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## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## Upcoming **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

### 2 - Monday

NO SCHOOL

Pool Hours: 1-4:50 open swim

Emmanuel: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

### 3 - Tuesday

10 a.m.: Boys Golf at Lee Park

6:30 p.m.: Volleyball at Ipswich (JV at 6:30)

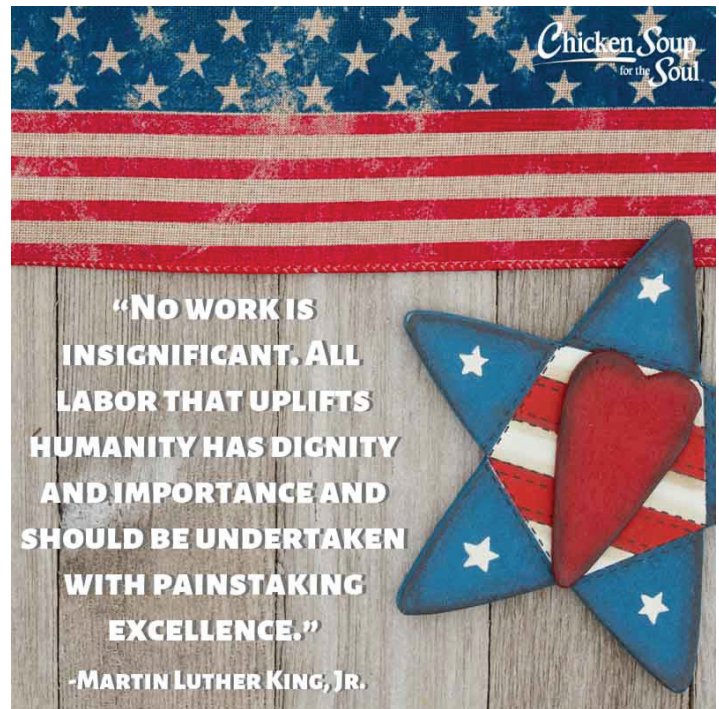
St. John's: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.

UMC: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

**Breakfast:** Mini Pancakes

**Lunch:** Pizza Cruncher, Cooked Carrots

**Senior Menu:** Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, apricots, whole wheat bread.



### 4 - Wednesday

St. John's: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel: Lutheran Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Parent meeting for confirmation, 7 p.m.; Bible Study, 7 p.m.

C&MA: Adult Bible Study, Youth Group, Kid's Club, 7 p.m.

UMC: Coffee time, 9 a.m.

**Breakfast:** Stuffed Bagels

**Lunch:** Turkey Gravy, Mashed Potatoes

**Senior Menu:** Hearty Vegetable Beef Soup, Chicken Salad sandwich, Mandarin oranges, cookie.

It's Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Ipswich  
Tigers**

**VS**



**Groton Area Tigers**

Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019

7:00 p.m. at Ipswich

**SPONSORED BY DAKOTA RISK MANAGEMENT**

## Farmers Earn 25 Cents from \$12 State Fair Lunch

HURON, S.D. - South Dakota's number one industry of agriculture is hurting. In addition to dealing with extreme weather during 2019 calving and planting seasons, grain and livestock prices are down. While at the same time, grocery store prices hold steady.

To help South Dakotans who don't work on farms and ranches gain a better understanding of the wage gap between what they pay in the grocery store and what a South Dakota farm or ranch family earns, South Dakota Farmers Union (SDFU) hosts its annual Farmer Share Lunch during Farmers Union Day at the South Dakota State Fair, Aug. 31.

Fairgoers pay only 25 cents for a lunch valued at \$12.

"We fed more than 1,000 today," says Karla Hofhenke, SDFU Executive Director. "This is our largest educational event. Farmers Union board members, who are farmers and ranchers, and staff spend a lot of time visiting with folks waiting in line, answering questions, helping them understand what the family farmers and ranchers of our state are going through right now."

Friends, Taylor Feddersen and Savannah Krogman said they knew prices were low, but they were still surprised when they learned the farmer and rancher who raised the ingredients for the lunch, which included milk, chips and pulled pork sandwich, only received 25 cents.

"We live in a small town, and know everyone who does farm," explains Feddersen, who traveled to the State Fair from Murdo.

"But it's still surprising – farmers don't make enough," adds Krogman.

Farmer Share lunch is an annual event hosted by S.D. Farmers Union. And although there has been a large gap between what shoppers pay and what farmers and ranchers earn, in recent years the difference has become extreme.

"Farmers and ranchers are used to dealing with unpredictable weather, and somewhat volatile markets, but the recent trade war and the 2017 dissolving of governmental oversight with the closure of USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) who facilitated the marketing of agriculture products, means our farmers can't even get fair markets within the U.S.," explains Doug Sombke, SDFU President and fourth-generation farmer.

Winner farmer, Joel Keierleber, appreciates the organization's effort to education. "When consumers buy a pound of burger at the store and pays \$4, they think I'm making \$4 a pound for the cattle I raise. This simply isn't the case. Consumers really don't understand that most of their food dollars go to the middle-man. For example, I only receive \$1.73 for that pound of burger, and that is not counting how much it cost me to produce and market the cow."

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**SOUTH DAKOTA  
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

## Poor S.D. residents hit hardest by state debt collection efforts

By: Nick Lowrey

Thousands of South Dakotans have lost their privileges to hunt, fish, or drive in the state since 2016 because they owe money to government agencies for unpaid fines, fees or even college tuition, but often the people hardest hit by state debt collection efforts are low-income residents who are the least able to pay up.

The license and registration suspensions were implemented by the state debt Obligation Recovery Center, known as the ORC, as part of its efforts to collect money owed to government agencies.

Under state law, anyone who owes \$50 or more to a government agency shall not be issued a hunting license, fishing license, state park entrance pass or be able to make a state park camping reservation. Driver's licenses and annual vehicle registrations can be suspended if the debt is greater than \$1,000.

State officials say the license and vehicle registration suspensions are a necessary tool to collect more than \$80 million owed to state agencies and departments for debts due to outstanding fees, fines and unpaid taxes.

Scott Bollinger, commissioner of the state Bureau of Administration that oversees the ORC, said debt sanctions are a way for state government to pressure people who owe money to pay up and can help keep costs down for those who do not owe money. For example, Bollinger said that collecting debts owed to the Board of Regents, one of the top recipients of ORC debt collections, can help keep down the price of tuition at public universities.

"Ideally, if everyone paid their debts we'd probably have lower tuition rates, sales tax rates, whatever," Bollinger said.

Created after a tough fight by the 2015 state Legislature, the ORC acts as state government's central debt collector. By June 30, 2019, state agencies had sent 122,353 individual debt accounts to the ORC. So far, since beginning operations in 2016, the center has brought more than \$8.7 million worth of recovered debt into state coffers, according to its most recent annual report. Meanwhile, debtors owing millions more dollars to the state have entered payment plans to satisfy their debts.

During the 2019 fiscal year running from July, 1 2018 to June 30, 2019, the ORC informed 18,000 people they'd be blocked from purchasing a hunting or fishing license in the state. Additionally, 3,000 people were notified that they wouldn't be able to renew their driver's licenses and vehicle registrations that year unless they paid their debt in full or started a payment plan.

Bollinger is responsible for keeping tabs on ORC operations. He said the center has helped boost the state's fiscal bottom line without costing taxpayers a dime because the independent contractor that operates the ORC doesn't get paid unless the state does first.

"If you look at the raw numbers, we collect a lot more than we used to," Bollinger said.

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The South Dakota court system has, so far, been the largest beneficiary of the ORC's efforts. A total of around \$3.67 million has been collected for the courts since 2016. In fiscal 2019 alone, \$1.48 million worth of court-ordered debts was collected. A large portion of that total was court-ordered restitution and was paid to crime victims.

The state Board of Regents, which is responsible for South Dakota's public universities, has received the second-largest amount of collections. Collectively, the state's six public universities have received a little over \$3.5 million in collected debts since 2016. The state Department of Corrections received the third-highest amount of collections, with more than \$1.17 million paid over the last three fiscal years. The Department of Revenue has seen around \$950,000 of debt collected through the ORC.

The average debt referred to the ORC in 2019 was about \$670, meaning most of the state's debtors couldn't be hit with its toughest sanctions.

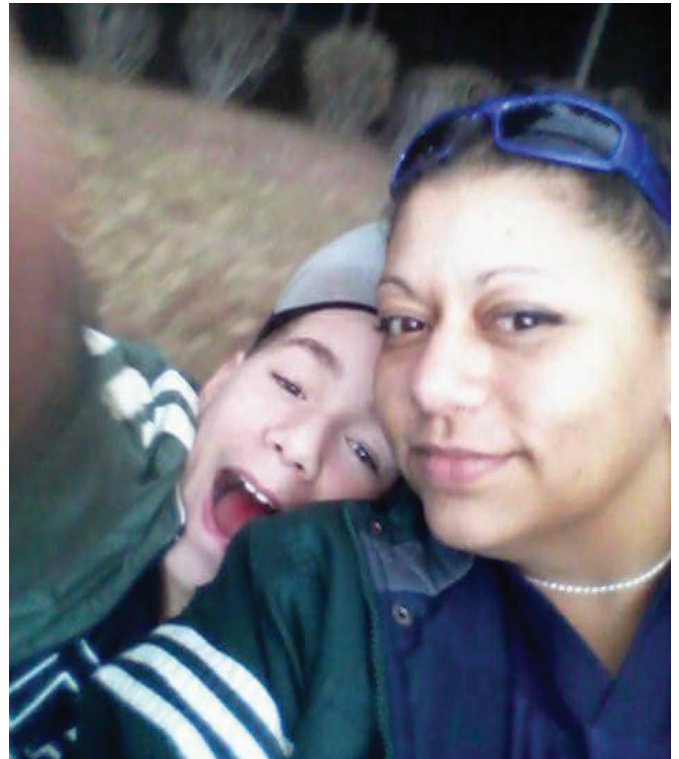
Still, many who have faced ORC enforcement actions are among the state's poorest residents who struggle to repay their debts and can least afford to lose the right to drive legally, according to critics who say the debt collection system is biased against poor people.

"Wealth-based suspensions create a two-tiered system of justice where rich and poor people with otherwise identical records receive different punishments solely because of their ability to pay, said Libby Skarin, policy director for American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota. "Criminalizing poor people and balancing budgets on the backs of the poor is inherently unfair and it undermines the fairness and legitimacy of our legal system."

Tomia Valdez, 42, of Rapid City, is on disability for a degenerative genetic condition and has custody of her 17-year-old son who is on the autism spectrum. She said her driver's license has been suspended since 2017 because she owes the state \$4,000.

The debt arose from a 2014 legal battle for which Valdez said she was assigned a public defender. She said she had been accused of neglecting and abandoning her son after they were evicted from their residence. She says the incident was a misunderstanding that took nearly two years to overcome in order to regain custody of her son.

In 2017, Valdez said she went to get her driver's license reinstated after settling a separate legal issue but was denied and told of the \$4,000 debt for the first time. Valdez said the debt would be nearly impossible to settle given her limited income.



