

Now terrified of walking exposed on the highways, some turned in desperation to a tactic that used to be a popular way north, clambering aboard a passing freight train bound for the neighboring state of Tabasco. It's been years since migrants hopped trains in large numbers.

Javier Núñez, a 25-year-old Honduran, said he and his family walked through the hills, along a river and by some train tracks after Monday's raid before venturing into the town of Pijijiapan to find something to eat. But agents appeared again Monday night and detained his wife and son, who he said were taken to an immigration facility in Tapachula for deportation processing.

"They were hunting us," Núñez said. As he sees it, the only thing to do is go on alone, see how far he



A Central American migrant detained by Mexican immigration agents looks out from a van on the highway to Pijijiapan, Mexico, Monday, April 22, 2019. Mexican police and immigration agents detained hundreds of Central American migrants on Monday, the largest single raid on a migrant caravan since the groups started moving through Mexico last year. (AP Photo/Moises Castillo)

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can make it. "Now we are afraid of everyone who looks at us or approaches."

Asked about the detentions at a Tuesday morning news conference, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador acknowledged that the government is not letting migrants simply go wherever they please. He denied taking a hard line, saying controls are for migrants' security because human traffickers are allegedly infiltrated among the caravans.

"We don't want for them to just have free passage, not just out of legal concerns but for questions of safety," López Obrador said.

His immigration chief, Tonatiuh Guillén, said later that Monday's incident was "regrettable," particularly in the case of the children who were frightened.

He said it was not something he wanted to repeat. But he also maintained it was a normal migration enforcement action.

Guillén said Mexico has deported 11,800 migrants so far this month and is being more selective in who is given a humanitarian visa, which allows a migrant to remain in the country and work.

Interior Secretary Olga Sánchez Cordero said the migrants who were detained Monday had refused to register for a regional visa that would have allowed them to remain in southern Mexico.

While U.S. President Donald Trump has ramped up public pressure on Mexico to do more to stem the flow of Central American migration through its territory, López Obrador has rejected criticism from some that the immigration policy seems unclear or even contradictory.

In recent months Mexico has deported thousands of migrants. It has also issued more than 15,000 humanitarian visas.

AP journalists who were present for the raid did not witness any initial violent behavior by the migrants, though immigration authorities said otherwise. During a second detention operation, some from the caravan took up rocks and clubs and at least one stone was thrown, but authorities did not report any injuries to agents.

It was "a planned ambush ... to break up this caravan," said Denis Aguilar, a factory union leader from San Pedro Sula, Honduras. "They grabbed the children ... the strollers are abandoned there."

Aguilar said he and his brother fled through the woods until they found a ranch house whose residents took them in. In the morning, the family drove them to a bus stop.

Maria Mesa, a homemaker from La Esperanza, Honduras, said she saw officials tugging children as their mothers battled to pull them through the barbed wire fences. She saw other children weeping, alone, on the edge of the woods. Mesa has kids of her own, but left them home because she knew it would be a hard journey.

Her decision to go alone contrasts with the many thousands of others from Central America migrating with relatives toward the U.S. border, where detentions of people traveling in families have spiked. They typically say they are fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries, and many hope to seek asylum.

Those who arrive at the U.S. border must contend with policies limiting how many are allowed to apply for refuge each day. The United States has also returned some to wait in Mexico while their asylum cases inch through a backlogged court system. Trump recently told migrants not to come, saying: "Our country is full, turn around."

Migrants who opt to join caravans do so figuring there is safety in numbers and also because it is a relatively inexpensive alternative to paying thousands of dollars to a "coyote," or smuggler.

But they are finding it a much tougher go through Mexico than before. In addition to Monday's dramatic raid, migrants have experienced a cooler reaction from townspeople, who last year donated food and clothing but have grown tired of the groups. Migrants say once-friendly Mexicans now refuse to give even water, leaving them no choice but to drink from puddles at times.

"People don't want them to enter the towns," said Gerardo Lara Espinosa, a bus dispatcher in Tonalá, who said the caravans are seen as overwhelming small towns and hurting businesses.