**After settling a separate legal issue in 2017, Tomia Valdez, 42, of Rapid City, was told she couldn't renew her driver's license because she owed the state of South Dakota \$4,000. Valdez said she hadn't been notified of the debt until then. Now, she is disabled due to a degenerative disease and can't afford to pay the debt, so therefore she cannot legally drive.** Photo: Submitted

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"I can't take my son fishing, I can't take my self to the grocery store, I can't take myself to medical appointments and my son is disabled," Valdez said. "I can't do anything."

## Boost government revenue without a tax hike

There are no government employees tracking down debtors and making annoying phone calls or writing threatening letters for the Obligation Recovery Center. Instead, South Dakota hired a private contractor to do the work. The center is, largely, a software system managed by a contractor called CGI Technologies and Solutions. Many of its debt collection functions are automated, but CGI also operates a call center for customer service and debt-collection phone calls. Debtors also can use the system to make payments and enter into payment plans on their own.

Now headquartered in Virginia, CGI has become a global entity offering a wide variety of services including information technology outsourcing, business processing and consulting services to governments all over the world. The company says it has successfully worked with 20 states on successful debt collection programs and helped governments all over the world boost revenue by \$3.5 billion by improving collection of unpaid taxes and debts.

Over the past 10 years, CGI has been involved in some high-profile failures. The company helped build the originally troubled federal healthcare.gov website created as part of the 2009 Affordable Care Act. More recently, in 2018, CGI was awarded no-bid contracts as part of a failed effort to privatize and outsource the Information Technology arm of the Kansas Department of Revenue.

Through its consulting arm, CGI was an integral part of the creation of the South Dakota Debt Obligation Recovery Center in 2015. A year earlier, then-Gov. Dennis Daugaard was looking for a way to boost state revenues without raising taxes. As it turns out, an analysis conducted by CGI found the state was owed more than \$120 million, ranging from unpaid taxes and fines to college tuition and court-ordered restitution.

At the time, state government agencies were individually responsible for collecting unpaid debts. For example, if a student dropped out of a state university two-thirds of the way through a semester and didn't pay their tuition bill prior to 2015, the university would solely have been responsible for collecting the debt. Often, this meant employees who spent time on other duties were stuck making collection calls or sending letters. If that didn't work, the school would have been forced to absorb the loss or contract with a private collection agency and then write off a healthy portion of the debt.

## HOW NEIGHBORING STATES COLLECT UNPAID DEBTS

Here is a look at how South Dakota's neighboring states approach collection of unpaid government debts.

**Iowa:** State law allows state agencies, courts and local governments to ask the Department of Revenue for all or a portion of a resident debtor's state income tax return in order to satisfy debts.

**Minnesota:** The state Department of Revenue is responsible for debt collection; state agencies and courts can ask the revenue department to hold back state income tax returns to satisfy debts.

**Nebraska:** State law allows state agencies to ask the Department of Revenue for a portion of a resident debtor's state income tax returns.

**North Dakota:** State agencies are allowed to take all or some of a resident's state income tax return to satisfy debts.

**Wyoming:** Like South Dakota, Wyoming does not have a state income tax. The state now leaves most debt collection up to its individual agencies.

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In the case of court-ordered debts, such as for criminal restitution, fines and court fees, which cannot be written down, the debts often went uncollected altogether. The state's court system didn't employ full-time debt collectors.

Daugaard Administration officials — with the help of CGI — devised a central collections center to which the state's agencies could refer debts they were unable to collect. The governor told the legislature in 2015 that centralizing the debt collection process would be more efficient and successful by putting it into the hands of professional debt collectors.

To pay for the operations of the new debt collection center, any debts referred to it would be assessed a 20% surcharge. The debtor would be responsible for the extra 20 percent charge in addition to their original debt. Part of the sales pitch given to legislators in 2015 was that the ORC would be entirely self-sustaining due to the 20 percent charge.

Another piece of the sales pitch was that creating the ORC would not require more state employees. The process would mostly be automated and third parties could be contracted to handle debts that needed a more traditional collections approach. Responsibility for keeping tabs on the ORC and managing the state's relationship with the contractor would be tacked onto the duties of the Bureau of Administration.

Still, the ORC was a tough sell. The bill that created the ORC was written late in the session and narrowly passed the state senate. Some legislators argued that the ORC was being given too heavy a hand with the ability to suspend licenses and vehicle registration. Others argued that the ORC would represent unfair public competition with private debt collectors. But, eventually, the bill passed and Daugaard signed it.

Once money is collected, it gets deposited in the state general fund and is then sent to the agency that is supposed to have it, Bollinger said. The 20 percent surcharge also gets deposited into the general fund and is then used to pay the ORC contractor. Bollinger said CGI only gets paid if and when a debt is collected. So far, tax dollars haven't been used on the program, he said.

In states bordering South Dakota, most of which have a state income tax, governments use the threat of not sending out all or part of an annual tax return to compel residents who owe debts to pay up. No neighboring states, including Wyoming, which like South Dakota does not have an income tax, use the threat of loss of licenses to push debtors to pay up.

In South Dakota, debtors who think they've been wrongly targeted or weren't properly notified that they had a debt can ask for a due-process hearing in front of the state Board of Hearing Examiners.



**In 2017, Laurie Amundson of Vermillion was notified by the South Dakota Debt Obligation Recovery Center that she owed the state more than \$3,500 for her son's room and board while we was held at Star Academy, a juvenile treatment facility near Custer which has since closed. Amundson said she can't work due to medical conditions and can't pay the bill.** Photo: Submitted

Bollinger said the hearings are fairly limited in scope but the referring agency does need to present evidence. From fiscal 2017 through fiscal 2019, debtors requested a total of 46 due-process hearings. In all, 16 hearings were dismissed or withdrawn, according to the ORC 2019 annual report.

## Some debtors refuse to pay

Laurie Amundson said she got her first letter from the ORC in 2017. The letter said she owed more than \$3,500. She had to call the customer service number listed in the letter to discover that the debt originated from about six years earlier. Her son had been sent to Star Academy, the former Department of Corrections juvenile treatment facility outside of Custer, for around seven months, Amundson said.

The boy had been convicted of assaulting Amundson and stealing from her after committing a string of other crimes, Amundson said. At the end of her son's sentence, Amundson was required to pay \$1,200 in restitution for damage her son had caused to a car before he could be released from the detention facility. At the time, no one mentioned anything about an additional \$3,500 charge for room and board at the facility, Amundson said.

When Amundson found the ORC's first notification letter in her mailbox in 2017, she said she was shocked and more than a little angry.

"They told me that if I didn't pay the bill, they would take my [driver's] license away," she said. "I told them, 'Go ahead, I don't drive anymore.'"

As a result, her driving privileges have been suspended since 2017. Amundson said the suspension doesn't affect her much because she stopped driving a while ago and now lives in Vermillion, where she can get around town fairly well using public transit. The debt Amundson owes has been sent to Texas-based Municipal Services Bureau, the third-party collections contractor the state uses if the ORC's efforts prove unsuccessful.

Amundson said she has so far refused to pay the bill both because she doesn't think she should have to pay for a crime that her son committed against her and because she simply can't afford it. She's out of work, partially because she suffers from chronic

## BY THE NUMBERS: S.D. DEBT COLLECTIONS

Here is a look at some key data points regarding money owed to the state of South Dakota and the state's attempts to collect it through the Obligation Recovery Center.

3,000 — Number of people who lost their licenses or vehicle registrations due to unpaid debts in fiscal 2019.

18,000 — Number of people who lost their ability to buy a hunting or fishing license due to unpaid debts in fiscal 2019.

110,571 — Number of active debt accounts referred to the Obligation Recovery Center, including from 84,256 state residents and from 26,258 non-residents (some of the total accounts referred are no longer active.)

\$8.7 million — Amount of money collected by the South Dakota Debt Obligation Recovery center since 2017.

\$81.8 million — Amount of debt owed on accounts held by the Obligation Recovery Center.

\$57.3 million — Amount owed by South Dakota residents on accounts referred to the Obligation Recovery Center.

\$24.4 million — Amount of debt owed by non-residents on accounts referred to the Obligation Recovery Center.

\$27 million — Amount of debt referred to the ORC by June 30, 2019 that was 10 or more years old, meaning it likely will be difficult to collect.

Source: State of South Dakota

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fatigue and fibromyalgia. Her husband, a truck driver, also owes money to the Internal Revenue Service.

"My life shouldn't be destroyed for something my son did. My privileges shouldn't be taken away for something I didn't even do," Amundson said.

For now, Amundson said, she'll keep throwing away her collection letters. She figures there isn't much more the state can do to compel her to pay.

In the private sector, debt collection agencies are typically hired to collect "bad debt" — money owed but uncollected for 60 or more days — on behalf of the organization to which the money is owed. They are used by everything from credit card companies to hospitals and local government utility departments. Often the collections agency will take up to 45 percent of the money it collects.

A private collections agency is limited in what it can do by the federal Fair Debt Collections Practices Act. They can't, legally, call at odd hours, contact someone else about the debt, use threats or intimidation or lie to a debtor. Collection agencies can make deals to satisfy debts at lower costs to debtors. They can also work with credit bureaus and limit a person's access to credit. But that's about all they can do, short of filing a lawsuit.

South Dakota's ORC can do nearly everything a private collections agency can do plus ask the Game, Fish & Parks Department to suspend a debtor's hunting privileges if the debt is over \$50. The ORC can ask the Department of Public Safety to suspend a debtor's driver's license and ask the Department of Revenue to restrict someone from renewing their license plates.

The 20 percent collection fee wouldn't cover the cost of legal action, so the ORC doesn't file lawsuits to recover debts, Bollinger said.

The ORC cannot negotiate with debtors who have been ordered by South Dakota courts to pay restitution, fines or court fees, which can make collections on those debts more difficult, Bollinger said. Court-ordered debts also cannot legally be written off, unlike most other debts.

Another problem is that roughly a quarter of the debt that has been referred to the ORC, roughly \$20 million, is owed by more than 26,000 people who don't live in South Dakota. Outside of reporting the debt to credit bureaus and barring someone from getting a non-resident hunting or fishing license, there's not much the state can do to force a non-resident to pay, Bollinger said.

If a debt hasn't been collected after the ORC has tried for at least six months and a third-party debt collection contractor has tried for at least one year, the debt can be sent back to the referring agency. The agency can then ask the state Board of Finance to write the debt off of its books.

Debt write-offs have been on the agenda for three Board of Finance meetings so far in 2019. Most of the write-offs were for debts owed to the Department of Transportation for property damage and had been returned to DOT uncollected. One debt to the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in Rapid City was written off because the debtor died, while another debt to Black Hills State University in Spearfish was written-off due to a bankruptcy, according to documents filed with the Board of Finance.

## **ABOUT NICK LOWREY**

Nick Lowrey, based in Pierre, S.D., is an investigative staff reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A South Dakotan for more than 20 years, he is a former editor of the Pierre Capital Journal.

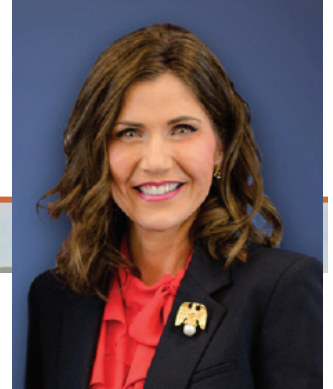


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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR  
**KRISTI NOEM**



## Industrial Hemp is Not the Answer

As a farmer and rancher, I would be thrilled to get a new crop into the hands of our producers, especially as our ag markets struggle. A new source of revenue for farmers would be great. But industrial hemp is not the answer.

Legalizing industrial hemp legalizes marijuana by default. I asked my cabinet and other experts in state government to see what other states are doing on hemp and how they are implementing their laws. But what they've come back with is example after example of drug laws becoming murky and unenforceable.

Across the country, states are dealing with issues surrounding the enforcement of marijuana laws because hemp and marijuana look the same and smell the same. Police officers are unable to distinguish between hemp and marijuana on the road, essentially legalizing marijuana.

Proponents in Texas told legislators that legalizing hemp would not decriminalize marijuana. Yet with Texas's new industrial hemp law now on the books, prosecutors have dropped hundreds of marijuana cases and have stopped accepting new cases until much more detailed testing is done. In Ohio, a law enforcement official said this to WBNS, a local news station: "We have to be able to distinguish between hemp and marijuana. That is not possible for a human being to do, that has to be done through crime analysis."

Without additional equipment costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, many crime labs can only detect the presence of THC – not the level of it – for crime analysis purposes. A full crime analysis from an outside lab can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars per test, a price tag too steep for local law enforcement agencies who oftentimes have to wait weeks before receiving test results.

A recent NBC News article reiterated this message. "With the passage of new hemp-legalization laws over the past eight months, crime labs across the country have suddenly found themselves unable to prove that a leafy green plant taken from someone's car is marijuana, rather than hemp." Without the ability to test the level of THC in a plant, the NBC report says, labs can't provide useful scientific evidence for use in court. Any suspected marijuana case would require this expensive and time-consuming testing. Prosecutors will quickly get overwhelmed, and as we've seen in other states, they begin dropping charges or avoiding new cases altogether.

Last week, my Secretary of Public Safety, Craig Price, said that "the more we study this issue, the more concerns I have for the impact on public safety. Law enforcement is already stretched thin in our state, and legalizing hemp would stress our resources even further. It would have a negative impact on our drug fighting efforts in South Dakota."

We've seen this firsthand. A few months ago, a South Dakota Highway Patrol officer showed the Legislature that a drug dog alerted the same way to both hemp and marijuana. If drug dogs and roadside tests are unable to decide between hemp and marijuana, our best assets to cracking down on illegal drugs are invalid. We'll be legalizing marijuana by default.

That's what it boils down to. Legalizing industrial hemp weakens drug laws. It hurts law enforcement. It's a step backward. South Dakota already faces a drug problem. Families continue to be ripped apart by substance abuse. I realize this position might not be popular, but that's not why I'm taking it. As a governor who has said I will make every decision with the next generation in mind, I cannot sit by.

South Dakota must lead by example. We cannot rush into legalizing industrial hemp without knowing the cost we will pay. The safety and health of the next generation is not worth the gamble.



## Holding the Army Corps Accountable for its Management of the Missouri River

In the Senate, I have the opportunity to serve as Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Oversight, which has the important responsibility of providing oversight of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers manages the Missouri River Basin Mainstem Reservoir System, which includes six dams and reservoirs in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. These six reservoirs have a combined maximum capacity of 72.4 million acre feet and control runoff from approximately half of the Missouri River Basin.

Our subcommittee recently held a field hearing in North Sioux City with Brigadier General Peter Helmlinger and John Remus, Chief of the Missouri River Water Management Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Northwestern Division, to discuss the Corps' management following spring 2019 flooding along the river due to heavy precipitation and an extreme weather event known as a "bomb cyclone," followed by rapid snowmelt. As a result, hundreds of miles of land along the river system flooded, threatening and damaging homes, communities, farmland and critical infrastructure such as dams and bridges.

I appreciated the Army Corps' willingness to participate in the hearing and answer our questions regarding their management of the river. I also appreciated the many members of the public who took time out of the day to attend.

During the hearing, we discussed the latest August 1, 2019, runoff projections from the Army Corps of Engineers. 2019 is expected to be the second-highest runoff year on record with almost 53 million acre feet of runoff, second only to 2011. This has had a major impact on ag production in South Dakota this year. While total impact and damage assessments are still being conducted, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) report shows that agricultural producers were not able to plant crops on more than 19.4 million acres in 2019 - the most prevented plant acres reported since USDA's Farm Service Agency began releasing the report over a decade ago.

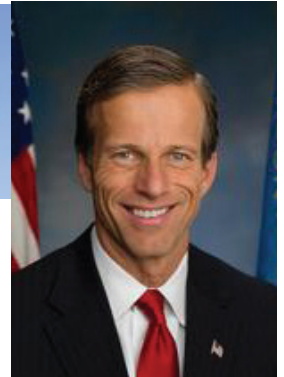
We certainly hope there are not many more wet years like this. However, when wet years do occur, we need to have the ability to manage them. Unfortunately, years like 2019 are becoming more frequent. Near-record levels have occurred three out of the last nine years. During periods of extreme weather conditions, the Corps' management of the river system plays a critical role in mitigating damage. We believe this is best achieved by recognizing trends, making accurate projections and reacting accordingly.

The Corps currently makes decisions based on the Missouri River Basin Mainstem Reservoir System Master Water Control Manual, known as the 'Master Manual', which outlines how the Corps of Engineers will operate the system to meet its eight congressionally authorized purposes for managing the system. These include flood control, navigation, water supply, water quality control, irrigation, recreation, hydro-power, and fish and wildlife.

During the hearing, we discussed the possibility for the Corps to take into account wet-year and dry-year trends, which they currently monitor, as they make decisions about how much water to release each year. When we're in a flood year, the Corps could increase releases upstream earlier in the year so there could be more storage capacity available in the three main upstream reservoirs. This could help to mitigate long-term flooding downriver.

I appreciated the Corps' willingness to listen to our concerns. I look forward to continue working with them toward a solution that will allow them to manage the river using the Master Manual mandates while also preventing serious flooding in the communities along the Missouri River.

**John Thune**  
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



## A Bipartisan Idea to Address America's Mountain of Student Loan Debt

**\*\*Special Edition By Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Mark Warner (D-Va.)\*\***

Every summer, college graduates around the country don their caps and gowns in celebration of a job well done, with the hopes of using their degrees to propel them into a successful career.

But for many young Americans entering the workplace, that first job will also bring with it the first payment on tens of thousands of dollars of student loan debt — debt that can take them decades to pay off.

While college is certainly not the only path to a good job, the fact is more than half of all jobs paying over \$35,000 require a bachelor's degree or higher — and that number is only expected to grow.

Americans are following the money. Today more than 44 million Americans have outstanding student loan debt, which has become the one of the biggest consumer debt categories. All told, student debt in the U.S. now totals more than \$1.5 trillion.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez says it was easier for her to become a representative than pay off her

For South Dakotans, more than 109,000 borrowers hold \$3.3 billion in total outstanding federal student loan debt, according to recent data from the Department of Education. That averages out to more than \$30,000 per borrower. In Virginia, more than 1 million borrowers hold \$38 billion in total outstanding debt. Across America, it's estimated that the average borrower has more than \$37,000 in debt, while more than 2 million student loan borrowers owe \$100,000 or more — and these figures continue to rise.

As a result of this growing student debt crisis, many borrowers struggle to pay for day-to-day necessities like rent, groceries or car payments. For others, their student debt stands in the way of buying a home, starting a business or pursuing a new career opportunity.

While the federal government already provides some assistance to those who are eligible, much more can be done to help graduates responsibly pay down their student debt and help employers recruit and retain qualified candidates for good-paying jobs.

That is why we introduced the bipartisan Employer Participation in Repayment Act. Employers can already contribute up to \$5,250 each year tax free to help cover the education expenses of students who are working while taking classes. Our legislation would expand this benefit to allow employers to provide the same tax-free contributions to their employees who are no longer in school and help them pay down their student loan debt.

Right now, borrowers pay taxes on any contributions their employer makes toward their student loans. Our bill would help employees pay down their student debt more quickly and put more of their hard-earned money toward buying a home, starting a business, or saving for the future.

This is an obvious benefit for graduates, but it would also give employers a new tool and benefit option that would help them attract and retain top-level talent. This is a win-win scenario for graduates, for businesses, and for the American economy.

We know this bipartisan legislation isn't a silver bullet. More must be done to bring down the cost of higher education and expand opportunities for those Americans who choose not to go to college. But for the millions of Americans currently saddled with student debt, our bill would begin to ease that burden almost immediately.

Our bill can pass Congress and get the president's signature this year. With more than one-third of both the House and the Senate signed on as cosponsors and a wide variety of endorsing stakeholder groups, our bill has earned the type of consensus support that's not easily found in Washington these days. Several major companies have already committed to introducing student loan repayment benefits if Congress steps up and makes this fix. Let's give employees the chance to take them up on the offer.

By working together in support of this bill, Democrats and Republicans can help give student borrowers some relief and put them on the pathway to success.

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



## Today's College Student

Most of South Dakota's students are back in the swing of the school year. Whether your child is beginning kindergarten or just moved into their first dorm room to begin freshman year at college, education - from pre-K to secondary - is central to the American way and our progress as a nation.

Everyone's education experience is unique. If you grew up in Rapid City, you may have graduated in a class along with several hundred other students - if you grew up in a rural community, you may have had half-a-dozen siblings or cousins in school with you. You may have also been one of South Dakota's many homeschool families. It's easy to forget that the experiences of others are often staggeringly different than your own. The movies usually depict fresh out of high school suburban kids as the model college student, but in reality, more than 37% of today's college students are over the age of 25 and only 13% of students live on campus.

As a new member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, I've had the opportunity to participate in dozens of hearings and listen to witnesses from all walks of life. Earlier this year during a hearing on college tuition prices, I was impacted by the testimony of Ms. Parker, a single parent and college student. More than 24% of college students nationwide are parents, and an even higher percentage of those parents are single mothers. Ms. Parker is one of those mothers and she shared the difficulty of navigating college, working multiple jobs at a time, and using childcare all on her own.

Ms. Parker isn't alone - her story is the story of so many young parents and single mothers in the United States. More than 38% of students with family, financial, or work obligations leave school in their first year. A postsecondary education or trade is more important than ever to succeed in today's economy. And access to affordable child care can be a great enabler for parents to pursue a postsecondary education and get a higher paying job.

Currently, colleges and technical schools utilize Strengthening Institutions Program grants to expand student services for low-income students. However, this program is limited, and the Department of Education's Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program is limited to campus-based child care. Parents pursuing higher education often need to attend classes and need accessible child care available to them outside of the traditional 9-5, so we need to find ways for colleges and technical institutes to access resources to accommodate their respective student-parent population.

When I get back to Washington in September, I plan to introduce the Empower Parents in College Act, which will provide flexibility for parents and universities to partner with a local child care provider to offer untraditional child care services to their student-parent population.

The Empower Parents in College Act would allow colleges and technical institutes that serve low-income students to apply for existing grant funds from the Strengthening Institutions Program. If Congress can add flexibility for college student-parents at no extra cost to the program, it should be a no-brainer. I look forward to keeping you posted as this legislation progresses.

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings fell to the Buffalo Bills 23-27 in their fourth and final preseason game of 2019. None of the Vikings' starters played in this game, instead this game was used to straighten out the rest of the team's depth chart and give those players on the roster bubble one last chance to not only impress the Vikings' coaching staff, but also put game film out there for the 31 other teams around the league.