Mexican officials said last month they would try to contain migrants in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico's narrowest stretch and the easiest to control. Pijijiapan is not far from the isthmus' narrowest

point, in neighboring Oaxaca state.

About 300 migrants hopped a train Monday to Ixtepec, in Oaxaca. On Tuesday, others were walking along the road to Tonalá, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Pijijiapan.

Jorge Herrera, a farm worker from El Progreso, Honduras, said he and his 7-year-old son fled through the woods after the raid. The boy is sunburned and has cuts and mosquito bites. Herrera thinks López Obrador is doing Trump's dirty work.

"He must be bought. He must be paid for them to do this to us," Herrera said.

Associated Press writer Mark Stevenson reported this story in Tonalá and AP writer Sonia Pérez D. reported from Pijijiapan. AP writer María Verza in Mexico City contributed to this report.

The Comey firing, as retold by the Mueller report

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump was seething.

The FBI director, James Comey, had privately reassured him that he was not personally under investigation. But on May 3, 2017, when Comey was summoned to Capitol Hill to explain his handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation, he denied the president the public vindication he'd sought.

Facing curious lawmakers and a captivated American audience, Comey pointedly refused to say whether any members of the Trump campaign were or were not under criminal investigation — including the president himself.

"The Department of Justice has authorized me to confirm" the existence of a broader investigation into potential collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign, Comey said. "We're not going to say another word about it until we're done."

And, indeed, he would not speak about it again, as FBI director.



This combination photo shows President Donald Trump speaking during a roundtable discussion on tax policy in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., on April 5, 2018, left, and former FBI director James Comey speaking during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on June 8, 2017. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci, left, and Andrew Harnik)

EDITOR'S NOTE — First in a series of stories focusing on events detailed in the report of special counsel Robert Mueller, drawing from the document's trove.

At the White House that afternoon, Trump's anger grew as an adviser recounted Comey's testimony. He trained his fire on Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who'd recused himself from the Russia investigation two months earlier because of his work on the Trump campaign.

Notes maintained by Sessions' chief of staff depict a president in full venting mode: The attorney general was supposed to be a president's most important appointment, he raged. John Kennedy had his brother

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Robert, Barack Obama had his friend Eric Holder.

"You left me on an island," Trump told Sessions. "I can't do anything."

He spent the next several days stewing over Comey. Their relationship was already fraught. Over dinner months earlier, Trump asked Comey to pledge his loyalty to him, but the FBI chief declined. Then Comey ignored the president's appeal to end an investigation into his former national security adviser.

Comey was a show-boater, a grandstander, Trump complained to aide Steve Bannon. Three times, Trump lamented, Comey had told him he wasn't under investigation. And now this.

By that weekend, Trump was at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, crafting a plan to dismiss Comey and dictating language for a draft termination letter to aide Stephen Miller.

In it, Trump said that though he appreciated being told he wasn't under investigation "concerning the fabricated and politically motivated allegations of a Trump-Russia relationship," Comey had nonetheless lost the support of the president and the American public.

That Monday, in Washington, the plan grew more complicated.

Trump read aloud the first paragraphs of the letter and told aides his mind was made up and there was nothing to discuss. His White House counsel Don McGahn, who repeatedly functioned as a check against Trump's impulses, suggested his office consult Justice Department leadership.

After neither Sessions nor Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein raised concerns about Comey's firing, Trump asked Rosenstein to draft a memo recommending the dismissal, and to "put the Russia stuff" in it, according to the notes of a senior Justice Department official.

Rosenstein agreed to the memo but resisted any Russia reference. He knew as he left the White House that day that Comey would be fired — but not for the reasons he'd give in his document.

Rosenstein's memo focused exclusively on Comey's handling of the Clinton investigation, including his decision to publicly announce that she should not face charges. There was no mention of Russia, save for a single-page letter to Comey in which Trump said he'd been informed three times he wasn't under investigation.

The White House released the memo on the evening of May 9 as it announced Comey's firing, which it said was done at the Justice Department's recommendation.