The stats of the final preseason game are basically meaningless, so we won't spend time recapping the game. Instead, we will focus on the ultimate results of the game: the final roster cuts. As of today (Sunday, Sept. 01), the Vikings are down to 53 players on their roster. There will be a few moving pieces here and there, but for the most part the 2019 roster is set. Let's take a look at who got cut this past weekend, and what it means going forward.

On offense, the Vikings cut: WR Jeff Badet, FB Khari Blasingame, QB Jake Browning, T Aviante Collins, WR Davion Davis, C Cornelius Edison, RB De'Angelo Henderson, TE Cole Hikutini, WR Alexander Hollins, C John Keenoy, WR Dillon Mitchell, T Storm Norton, QB Kyle Sloter, WR Laquon Treadwell, T Nate Wozniak, WR Brandon Zylstra. The Vikings also put TE David Morgan on the PUP, so he will be unable to practice until week six of the regular season.

While most of these players were facing an uphill battle to make the roster, there are a few surprises on the list of cut players. The most notable cut by the Vikings was wide receiver Laquon Treadwell, the former first-round pick. Coming out of college, Treadwell was supposed to be a perfect complement to Stefon Diggs and Adam Thielen – a big bodied WR who could dominate smaller cornerbacks underneath and in the red zone. Unfortunately, that dream never came to be realized, and Treadwell couldn't take advantage of his opportunities. I believe all the coaching changes hampered his development, and I wouldn't be surprised to see him land on his feet with another team. Cutting Treadwell also leaves the Vikings with only four WRs on the roster, so they will surely add at least one more as they sift through players cut by other teams.

The other big surprise on cut-day was QB Kyle Sloter, who many fans were hoping could take the backup job away from Sean Mannion. Fans were able to see him in games, which is where Sloter shined, but the coaching staff was unimpressed with the signal caller in practice, and they didn't feel he was reliable if he was forced to play extended time in the unfortunate event of a Kirk Cousins injury.

On defense, the Vikings cut: DE Ade Aruna (Injured), LB Reshard Cliett, DT Curtis Cothran, LB Devante Downs, CB Craig James, DE Stacy Keely, LB Greer Martini, CB Nate Meadors, DT Tito Odenigbo, DE Anree Saint-Amour, DE Karter Schult, LB Cameron Smith, S Derron Smith, CB Duke Thomas, S Isaiah Wharton (Injured). The Vikings also put CB Holton Hill (who is serving an eight-game suspension) on the Reserve/Suspended list, and DE Tashawn Bower on the Reserve/Non-Football Injury list. Neither of the two players will count towards the Vikings' 53-man roster while on their respective lists.

There weren't as many surprise cuts on defense. The biggest names that pop out to me are DE Ade Aruna and LB Cameron Smith. Aruna was a sixth-round pick in 2018, and Smith was a fifth-round pick of the most recent draft. I'm sure the Vikings will try and get both players onto their practice squad, which is likely getting filled as I'm writing this article. I will have an updated practice squad roster in next week's article.

The only other notable cut from this past weekend was kicker/punter Kaare Vedvik. It was just a few weeks ago that the Vikings sent a fifth-round pick to Baltimore to acquire the kicker, meaning the Vikings have spent more draft capital than just about every other team in the league to figure out their kicking problem, and it's still not fixed.

Looking ahead, the Vikings kick off the regular season on Sunday, September 8 when the Atlanta Falcons come to town. The game will start at noon (CT) and will be shown on Fox. The Falcons have a high-powered offense and an ascending defense, so they will be a good test for the Vikings. Skol!

If you have any questions or comments, reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL)

## We need our farmers.

We need them physically strong. We need them mentally strong.

---

**Northeastern Mental Health Center** is now offering counseling services for farmers and their families-**at no cost.**

With the current state of the industry, we understand that farm families can feel overwhelmed in times of stress, instability, and uncertainty.

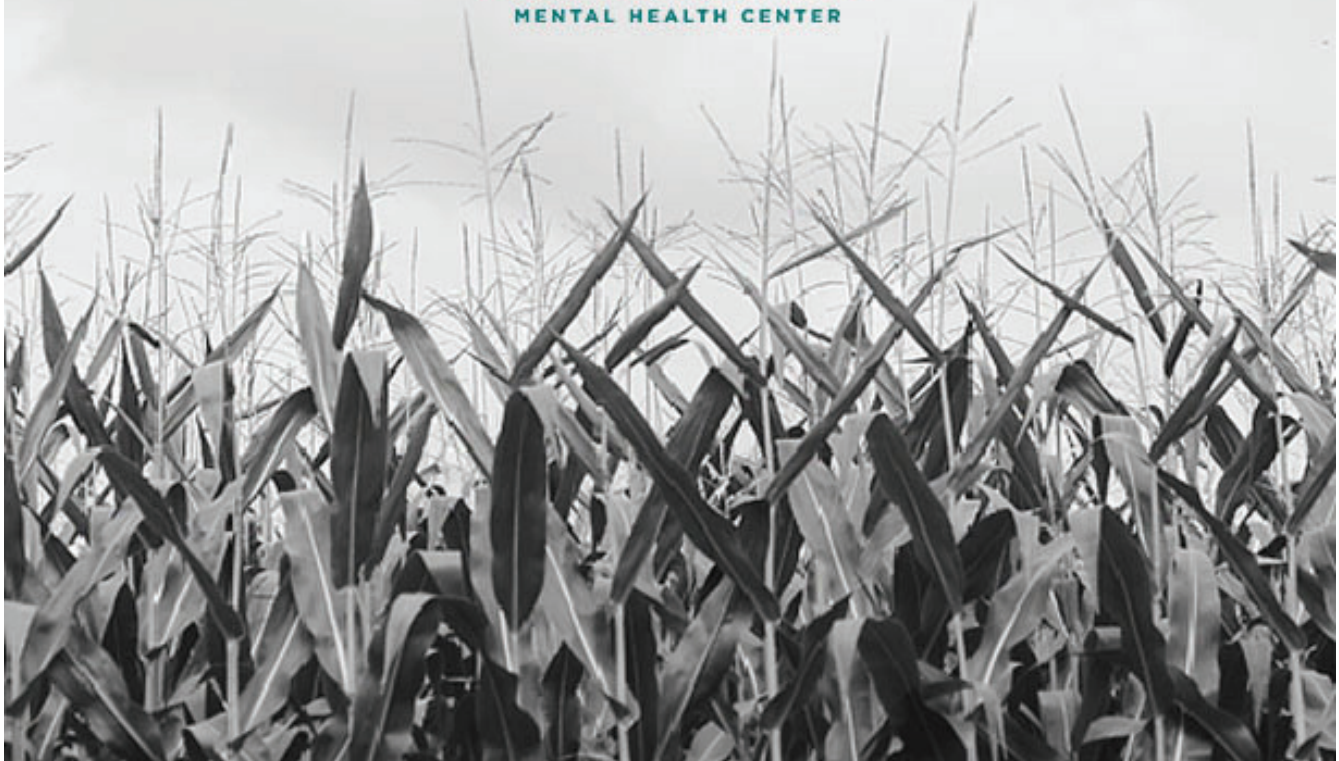
We're here to help.

**Call 605-225-1010 for more information.**

Northeastern Mental Health Center services the counties of Brown, Campbell, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Marshall, McPherson, Potter, Spink and Walworth.



Northeastern  
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER





*Adults and Students . . . come  
learn what social issues are  
involving our youth  
in our community.*

# **Solutions** **to** **Social Issues**

**SPONSORED BY LOCAL CHURCHES**

Youth Groups Welcome ~ Large Groups please RSVP 605/377-0709

Seminars are:

**September 11 at United Methodist Church:**

**Drugs & Alcohol**

**October 9 at Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church:**

**Sex Trafficking and Date Violence**

**November 6 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church:**

**Suicide and Bullying**

**Light Meal at 5:45 p.m. ~ Seminar begins at 6:30 p.m.**

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**Labor Day**



Slight Chance  
T-storms

**High: 77 °F**

**Tonight**



Severe  
Thunderstorms

**Low: 60 °F**

**Tuesday**



Sunny and  
Breezy

**High: 70 °F**

**Tuesday Night**



Mostly Clear

**Low: 47 °F**

**Wednesda**



Sunny

**High: 74 °I**

## Enhanced Risk

of Severe Thunderstorms

1 2 **3** 4 5

### Hazards

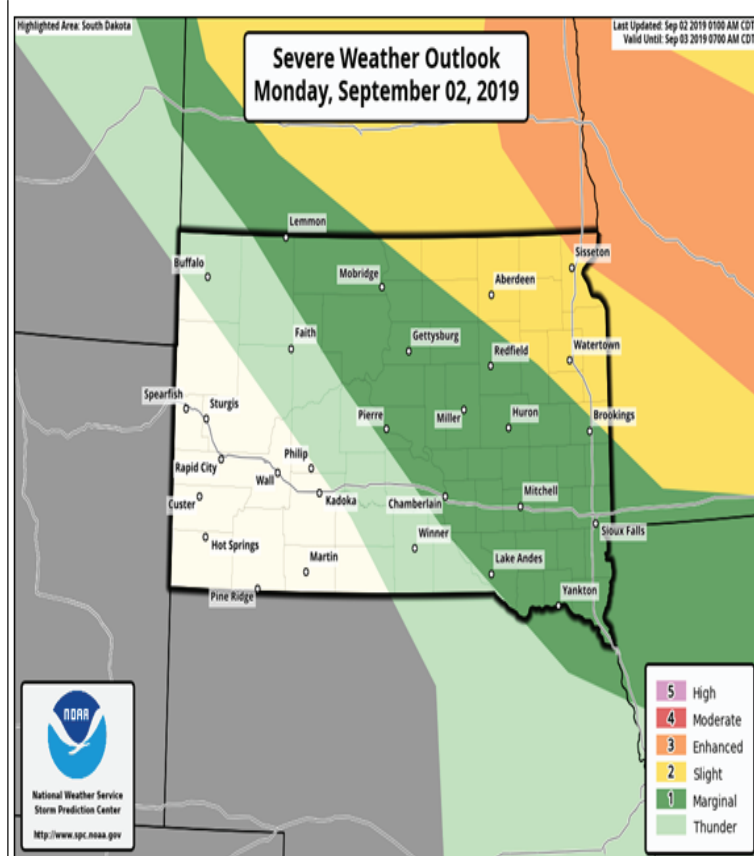
Thunderstorms, a few strong to severe, have the potential to produce large hail to golf ball size and wind gusts to 70 mph

### Timing

Storms will fire north this afternoon and spread southeast through the evening hours. The highest risk period will be from 7 pm - Midnight.

### Some Cities at Risk

Watertown, Ortonville, Wheaton, Aberdeen  
And Sisseton



ISSUED: 2:09 AM - Monday, September 2, 2019

Published on: 09/01/2019 at 10:12PM

A cold front could produce strong to severe storms over the region late this afternoon and evening. However, before then, a few strong thunderstorms are possible this morning, especially over the Missouri River valley.



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## Today in Weather History

September 2, 1962: From 315 to 445 pm, hail fell in and around the Mobridge area. The hail ranged from 1 1/2 to 4 inches in diameter. The ground was covered up to 3 inches deep with drifts of 2-3 feet. At this time, the storm was one of the worst in recent history for damage.