Comey learned of his firing from television screens as he addressed FBI employees in Los Angeles. It was, he initially thought, a joke. Except that it wasn't, and news helicopters were soon tracking his trip to the airport. He flew home on the FBI plane, helping himself to a bottle of California pinot noir he'd picked up on the trip.

Trump expected cheers from Democrats, given their fury over Comey's actions toward Clinton. Instead there was anger and confusion.

Why would Trump be mad about Comey's conduct in the Clinton case since he benefited from the FBI's actions? If that really was the reason, why had he waited four months to fire him?

The administration was roiled in chaos. Trump, unhappy with the press coverage, sought the advice of former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who told him Rosenstein should publicly defend the firing.

But when Trump told Rosenstein he should have a press conference, Rosenstein said that wasn't prudent. If asked, he said, he would have to tell the truth. He'd have to say the firing wasn't his idea at all.

Sessions and Rosenstein told McGahn they were concerned the White House was creating a false narrative by suggesting Rosenstein had initiated the decision.

Trump took care of that with a May 11 interview with NBC's Lester Holt, in which he said he would have fired Comey regardless of the Justice Department's recommendation.

"In fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said, you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story," Trump said. "It's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should've won."

He went on to say something eerily prescient, something that proved true each day for the next two years as the Comey firing took center stage in Mueller's investigation.

Instead of ending the scrutiny by firing Comey, the president acknowledged, "I might even lengthen out the investigation."

For complete coverage of the Mueller report, go to <https://www.apnews.com/TrumpInvestigations>

Shallow quake shakes northeast India, no damage yet reported

GAUHATI, India (AP) — A moderate earthquake shook remote northeastern India near the border with China early Wednesday, but no damage or casualties were immediately reported.

U.S. Geological Survey geophysicist Gavin Hayes said the area in Arunachal Pradesh state is sparsely populated so not many casualties or much damage was expected.

The USGS said the quake was magnitude 5.9 with an epicenter 33 kilometers (20 miles) north-northwest of Along, India. It was a relatively shallow 14 kilometers (8.7 miles) below the surface.

Hayes says this area of the Himalayan frontal thrust has had some large quakes in the distant past, making experts more alert to the possibility that a bigger one might be next. However, he says most earthquakes are not followed by larger ones.



S&P 500, Nasdaq close at record highs as earnings roll in

By DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

The S&P 500 hit an all-time high Tuesday, marking the stock market's complete recovery from a nosedive at the end of last year.

The benchmark index's previous record was set last September, shortly before the market sank in the fourth quarter amid fears of a recession, an escalating trade war between the U.S. and China, and concern the Federal Reserve was moving too aggressively to raise interest rates.

Those concerns have eased or taken a back seat to more optimism among investors this year. Investors are more confident in the prospects for steady, if slower, growth. And they've been encouraged by an increasingly hands-off Federal Reserve, which has signaled this year that it may not raise interest rates at all in 2019 after seven increases the prior two years.

Traders are also feeling more optimistic about the global economy. In China, economic growth held steady at 6.4% in the first quarter of the year as increased government efforts to stem a slowdown gained traction. In the U.S., job growth rebounded in March following a surprisingly weak February.

And the uncertainty over the costly trade dispute between the U.S. and China has eased in recent weeks amid signs that both sides are making progress toward reaching a resolution.

The S&P 500 has now recovered all of the ground it lost last fall, gaining 24.8% since it hit a bottom on Christmas Eve.

"New highs, in and of themselves, tend to be bullish and tend to beget more new highs," said Willie Delwiche, investment strategist at Baird. "You have the combination of Fed friendliness, the economy still in good shape and some expectations from an earnings front being reset that create a fundamental backdrop that isn't all together unfavorable for stocks."

Tuesday's broad rally was driven by big U.S. companies turning in solid results for the first quarter. That

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surprised investors because analysts have forecast the worst quarter of earnings growth in years.

The S&P 500 index gained 25.71 points, or 0.9%, to 2,933.68. It's previous record high was 2,930.75, which was set on Sept. 20.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 145.34 points, or 0.5%, to 26,656.39. The Nasdaq composite index climbed 105.56 points, or 1.3%, to 8,120.82, beating the record high close of 8,109.69 it reached on Aug. 29.

Small-company stocks rose much more than the rest of the market, a bullish sign indicating that investors were more willing to take on risk. The Russell 2000 index picked up 25.05 points, or 1.6%, to 1,585.09. It finished well below the peak it reached last August.

At the sector level, technology and industrial stocks are leading the way this year, with gains of 27.2% and 22.4%, respectively.

While the S&P 500's latest milestone reflects renewed optimism about stocks, where the market goes from here depends largely on corporate earnings growth. To that end, the breadth of earnings growth is key, said Delwiche.

"You could argue that a bulk of the decline last year was concern about the global economy and whether or not the Fed was tightening too, much too soon," Delwiche said. "The question is: What's next?"

"In terms of identifying what's next for the market, you really need to see how the average stock does," he said. "Is the average stock able to come through with earnings growth? Is the average stock able to rally? Or have the past six-seven months been just one big action-reaction and we're left with spinning heads but not much else?"

Delwiche noted that while the S&P and Nasdaq notched new highs Tuesday, the number of individual stocks making new highs is relatively small.

"That's a cause for concern," he said.

On Tuesday, Hasbro, Lockheed Martin and Twitter all surprised Wall Street with strong profit and revenue. Analysts are watching corporate reports closely this week as they gauge whether first quarter earnings for U.S. companies will be as bad as predicted. Wall Street has been forecasting a contraction during the quarter.

Stocks are under a little less pressure following the latest round of earnings results. That's not only because the earnings have been mostly solid, but also because companies have been issuing optimistic forecasts.

"We're getting a nice forward-looking picture from those companies," said J.J. Kinahan, chief market strategist for TD Ameritrade.

There are still many big companies yet to report earnings and it's far too early to conclude that the results will beat Wall Street's modest expectations. Reports from Caterpillar, Boeing and Microsoft are all going to be closely watched Wednesday.

Hasbro surged 14.2% after the toy company reported strong growth in its various franchises, which include Transformers toys, which benefited from the hit movie "Bumblebee" and "Magic: The Gathering Arena." The turnaround comes as Hasbro and other toy makers recover from the bankruptcy of Toys R Us.



FILE - In this March 12, 2019, file photo, trader Michael Milano works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The U.S. stock market opens at 9:30 a.m. EDT on Tuesday, April 23. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

Coca-Cola surprised Wall Street with its beverage sales during the first quarter after it previously warned of slower growth this year. The stock rose 1.7%.

Twitter surged 15.6% after surprising Wall Street by adding more users than analysts had expected during the first quarter.

Lockheed Martin rose 5.7% after raising its forecast for the year on a solid outlook for jet and arms production.

Bond prices rose. The yield on the 10 year Treasury fell to 2.57% from 2.59% late Monday.

Energy futures closed mostly higher. U.S. crude gained 1.1% to settle at \$66.30 per barrel. Oil has been climbing since dropping below \$43 in late December. Brent crude rose 0.6% to close at \$74.51 per barrel.

Wholesale gasoline inched 0.1% higher to \$2.13 per gallon. Heating oil rose 0.7% to \$2.12 per gallon. Natural gas fell 2.7% to \$2.46 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold slipped 0.3% to \$1,273.20 per ounce, silver dropped 1.2% to \$14.79 per ounce and copper fell 0.3% to \$2.89 per pound.

The dollar fell to 111.83 Japanese yen from 111.94 yen late Monday. The euro weakened to \$1.1215 from \$1.1259.

US expands probe into air bag failures to 12.3M vehicles

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — U.S. auto safety regulators have expanded an investigation into malfunctioning air bag controls to include 12.3 million vehicles equipped with bags that may not inflate in a crash. The problem could be responsible for as many as eight deaths.

Vehicles made by Toyota, Honda, Kia, Hyundai, Mitsubishi and Fiat Chrysler from the 2010 through 2019 model years are included in the probe, which was revealed Tuesday in documents posted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. It involves air bag control units made by ZF-TRW that were installed in the vehicles.