September 2, 1983: A tornado touched down in the late afternoon 3 miles west and 1 mile south of Polo in Hand County damaging buildings, machinery, and trees. The roof of a hog house was torn off, and the north side of the building was destroyed. A barn was pulled several inches off of its foundation, and numerous trees were destroyed. At a nearby farm, two outbuildings were damaged, with two cows injured along with two calves killed.

September 2, 1985: Intense thunderstorms moved from south-central South Dakota to northeast South Dakota during the evening. Winds gusted to 60 to 70 mph over the area. Southwest of Presho, three small buildings were destroyed, and barns were damaged. Power lines and other property were damaged near Vayland, Miller, Wessington, Wolsey, Kimball, White Lake, Armour, and Castlewood. Large hail caused considerable damage to crops.

1775: The 1775 Newfoundland hurricane, also known as the Independence Hurricane, was a storm that hit the Colony of Newfoundland. It is believed to have killed at least 4,000 people, making it one of the deadliest Atlantic hurricanes of all time. The death toll in Virginia and North Carolina was 163 lives.

1882: Possibly the first photograph of a lightning strike was taken on this day by William Jennings in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1935: The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane was the strongest and most intense hurricane to make landfall in the United States and the Atlantic Basin in recorded history. The death toll from this hurricane is between 400 to 600 individuals.

1985: Category 3 Hurricane Elena made landfall near Biloxi, Mississippi causing major wind and storm surge damage.

2002: An F3 tornado destroyed much of the downtown area of Ladysmith, Wisconsin. Overall damage was estimated at \$20 million, but there were no fatalities.

1950 - The temperature at Mecca, CA, soared to 126 degrees to establish a U.S. record for the month of September. The low that morning was 89 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - After teasing residents along the Gulf of Mexico for two days, Hurricane Elena finally came ashore at Biloxi MS. The hurricane, packing winds of 127 mph, caused more than a billion dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Late evening thunderstorms in the Northern Plains Region produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Jordan MT, and a ""hot flash"" at Redig SD. The temperature at Redig rose from 66 degrees at 10 PM to 86 degrees at 11 PM as thunderstorm winds gusted to 36 mph. Nine cities in the Upper Ohio Valley, the Tennessee Valley and the Central Gulf Coast States reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins WV with a reading of 38 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the northwestern U.S. Afternoon highs of 98 degrees at Olympia WA, 98 degrees at Seattle WA, 105 degrees at Portland OR, and 110 degrees at Medford OR, established records for the month of September. Quillayute WA equalled their September record with an afternoon high of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Eight cities in the Gulf Coast Region reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the upper 90s. Houston TX and Port Arthur TX hit 99 degrees. Late evening thunderstorms, developing ahead of a cold front, produced wind gusts to 63 mph at Dickinson ND, and golf ball size hail in North Dakota and Nebraska. Winds along the cold front itself gusted to 62 mph at Buffalo SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data).

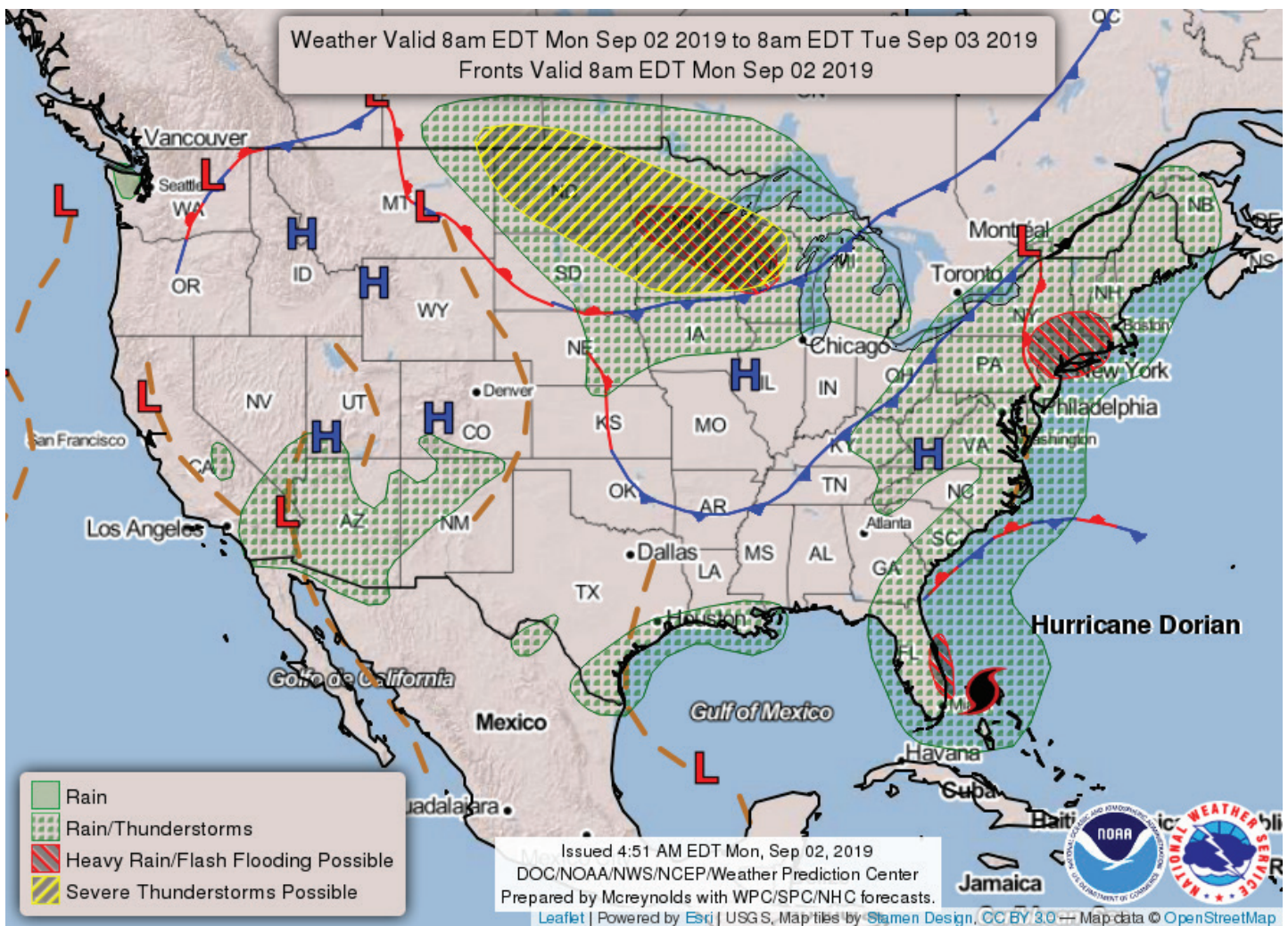
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 75 °F at 5:48 PM**  
**Low Temp: 60 °F at 1:25 AM**  
**Wind: 10 mph at 12:05 AM**  
**Day Rain: 0.00**

**Record High: 104° in 1913**  
**Record Low: 35° in 1896**  
**Average High: 78°F**  
**Average Low: 52°F**  
**Average Precip in Sept.: 0.08**  
**Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 16.29**  
**Precip Year to Date: 19.76**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:10 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:57 a.m.**



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## A MOTHERS INFLUENCE

As her son was about to leave home for college, his mother asked, Robert, will you promise me one thing?

Yes, maam, I will, he answered.

Promise me, she begged, that you will read one chapter from the Bible each day.

I will, he agreed.

That promise led to his coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Later, Robert Moffat went to Africa as a missionary where he labored for his Lord for forty-five years. He became famous as an educator, explorer, evangelist, and translator of the Bible.

What better request can any mother ask of a child than to be faithful to read Gods Word. We are confronted from every direction with challenges to our faith, tempted by friends to engage in behaviors that cause self-destruction, and often provided with endless opportunities that may destroy the plans God has for us.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul expressed a true sense of urgency and warning for him. He knew that people who believed in God would be misunderstood, challenged, tempted and ridiculed because of their faith. So Paul encouraged him to remain faithful to what he had been taught. Why? Gods Word and wisdom will guide us and guard us when we are tempted to sin.

Prayer: Father, parents have a great responsibility to raise their children to love, honor, and obey Your Word. Grant them courage and a willingness to do so. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 2 Timothy 3:14-16 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

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## 2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 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 at the Legion Post #39

## 2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)  
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### This Sioux Falls architect-in-training builds tiny worlds

By JEREMY FUGLEBERG Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Other than their size, there's nothing tiny about Anthony Dyk's buildings.

Dyk, 28, works at TSP Inc. in Sioux Falls, whose architects designed the \$25 million Regional Science Center at Northern State University in Aberdeen.

But at night and on weekends, on his personal time, Dyk built a scale model of the huge building by hand. He painstakingly assembled bits of wood, card stock and plastic by hand, building a miniature version of the center from the ground to the roof.

It took 500 hours to complete the building. This is Dyk's off-hours obsession, building intricate scale models of his designs, renewing a craft long-abandoned by modern-day architects, the Argus Leader reported.

"This is six months of work," he said, as he showed off the model. "That's all I really did: work and this."

Dyk's hobby used to be standard practice in his field. Before computers revolutionized the industry, architects built models of their designs by hand, to show clients their work. That work is now all done on a computer, which can easily produce renderings of building designs.

Dyk was in the inaugural class of students in the new architecture program at South Dakota State University in 2010. He learned how to hand-build models, but modeling wasn't a previous interest of his.

"I never built models as a kid, but I built Legos a lot — I still collect Legos," he said.

Dyk joined TSP in January 2017, working toward becoming a licensed architect.

But he thought again of those hand-built models from college. He decided to try his hand at them again. He took the structural drawings of the building, carefully examining them and converting dimensions down to size: say, 4 inches of real-life structure equals 3/32 of an inch in his models.

His materials, basic: thin sheets of wood, card stock, see-through plastic sheets for glass. His tools, basic: sharp knives, rulers and glue.

"The materials are very affordable and easy to come by, it's just the time," he said.

Dyk not only had to build each tiny element of the miniature building by hand, he had to come up with how to do it. There's no instructional manual for how to forge tiny I-beams out of thin strips of card stock and wood slivers thinner than a toothpick.

Dyk said he found himself looking at actual buildings and pondering how he would model them, what he would have to build to make tiny versions of what he saw.

"When I'm not modeling, I'm thinking about how to do it," he said.



**Anthony Dyk, a young architect at TSP, builds hand-crafted models of buildings for clients, a practice that most architects don't use, on Thursday, Aug. 22, 2019. Dyk's models can be time consuming to construct, with his largest one taking 500 hours to complete.** (Abigail Dollins/The

Argus Leader via AP)

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Between larger projects in his off hours he's built smaller, more simple models, almost palate cleansers to his bigger buildings, you know - ones that only take 10 to 50 hours of work. No big deal.

TSP doesn't hand-build models for every client. And there's no additional charge when Dyk does craft a design for client. But he does believe the small, physical models provide things computer renderings cannot: the ability to physically turn a model, see at a glance how light will fall, where shadows will form.

"You can understand scale better than you can on renderings," he said. "For me, I want to do the extra effort to help sell these ideas I'm working on."