The control units can fail in a crash, possibly because of unwanted electrical signals produced by the crash itself that can disable an air bag control circuit housed in the passenger compartment, according to NHTSA documents. The electrical signals can damage the control circuit, the documents say.

ZF, a German auto parts maker which acquired TRW Automotive in 2015, said that it's committed to safety and is cooperating with NHTSA and automakers in the investigation.

The case is another in a long list of problems with auto industry air bags, including faulty and potentially deadly Takata air bag inflators. At least 24 people have been killed worldwide and more than 200 injured



This undated combination of photos shows clockwise from top left the logos for Toyota, Honda, Kia, Fiat Chrysler, Mitsubishi and Hyundai. U.S. auto safety regulators have expanded an investigation into malfunctioning air bag controls to include 12.3 million vehicles because the bags may not inflate in a crash. Vehicles made by Toyota, Honda, Kia, Hyundai, Mitsubishi and Fiat Chrysler from the 2010 through 2019 model years are included in the probe, which was revealed Tuesday, April 23, 2019, in documents posted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (AP Photos)

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by the Takata inflators, which can explode with too much force and hurl dangerous shrapnel into the passenger cabin. The inflators touched off the largest series of automotive recalls in U.S. history with as many as 70 million inflators to be recalled by the end of next year. About 100 million inflators are to be recalled worldwide.

On April 19, NHTSA upgraded the ZF-TRW probe from a preliminary evaluation to an engineering analysis, which is a step closer toward seeking recalls. So far, only Hyundai and Kia and Fiat Chrysler have issued recalls in the case. Four deaths that may have been caused by the problem were reported in Hyundai-Kia vehicles and three in Fiat Chrysler automobiles. NHTSA opened an investigation in March of 2017 involving the TRW parts in Hyundais and Kias.

The upgrade came after investigators found two recent serious crashes involving 2018 and 2019 Toyota Corollas in which the air bags did not inflate. One person was killed. Toyota said it's cooperating in the probe, doing its own investigation and will take "any appropriate action."

Jason Levine, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety, a nonprofit consumer group, said the ZF-TRW case shows the auto industry thus far has learned very little from Takata.

"A single supplier of an important safety component provided what appears to be a defective part across multiple manufacturers and 12 million cars," Levine said. "While the first fatality reports emerged three years ago, it has taken a higher body count for more significant action to be taken by NHTSA and most impacted manufacturers remain silent. The industry needs to do better."

NHTSA said it will take "appropriate action" based on the investigation's findings.

In the ZF-TRW investigation documents, NHTSA said that it didn't find any other cases of electrical interference in Hyundai, Kia or Fiat Chrysler vehicles that used the ZF-TRW system but were not recalled. Also, the agency has not identified any other cases of electrical interference in other Toyotas including Corollas, since the company started using the ZF-TRW parts in the 2011 model year. In addition, no electrical interference cases have been identified in Honda or Mitsubishi vehicles with the same parts, the agency said.

NHTSA will evaluate how susceptible the air bag control units are to electrical signals as well as other factors that could stop air bags from inflating. The agency also "will evaluate whether an unreasonable risk exists that requires further field action."

Last year, Hyundai and Kia recalled nearly 1.1 million vehicles because of the problem, about a year after NHTSA opened its investigation.

Kia vehicles covered included 2010 through 2013 Forte compact cars and 2011 through 2013 Optima midsize cars in the U.S. Also covered are Optima Hybrid and Sedona minivans from 2011 and 2012. Recalled Hyundai vehicles included 2011 through 2013 Sonata midsize cars and the 2011 and 2012 Sonata Hybrid.

In 2016, Fiat Chrysler recalled about 1.9 million vehicles worldwide including the 2010 Chrysler Sebring, the 2011 through 2014 Chrysler 200, the 2010 through 2012 Dodge Caliber, the 2010 through 2014 Dodge Avenger, the 2010 through 2014 Jeep Patriot and Compass and the 2012 and 2013 Lancia Flavia.

AP source: Biden to announce 2020 bid on Thursday

By **BRIAN SLODYSKO, THOMAS BEAUMONT and STEVE PEOPLES** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Answering perhaps the most significant question of the early 2020 election season, former Vice President Joe Biden will launch his presidential campaign on Thursday.

The move, confirmed by a person familiar with his plans, sets up the 76-year-old lifelong politician as a front-runner in the crowded Democratic contest as the party fights to determine who's best positioned to defeat President Donald Trump next year.

Biden, who spent the last five decades in Washington but never lost touch with his working-class background, is scheduled to face union workers in Pittsburgh on Monday as part of the rollout tour, the person said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to disclose private conversations.

While he may be popular with the white working-class in the Midwest, it's unclear if Biden will appeal to the more liberal voters who tend to have outsized sway in Democratic primary contests.

His decision largely settles the crowded and diverse Democratic presidential field at 20 candidates,

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including six women, five people of color and one member of the LGBTQ community. Biden would be the most experienced politician in the race, and the second-oldest, after 77-year-old Bernie Sanders.

A handful of lesser-known Democrats, including Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, could join the race in the coming weeks or months, but Biden's decision is considered the final major piece as voters, donors and elected officials alike begin to pick their favorites.

"Come on in, the water is warm Joe," California Sen. Kamala Harris, another 2020 contender, laughed on Tuesday as she campaigned in New Hampshire. "I adore Joe Biden and I think he has to make whatever decision is best for him."

Biden, who has run for president twice before with little success, will look to organized labor for support early on.

The largest firefighters union is preparing to formally endorse Biden this week, with group leaders saying they will be "investing" heavily in the former vice president's anticipated bid.

The board of the International Association of Fire Fighters will meet this week to vote on the endorsement. They plan to announce it publicly early next week.

IAFF represents 316,000 full-time firefighters across the U.S. Harold A. Schaitberger, the union's general president, said the group will help Biden raise money. It will also launch an outside group that is expected to be able to raise and spend unlimited sums supporting his candidacy.

"I always remind everyone that we are everywhere there is a blinking light or traffic light," Schaitberger said. "We have infrastructure and capability, whether it's in the neighborhoods, or whether it's working to develop caucus attendees in Iowa. Our union is very strongly resourced and we will be investing."

One of the most recognizable names in politics, Biden served for two terms as Barack Obama's vice president after nearly four decades as a senator from Delaware. His high-profile, working-class background and connection to the Obama years would help him enter the race as a front-runner, though he faces questions about his age and whether his more moderate record fits with a party that has become more liberal.

Biden spoke at an IAFF gathering in Washington last month. At the time Schaitberger said the union would be "all in" for Biden if he runs. He also acknowledged that many rank-and-file members supported President Donald Trump in 2016.

Biden, Schaitberger argued, is better positioned than other Democrats to win in the Midwest, which flocked to Trump in 2016.

Associated Press writers Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Hunter Woodall in Manchester, N.H., contributed to this report.



In this April 5, 2019 photo, former Vice President Joe Biden speaks at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers construction and maintenance conference in Washington. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, April 24, the 114th day of 2019. There are 251 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 24, 1980, the United States launched an unsuccessful attempt to free the American hostages in Iran, a mission that resulted in the deaths of eight U.S. servicemen.

On this date:

In 1800, Congress approved a bill establishing the Library of Congress.

In 1877, federal troops were ordered out of New Orleans, ending the North's post-Civil War rule in the South.

In 1915, in what's considered the start of the Armenian genocide, the Ottoman Empire began rounding up Armenian political and cultural leaders in Constantinople.

In 1916, some 1,600 Irish nationalists launched the Easter Rising by seizing several key sites in Dublin. (The rising was put down by British forces five days later.)

In 1932, in the Free State of Prussia, the Nazi Party gained a plurality of seats in parliamentary elections.

In 1967, Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov was killed when his Soyuz 1 spacecraft smashed into the Earth after his parachutes failed to deploy properly during re-entry; he was the first human spaceflight fatality.

In 1970, the People's Republic of China launched its first satellite, which kept transmitting a song, "The East Is Red."