Dyk continues to build models of other TSP projects. And his models have become treasures of their own, bound for display cases in executives' offices and in the larger version of the buildings they model.

One gifted model was a miniature version of the Froiland Science Complex at Augustana University in Sioux Falls. Dyk's solitary work on the model garnered widespread delight among the faculty and staff who use the building.

"Just to talk to the professors, the teachers that use that space, they say, 'that's my office, that's my lab,'" he said. "Their experience with the model, after being in that building, is really cool."

For more on Anthony Dyk, visit his website.

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

## With new faces, Northern theater department changes focus

By Kelda J.L. Pharris Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A new theme and new team have taken the helm of the Northern State University theater department.

Kane Anderson, assistant professor of theater; Trevor Carrier, director of production and operations since 2017; and his wife, Jordan Jaked Carrier, lecturer of theater design; all have become the backbone of the department.

Anderson and Jaked Carrier are both new to the department.

"One of the things that drew me to this opportunity is that theater is important to this area. I'm interested in building upon what we've done," Anderson said. "Really what I love about college theater is it's an opportunity to do a lot of things."

Those include a renewed focus on the learning aspect in the department, with a wider skillset developed in those who move through the program.

"We've had a lot of focus on the product ... we're figuring out how to maintain that with bringing back the focus on the curricular," said Jaked Carrier.

"(Anderson) and I are very excited to reintroduce this program to our local community, making it very clear that we



**Trevor Carrier, back center, and Jordan Jaked Carrier, right, new theater department employees at Northern State University. The team looks at developing not just performance qualities in its students, but all elements of theater production to diversify student knowledge and experience in the process of putting on a great production.** ( John Davis/Aberdeen American News via AP)

are moving in a new, exciting direction. It's going to be at the

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school level, the patron level," Carrier said.

The team looks at developing not just performance qualities in its students, but all elements of theater production to diversify student knowledge and experience in the process of putting on a great production, Aberdeen American News reported.

"One of my goals in the program is to increase diversity in students, but also in the projects we produce," Anderson said.

Although as a director he tends to lean more toward pieces in the classical theatrical canon, thinking from an actor's standpoint he likes newer works, especially for students. Aberdeen audiences will get a taste of new works or new approaches to old works in the university's theater season.

Mid-October will bring performances of "The Brain From Planet X," a science-fiction production with some fantastical lighting and other effects. In March will be "Lasso of Truth," a take on the creation of Wonder Woman. April will feature an operatic version of "Cinderella." With such out-of-this-world picks, Anderson thought it necessary to pull them under an overarching theme — Fierce Women, Fantastic Stories.

Also new this season, the black box theater in the Johnson Fine Arts Center will be the venue for all productions, and they are slated to run over two separate weekends, each with matinee options, to give a larger audience the chance to take them in.

The black box theater was always meant to be the main theatrical venue of the center's remodel a couple years ago, according to the Carriers and Anderson. This trio will be putting it through its paces, leaving the large auditorium for other uses.

Anderson and the Carriers know it will be different from previous seasons. And they're excited to bring that change to a community that's been very open to a range of theatrical performances through the years.

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

## Cutting it close: Florida's fate may be a matter of miles

By **SETH BORENSTEIN** AP Science Writer

For Florida, just a handful of miles may make a huge difference in Hurricane Dorian's slow dance with the coast.

The National Hurricane Center forecasts Dorian to be 40 to 50 miles off the Florida coast on Tuesday and Wednesday, with hurricane-force wind speeds extending about 35 miles to the west.

When they make a forecast, meteorologists have a general idea where the monstrous storm is going but they then have to choose a point on the map instead of a general place, making it seem more specific than it really is.

And much of the Florida coast is inside that cone.

"This thing is perilously close to the state. I think we should all hope and pray for the best, but we have to prepare that this could have major impacts on the state of Florida," said Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. "If you look at the National Hurricane Center's current track, I think it ends up within 30 miles of the coast of Florida. Well guess what? You do just a touch of a bump one way or another, and you have a dramatic difference all of a sudden."

Center Director Ken Graham is telling residents don't bet on safety just because his office specific forecast track has the storm just a bit offshore.

"The cone is so important," Graham said.

And making matters more touch-and-go is that with every new forecast, "we keep nudging (Dorian's track) a little bit to the left," which is closer to the Florida coast, he said.

Dorian is a powerful but small hurricane with hurricane-force winds Sunday only extending 29 miles to the west, but they are expecting to grow a bit. That makes forecasting the storm's path along the coast — either just off the coast, skirting it or moving inland with a direct hit — delicate and difficult. Just a few miles west or east makes the difference between devastation and bad but not horrible damage, meteorologists said.

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"Where it doesn't directly hit, it's not going to be a huge problem," Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach said.

With a big, sloppy hurricane — say 50% larger in size — all of Florida would be under a serious threat, but that's not the case, said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy.

This is what makes this a nightmare for forecasters, McNoldy said.

It's a combination of the small size, close-in track, like Matthew in 2016, and weak steering currents. That means just a smidge of a movement days ahead of time, while Dorian is in the Bahamas, can reverberate and mean a direct hit or not, said private meteorologist Ryan Maue.

That can happen just because of the timing of when Dorian's eyewall collapses and is replaced, which happens normally in storms.

Adding to that problem is Dorian's slow, almost snail-like pace. What initially looked like a Labor Day storm for the U.S. is now approaching Tuesday and Wednesday.

"People are getting impatient with this," McNoldy said. Because the threat seems to keep sticking around, it could be a problem getting the right message across, he said.

Klotzbach said he thinks the U.S. East Coast will get "scraped," but Dorian will stay just offshore, something Maue agrees with.

Maue warns, however, that two days of high waves and heavy storm surge — the hurricane center is predicting 4 to 7 feet from West Palm Beach north to Cocoa Beach area — could severely damage Florida's beaches.

Residents along Florida's coast are relieved that the forecast, for now, doesn't have Dorian making landfall in Florida, but are still preparing for the worst.

Kevin Browning in Vero Beach has put up hurricane shutters, bought a generator and is stocked with supplies.

"I'm thanking God, now, that it's turned a little bit towards the east, but that's a forecast, and we never know. I'm just praying and trying to make sure that everybody's safe. I feel for the Bahamas and I'm praying for them, and I thank God it's not coming directly to us right now."

Associated Press writers Gerald Herbert in Vero Beach, Florida, and Brendan Farrington in Tallahassee, Florida, contributed.



**This GOES-16 satellite image taken Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019, at 17:00 UTC and provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shows Hurricane Dorian, right, churning over the Atlantic Ocean. Hurricane Dorian struck the northern Bahamas on Sunday as a catastrophic Category 5 storm, its 185 mph winds ripping off roofs and tearing down power lines as hundreds hunkered in schools, churches and other shelters.** (NOAA via AP)



## Record-setting Hurricane Dorian keeps pounding north Bahamas

By RAMÓN ESPINOSA Associated Press

McLEAN'S TOWN CAY, Bahamas (AP) — In a slow, relentless advance, a catastrophic Hurricane Dorian kept pounding at the northern Bahamas early Monday, as one of the strongest Atlantic storms ever recorded left wrecked homes, shredded roofs, tumbled cars and toppled power poles in its wake.

The storm's top sustained winds decreased slightly to 165 mph (265 kph) as its westward movement slowed, crawling along Grand Bahama island Monday morning at 1 mph (1.6 kph) in what forecasters said would be a day-long assault. Earlier, Dorian churned over Abaco island with battering winds and surf during Sunday.

There was little information from the affected islands, though officials expected many residents to be left homeless. Most people went to shelters as the storm approached, with tourist hotels shutting down and residents boarded up their homes.

"It's devastating," Joy Jibrilu, director general of the Bahamas' Ministry of Tourism and Aviation, said Sunday afternoon. "There has been huge damage to property and infrastructure. Luckily, no loss of life reported."

On Sunday, Dorian's maximum sustained winds reached 185 mph (297 kph), with gusts up to 220 mph (354 kph), tying the record for the most powerful Atlantic hurricane to ever make landfall. That equaled the Labor Day hurricane of 1935, before storms were named. The only recorded storm that was more powerful was Hurricane Allen in 1980, with 190 mph (305 kph) winds, though it did not make landfall at that strength.

Forecasters said Dorian was most likely to begin pulling away from the Bahamas early Tuesday and curving to the northeast parallel to the U.S. Southeast seaboard. Still, the potent storm was expected to stay close to shore and hammer the coast with dangerous winds and heavy surf, while authorities cautioned that it could still make landfall.

According to a Monday morning advisory from the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida's east-central coast may see a "brief tornado" sometime between Monday afternoon and Monday night.

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster issued an order Sunday for the mandatory evacuation of his state's entire coast. The order, which covers about 830,000 people, was to take effect at noon Monday, at which point state troopers were to make all lanes on major coastal highways one-way heading inland.

"We can't make everybody happy, but we believe we can keep everyone alive," McMaster said.

A few hours later, Georgia's governor, Brian Kemp, ordered mandatory evacuations for that state's Atlantic coast, also starting at midday Monday.

Authorities in Florida ordered mandatory evacuations in some vulnerable coastal areas. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper warned his state that it could see heavy rain, winds and floods later in the week.

Dorian first came ashore Sunday at Elbow Cay in Abaco island at 12:40 p.m., then made a second landfall



**Strong winds move the palms of the palm trees at the first moment of the arrival of Hurricane Dorian in Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas, Sunday Sept. 1, 2019.** (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

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near Marsh Harbour at 2 p.m.

"Catastrophic conditions" were reported in Abaco, with a storm surge of 18 to 23 feet (5.5-7 meters).

Video that Jibrilu and government spokesman Kevin Harris said was sent by Abaco residents showed homes missing parts of roofs, electric lines on the ground and smashed and overturned cars. One showed floodwaters rushing through the streets of an unidentified town at nearly the height of a car roof.

In some parts of Abaco, "you cannot tell the difference as to the beginning of the street versus where the ocean begins," Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said. According to the Nassau Guardian, he called it "probably the most sad and worst day of my life to address the Bahamian people."

Bahamas radio station ZNS Bahamas reported that a mother and child on Grand Bahama had called to say they were sheltering in a closet and seeking help from police.

Silbert Mills, owner of the Bahamas Christian Network, said trees and power lines were torn down in Abaco.

"The winds are howling like we've never, ever experienced before," said Mills, who was riding out the hurricane with his family in the concrete home he built 41 years ago on central Abaco.

Jack Pittard, a 76-year-old American who has visited the Bahamas for 40 years, also decided to stay put on Abaco for Dorian, which he said was his first hurricane. A short video from Pittard about 2:30 p.m. Sunday showed the wind shaking his home and ripping off the siding.

The Bahamas archipelago is no stranger to hurricanes. Homes are required to have metal reinforcements for roof beams to withstand winds into the upper limits of a Category 4 hurricane, and compliance is generally tight for those who can afford it. Risks are higher in poorer neighborhoods, with wooden homes in low-lying areas.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Dorian is forecast to be 40 to 50 miles (64 to 80 kilometers) off Florida, with hurricane-force wind speeds extending about 35 miles (56 kilometers) to the west.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center issued a hurricane watch for Florida's East Coast from Deerfield Beach north to the Georgia state line. The same area was put under a storm surge watch. Lake Okeechobee was under a tropical storm watch.