In 1990, the space shuttle Discovery blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying the \$1.5 billion Hubble Space Telescope.

In 1995, the final bomb linked to the Unabomber exploded inside the Sacramento, California, offices of a lobbying group for the wood products industry, killing chief lobbyist Gilbert B. Murray. (Theodore Kaczynski was later sentenced to four lifetimes in prison for a series of bombings that killed three men and injured 29 others.)

In 2003, U.S. forces in Iraq took custody of Tariq Aziz (TAH'-rihk ah-ZEEZ'), the former Iraqi deputy prime minister. China shut down a Beijing hospital as the global death toll from SARS surpassed 260.

In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI formally began his stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church; the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said in his installation homily that as pontiff he would listen to the will of God in governing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

In 2013, in Bangladesh, a shoddily constructed eight-story commercial building housing garment factories collapsed, killing more than 1,100 people.

Ten years ago: Mexico shut down schools, museums, libraries and state-run theaters across its overcrowded capital in hopes of containing a deadly swine flu outbreak. Back-to-back suicide bombers struck near a Shiite shrine in Baghdad, killing 71.

Five years ago: An Afghan government security guard opened fire on foreign doctors at a Kabul hospital, killing three Americans in the latest of a deadly string of attacks on Western civilians in the capital. The tiny Pacific nation of the Marshall Islands took on the United States and the world's eight other nuclear-armed nations with an unprecedented lawsuit demanding they meet their obligations toward disarmament and accusing them of "flagrant violations" of international law.

One year ago: Former police officer Joseph DeAngelo was arrested at his home near Sacramento, California, after DNA linked him to crimes attributed to the so-called Golden State Killer; authorities believed he committed 13 murders and more than 50 rapes in the 1970s and 1980s. (DeAngelo is awaiting trial.)

Today's Birthdays: Movie director-producer Richard Donner is 89. Actress Shirley MacLaine is 85. Actress-singer-director Barbra Streisand is 77. Former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley is 77. Country singer Richard Sterban (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 76. Rock musician Doug Clifford (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 74. R-and-B singer Ann Peebles is 72. Rock singer-musician Rob Hyman is 69. Former Irish

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Taoiseach (TEE'-shuk) Enda Kenny is 68. Actor-playwright Eric Bogosian is 66. Rock singer-musician Jack Blades (Night Ranger) is 65. Actor Michael O'Keefe is 64. Rock musician David J (Bauhaus) is 62. Actor Glenn Morshower is 60. Rock musician Billy Gould is 56. Actor-comedian Cedric the Entertainer is 55. Actor Djimon Hounsou (JEYE'-mihn OHN'-soo) is 55. Rock musician Patty Schemel is 52. Actress Stacy Haiduk is 51. Rock musician Aaron Comess (Spin Doctors) is 51. Actor Aidan Gillen is 51. Actress Melinda Clarke is 50. Actor Rory McCann is 50. Latin pop singer Alejandro Fernandez is 48. Country-rock musician Brad Morgan (Drive-By Truckers) is 48. Rock musician Brian Marshall (Creed; Alter Bridge) is 46. Actor Derek Luke is 45. Actor-producer Thad Luckinbill is 44. Actor Eric Balfour is 42. Actress Rebecca Mader is 42. Country singer Rebecca Lynn Howard is 40. Country singer Danny Gokey is 39. Actress Reagan Gomez is 39. Actor Austin Nichols is 39. Actress Sasha Barrese is 38. Contemporary Christian musician Jasen Rauch (Red) is 38. Singer Kelly Clarkson is 37. Rock singer-musician Tyson Ritter (The All-American Rejects) is 35. Country singer Carly Pearce is 29. Actor Joe Keery is 27. Actor Jack Quaid is 27. Actor Doc Shaw is 27. Actor Jordan Fisher is 25. Golfer Lydia Ko is 22.

Thought for Today: "The door to the past is a strange door. It swings open and things pass through it, but they pass in one direction only. No man can return across that threshold, though he can look down still and see the green light waver in the water weeds." — Loren Eiseley, American anthropologist (1907-1977).