Mandatory evacuation orders for low-lying and flood-prone areas and mobile homes were in effect starting either Sunday or Monday from Palm Beach County north to at least the Daytona Beach area, and some counties to the north issued voluntary evacuation notices. Weekend traffic was light in Florida despite those orders, unlike during the chaotic run-up to Hurricane Irma in 2017 when the unusually broad storm menaced the entire state.

Ken Graham, director of the hurricane center, urged people not to bet on safety just because the forecast track had the storm a bit offshore. With every new forecast, "we keep nudging (Dorian's track) a little bit to the left" — that is, is closer to the Florida coast, Graham said.

President Donald Trump already declared a state of emergency and was briefed about what he called a "monstrous" storm.

"We don't know where it's going to hit but we have an idea, probably a little bit different than the original course," Trump said. "But it can change its course again and it can go back more toward Florida."

For AP's complete coverage of the hurricane: <https://apnews.com/Hurricanes>

## Not so easy to prevent the spread of mass shooters' names

By LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

When law enforcement authorities gathered to discuss details of a mass shooting in West Texas that left seven people dead, there was one bit of information they refused to provide on live television: the name of the gunman.

Instead, they decided to release the name through a Facebook post. Odessa Police Chief Michael Gerke made it plain why he wouldn't mention the name at the news conference: "I'm not going to give him any notoriety for what he did."

Even with such restraint, it remained a challenge to curb the spread of the gunman's name. The Odessa Police Department has fewer than 25,000 followers of its Facebook page, but the social media platform

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easily reaches millions of Facebook's members around the globe and the post was shared hundreds of times. Within minutes, Twitter lit up with posts mentioning his name. Journalists and advocates on both sides of the gun debate also began spreading the word, spewing a firehose of information about the suspect.

In this era of a saturation of social media and around-the-clock news, it's next to impossible to keep a lid on such information.

"Ultimately, the police department can only directly control what they do, and that name, that information can be reposted and retweeted and republished hundreds of thousands of time," said Adam Lankford, a criminologist at the University of Alabama who has studied the influence of media coverage on future shooters. He and others appeal to the media to limit the volume of information about these perpetrators, saying it does little to understand the reasons for the violence or stop it in the future.

The "No Notoriety" movement first started to take hold after the 1999 Columbine school shooting outside Denver. The gunmen became household names and even in death appeared to motivate a whole new crop of mass shooters.

In recent years, it has gained momentum amid a seemingly steady stream of mass shootings. The idea is to urge news organizations to refrain from naming the shooters in mass slayings and to curb the volume of biographical information about them. In New Zealand, after a mass shooter there killed 51 people at two mosques, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern refused to mention the perpetrator's name at all.

FBI leaders, leery of inspiring copycat killers and hesitant to give them what they see as undue attention, have occasionally been reluctant in recent years to refer to them by name.

Former FBI Director James Comey expressed that concern in a briefing with reporters the day after a 2016 rampage at an Orlando nightclub, repeatedly referring to the gunman not by his name but simply as "the killer."

"You will notice that I am not using the killer's name, and I will try not to do that," Comey said. "Part of what motivates sick people to do this kind of thing is some twisted notion of fame or glory, and I don't want to be part of that for the sake of the victims and their families."

FBI special agent Christopher Combs, who previously worked at FBI headquarters leading the bureau's efforts to respond to mass shootings, has held to that view. As the top FBI official in San Antonio, he has overseen the bureau's response to multiple mass shootings in Texas, including a 2017 massacre at a church in Sutherland Springs that killed 25 people; including a pregnant victim whose fetus also died.

At a news conference after the shooting where officials refrained from naming the gunman, Combs said, "We don't talk about the shooter."

And in a television interview after the shooting, Combs said he understood that the media had to name a shooter "once," but "after that, we certainly don't want to draw any type of positive attention to the



**Odessa Police Chief Michael Gerke announces that he does not want to speak the name of the shooter from Saturday's shooting during a news conference, Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019, in Odessa, Texas. Instead, the department released the name of the gunman through a Facebook post.** (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki)

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shooter. And we have found through studies that there are people out there that are troubled, and when they see that, they believe this is how I can show the wrongdoings that have been done to me."

All these years later, the Columbine attack continues to motivate mass shooters, including the two men who earlier this year stormed their former school in Brazil, killing seven people. The gunman in New Zealand was said to have been inspired by the man who in 2015 killed nine black worshippers at a church in Charleston, South Carolina.

The University of Alabama's Lankford urges journalists to refrain from using shooters' names or go into exhaustive detail about their crimes. These attackers are trying to outdo previous shooters with higher death tolls, he said, and media coverage serves only to encourage copycats. Experts call it the "contagion" effect.

Lankford lauded the approach in Texas to avoid mentioning the name on live television. That medium is especially problematic, he said.

"There's the issue of B-roll where the sound bite can be played over and over and over again," he said. "They're trying to set a moral position and a lead they hope the media will follow."

Tom Manger, senior associate director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, said there are a number of challenges. The name of the shooter is considered public information that must be disseminated, and there's a general thirst for information about mass shooters. As Americans consider ways to prevent future shootings, knowing more about the gunman might help figure out effective solutions.

But there are practical issues at play, too: How can the information be contained?

"It goes out in a hundred different ways," Manger said. "Once it goes out on social media, it goes everywhere."

For Caren Teves, the issue is personal. Her son, Alex, was among those killed in an Aurora, Colorado, movie theater in 2012. She and her husband, Tom, created the No Notoriety movement, encouraging media to stick to reporting relevant facts rather than the smallest of biographical details.

"It is a tough thing to navigate. But it's a start," Teves said. "We've never said it's the only solution. It's just one of them."

Lisa Marie Pane reported from Boise, Idaho. Associated Press writers Eric Tucker in Washington, D.C., and Tim Talley in Oklahoma City contributed to this report.

## Saudi festival showcases green mountains, flower crowns

By AMR NABIL Associated Press

AL-SOUDAH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Atop a string of green mountains in Saudi Arabia, a monthlong festival drew a medley of yoga enthusiasts, extreme adventure seekers, tourists and traditional Saudi families — many wearing colorful flower crowns native to the region as the kingdom looks for ways to revamp its image and build up tourism.

The al-Soudah festival, which ran throughout the month of August, gave visitors a chance to experience a unique region in Saudi Arabia and take part in outdoor sports like hiking, mountain biking, paragliding, horseback riding, zip lining and bungee jumping. Thousands also attended concerts by Middle Eastern superstars.

Scenes of women zip lining and young Saudis at concerts, while nevertheless in a remote village, are a stark departure from the ultraconservative policies that for decades barred concerts and gender mixing, as well as shunned women's sports in the kingdom.

The reforms are being pushed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the king's powerful 34-year-old son. He is looking to revamp the country's economy to become more resilient in the face of lower oil prices. Boosting domestic spending and opening the country to foreign tourists are seen as ways to create more jobs for the millions of young Saudis who will be entering the workforce and looking for jobs in the coming years.

The al-Soudah festival attracted between 12,000 and 15,000 visitors per day, said Husameddin al-Madani,

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who oversaw the event. Most visitors to the festival were Saudi citizens, but it also drew foreign tourists.

Unlike Saudi Arabia's major cities — which have limited outdoor spaces for sports, especially for women who must wear long flowing robes known as abayas in public — Saudi women in al-Soudah wore fitted jeans and sneakers under their rolled up abayas to hike up the mountain. Other Saudi women were seen zip lining between cliffs. In keeping with local custom, many kept their faces and hair covered.

The weather in August in the village of al-Soudah, located in the southwest Asir province, is a comfortable 22 degrees Celsius (70 Fahrenheit) in August, unlike the capital, Riyadh, or the coastal city of Jiddah, where temperatures exceed 43 degrees Celsius (105 Fahrenheit) throughout the summer. In the winter, parts of the mountain range see snow.

Al-Soudah sits on part of the Sarawat Mountain range in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula, some 3,000 meters (9,840 feet) above sea level. Its highlands are covered in the green of juniper trees. The area is also home to baboons, who were kept away from the festival with help from Human Wildlife Solutions based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Jiddah city resident Noura al-Moammar said she was surprised by the region's climate.

"I never thought, honestly, that my country is that rich with nature," she said. "It's amazing for us to discover and see the different cultures and landscapes and weather in our beautiful Saudi."

In the nearby village of Rijal Almaa, the men wore flower crowns, or garlands, made from local flowers and herbs. Visitors here were treated to garlands of their own, local tribal dances, coffee, tea and evening lightshows displayed on the village's 500-year-old distinct natural clay, stone and wood structures.

The festival also drew extreme sports enthusiasts, including wingsuit base jumpers. Saudi media reported that British adventurer and astronautical engineer Angelo Grubisic died during a jump off the side of a cliff at the festival when he experienced difficulties reaching the landing site at speeds of around 160 kilometers (100 miles) per hour.

The festival took place less than 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the airport in Abha, the capital city of the region of Asir, which has been targeted by Iranian-allied Yemeni rebels. Saudi Arabia has been waging war in Yemen against the rebels, also known as Houthis.

Still, visitors at the festival said they felt extremely secure.

"I couldn't feel safer, honestly," said Paris Verra, a 24-year-old American visitor. "The city is vibrant, and I was walking down the streets at like 1 and 2 a.m. and having tea with locals."

"Coming from America, there's obviously a lot of misconceptions ... but I'm here to show and prove it's nothing but incredible ... I hope everybody gets a chance to visit this place one day," she added.



**In this Thursday, Aug. 22, 2019 photo, Saudi tourists take in the view from a mountain during the al-Soudah festival in Abha, southwest Saudi Arabia. A festival atop this chain of mountains drew a medley of yoga enthusiasts, extreme adventure seekers, tourists and traditional Saudi families -- many wearing colorful flower crowns native to the region as the kingdom looks for ways to revamp its image and build up tourism.** (AP Photo/Amr Nabil)

So serene was the vibe at the festival that Alwaleed al-Keaid, who runs a Saudi hiking company, led morning meditations atop the mountain.

"We start our mornings with a mediation session in this gorgeous environment where we thank God for this blessing and meditate," he said. "When we're done, we try the local bread with honey... and help people enjoy nature, forget about the rest of the world and live in the moment."

The festival also had its share of glitz and glamour with concerts by Middle Eastern mega stars, including Emirati singer Ahlam and Iraqi singer Kazem al-Safer. Their performances drew thousands of fans and al-Safer's concert alone generated 1.5 million Saudi riyals (\$400,000) in ticket sales, festival organizers said.

The al-Soudah festival is one of 11 taking place in different parts of the country this year. The initiative, dubbed Saudi Seasons, is aimed at developing tourism and providing Saudis with temporary and permanent jobs.

Al-Madani, the CEO of the al-Soudah festival, said at least 515 young men and women were hired from the local community to assist in the monthlong event. Local businesses also got a boost by contributing to food trucks and other services.

Associated Press writer Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

## Tens of thousands in Hong Kong boycott first day of school

By NADIA LAM and VINCENT YU Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Clad in gas masks along with their formal white school uniforms, tens of thousands of students in Hong Kong boycotted the first day of classes Monday as part of a citywide strike following a violent weekend of demonstrations.

High school students added gas masks, goggles and hard hats to their traditional uniforms, while university pupils crowded into a square at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Workers also participated in their own rally at a public park, braving strong winds and storm clouds as a typhoon threatened.

Nearly three months of youth-dominated protests — calling for democracy and an independent inquiry into police conduct — will be tested as classes resume with the end of the summer break in the semiautonomous Chinese territory.

The young protesters strove to demonstrate their continued determination with Monday's school strike.

Jacky So, president of the Chinese University of Hong Kong's student union, said 30,000 students attended a rally on campus. They dressed in black and wore face masks, waving banners



**Students wearing gas masks and helmets hold a banner which reads "Five major demands are indispensable.", at St. Francis' Canossian College in Hong Kong, on Monday, Sept. 2, 2019. Hong Kong has been the scene of tense anti-government protests for nearly three months. The demonstrations began in response to a proposed extradition law and have expanded to include other grievances and demands for democracy in the semiautonomous Chinese territory.** (AP Photo)

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for their student associations and black signs with the Chinese character for "Strike."

Separately, high school students who were skipping class rallied in Edinburgh Place, a public square in Hong Kong's central business district. Teenagers spoke to the crowd from a stage with a backdrop that read: "With no future, there's no need to go to class."

At St. Francis' Canossian College, uniformed students kneeled in a line and held up hand-painted signs that read, "The five major demands: Not one is dispensable." The elite girls' school is where Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam was educated.

Hong Kong Education Secretary Kevin Yeung said he hoped students would stay in class.

"Schools should not be used as places for political demands or exercising pressure," he said at a government briefing.

The protesters' demands include dropping charges against more than 1,000 people who have been arrested and formally withdrawing an extradition bill that would allow Hong Kong residents to be sent to mainland China to stand trial. The appeals are undergirded by a sense among some Hong Kong residents that the Communist Party-ruled mainland government has been eroding the autonomy and civil liberties promised when the former British colony was returned to China in 1997.

Some demonstrators disrupted the morning commute on Monday by blocking train doors, attempting to evade riot police who were hot on their heels by moving quickly between multiple public transit stations.

Officers at Lok Fu station hit protesters with batons and arrested one. Three others were arrested at Lai King station.

On Sunday, the MTR Corp. suspended train service to the airport after several hundred protesters gathered there following calls online to disrupt transportation. They blocked buses arriving at the airport but police in riot helmets kept them out of the terminal. Some protesters hurled bricks and metal poles onto the tracks of the Airport Express rail line, police said, prompting train services to be suspended and forcing some travelers to walk some distance to the airport.

Late at night Saturday, video from Hong Kong broadcaster TVB showed police on the platform of Prince Edward subway station swinging batons at passengers who backed into one end of a train car behind umbrellas. The video also shows pepper spray being shot through an open door at a group seated on the floor while one man holds up his hands.

Police officers said at a briefing Monday that they rejected accusations that they "beat up" ordinary citizens without first confirming their identities. They said they specifically targeted those who they believed to be rioters, including those who had changed out of their black protester outfits, and arrested 63 people on suspicion of illegal assembly and possessing explosives and offensive weapons.

Radical protesters have "hijacked the name of justice," Assistant Commissioner of Police Mak Chin-ho said Monday. "The biggest victims are the citizens of Hong Kong."

Clashes between police and protesters have become increasingly violent, as the self-described "front-line" demonstrators use gasoline bombs and throw rods at officers. Authorities in turn have employed water cannons, tear gas, rubber bullets and batons.

The protesters say that a degree of violence is necessary to get the government's attention after peaceful rallies were futile. Lam's administration, however, maintains that the violence must first end before any fruitful dialogue can begin.

"We always say that we must stop the violence right away, and then kick off the dialogue," said Administration Secretary Matthew Cheung Kin-Chung.

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Associated Press journalists Alice Fung and Raf Wober in Hong Kong and Yanan Wang in Beijing contributed to this report.

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump's bluster on hurricanes, guns, economy

By HOPE YEN, SETH BORENSTEIN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing another deadly mass shooting, President Donald Trump is deflecting on gun control.

Over the weekend, he pointed to mental illness as a likely culprit behind recent shootings in Odessa, Texas, and elsewhere, even though criminologists routinely point to gun ownership as a far better predictor of public mass shootings than indicators of mental illness. There were no immediate indications Sunday that mental illness contributed to the shootings that killed 7 and injured 22 others in Texas, a state with one of the most lenient gun control laws.

Trump also repeatedly marveled over Hurricane Dorian's size, incorrectly telling the public about its potential path and suggesting he's never heard of a "category 5" storm before. Dorian, in fact, is the fourth category 5 storm to happen under his watch.

The claims capped a week of distortion by Trump on various fronts, from the economy to Iran and North Korea.

A review:

### HURRICANE DORIAN

TRUMP: "In addition to Florida - South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, will most likely be hit (much) harder than anticipated." — tweet Sunday.

TRUMP: "The original course was dead into Florida. Now it seems to be going up toward South Carolina, toward North Carolina. Georgia's going to be hit. Alabama's going to get a piece of it, it looks like." — remarks to reporters Sunday.

THE FACTS: Trump goes astray in warning of trouble for Alabama, which is expected to be spared. As of Sunday, the National Hurricane Center forecast Dorian to be 40 to 50 miles (64 to 80 kilometers) off the Florida coast on Tuesday and Wednesday, with hurricane-force wind speeds extending about 35 miles (56 kilometers) to the west.

"Alabama will NOT see any impacts from #Dorian," tweeted the National Weather Service in Birmingham, Alabama. "We repeat, no impacts from Hurricane #Dorian will be felt across Alabama. The system will remain too far east."

Few, if any, meteorologists put Alabama in its path.

Asked if Trump had been briefed about the impact to Alabama, Christopher Vaccaro, a spokesman for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, wrote in an email: "The current forecast path of Dorian does not include Alabama."

TRUMP: "I'm not sure that I've ever even heard of a category 5. I knew it existed and I've seen some category 4's. You don't even see them that much. But a category 5 is something that I don't know that



President Donald Trump speaks at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019, in Washington. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)



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I've ever even heard the term other than I know it's there." — remarks Sunday at FEMA headquarters.

THE FACTS: In his third hurricane season as president, Trump has had plenty of exposure to category 5 storms.

He made the same claim two years ago, saying he wasn't aware of category 5 storms until Hurricane Irma. "In Florida, you got hit with the strongest winds ever recorded. It actually hit the Keys with a—it was a Category 5. I never even knew a Category 5 existed," Trump said in September 2017.

Since then, he's repeatedly marveled about the size of the storms — and by extension, his administration's response to it — including category 5 hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, Michael in 2018 and now Dorian.

Having four category 5 hurricanes in three years is actually more than any other president in history. George W. Bush had eight such hurricanes in eight years. Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan only had one during their two terms in office, while George H.W. Bush had two in four years and Carter had three in four years.

TRUMP, on hurricane aid: "Will it ever end? Congress approved 92 Billion Dollars for Puerto Rico last year, an all time record of its kind for 'anywhere.'" — tweet Tuesday.

TRUMP, on Puerto Rico: "Congress approved Billions of Dollars last time, more than anyplace else has ever gotten." — tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: His figure of \$92 billion is wrong, as is his assertion that the U.S. territory has set some record for federal disaster aid. Congress has so far distributed only about \$14 billion for Puerto Rico.

It's a false claim he's made repeatedly. The White House has said the estimate includes about \$50 billion in expected future disaster disbursements that could span decades, along with \$42.7 billion approved.

That \$50 billion in additional money, however, is speculative. It is based on Puerto Rico's eligibility for federal emergency disaster funds for years ahead, involving calamities that haven't happened.

That money would require future appropriations by Congress.

Even if correct, \$92 billion would not be the most ever provided for hurricane rebuilding efforts. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 cost the U.S. government more than \$120 billion — the bulk of it going to Louisiana.

Trump frequently inflates and complains about the amount of disaster aid that Congress "foolishly gave" Puerto Rico after the deadly destruction from Hurricane Maria in 2017. He has talked as if he doesn't recognize the U.S. territory as American and, in an April tweet, said Puerto Rico officials "only take from USA."

Hurricane Dorian inflicted limited damage in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands before intensifying on its track toward the U.S. mainland.

## GUN VIOLENCE

TRUMP, addressing the mass shooting in Odessa, Texas: "For the most part, sadly, if you look at the last four or five going back ... five or six or seven years for the most part, as strong as you make your background checks, they would not have stopped any of it. So it's a big problem. It's a mental problem." — remarks Sunday.

TRUMP: "Our goal must be to identify severely disturbed individuals and disrupt their plans before they strike." — remarks Sunday at FEMA headquarters.

THE FACTS: He's oversimplifying the role of mental illness in public mass shootings and minimizing the ease with which Americans can get firearms. There was no immediate indication Sunday that mental illness was a factor in shootings in Texas.

Most people with mental illness in fact are not violent, and they are far more likely to be victims of violent crime than perpetrators.

A country's rate of gun ownership is a far better predictor of public mass shootings than indicators of mental illness, said Adam Lankford, a University of Alabama criminologist who published a 2016 analysis of data from 171 countries.

"The key of what's going on here is access to guns for people who are dangerous or disturbed," Lankford said. Red flag laws make it easier to disarm people believed to be a danger to themselves or others,

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"but sometimes there are not clear warning signs or those signs are not reported to the authorities until after an attack," he said.

Last month, the U.S. Secret Service released a report on mass public attacks in 2018, finding that "no single profile" can be used "to predict who will engage in targeted violence" and "mental illness, alone, is not a risk factor."

Trump has offered contradictory messages in reacting to recent mass shootings. Days after the El Paso shooting last month, he said he was eager to implement "very meaningful background checks" on guns and told reporters there was "tremendous support" for action. He later backed away, saying the current system of background checks was "very, very strong."

## ECONOMY

TRUMP: "On this very day — I just saw a number — almost 160 million people are working. The most ever in the history of our country. I mean, we have incredible numbers." — remarks to reporters Friday.

THE FACTS: He's correct, but that's only because of population growth.

A more relevant measure is the proportion of Americans with jobs, and that is still far below record highs. According to Labor Department data, 60.7% of people in the United States 16 years and older were working in July. That's below the all-time high of 64.7% in April 2000, though higher than the 59.9% when Trump was inaugurated in January 2017.

TRUMP: "General Motors, which was once the Giant of Detroit, is now one of the smallest auto manufacturers there. They moved major plants to China, BEFORE I CAME INTO OFFICE. This was done despite the saving help given them by the USA. Now they should start moving back to America again?" — tweet Friday.

THE FACTS: That's inaccurate on several counts.

Still a giant, GM did not close factories in the U.S. and move them to China. It set up and expanded operations in China primarily to serve that market.

And by many measures, it is the largest U.S. automaker. The company made more money last year than crosstown rivals Fiat Chrysler and Ford, and GM sold more vehicles in the U.S. than the other two.

It remains the largest Michigan-headquartered employer in the state, with a workforce of 52,000 outpacing that of Ford, the state government and Fiat Chrysler, according to an analysis this year by Crain's Detroit Business. In southeast Michigan, it was No. 2, behind Ford, and ahead of Fiat Chrysler.

## NORTH KOREA

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE: "Watching those 55 small, flag-draped caskets come off the plane was an extraordinary experience. We brought back — we brought back our heroes, and there's more to come." — remarks Wednesday to the American Legion veterans group.

THE FACTS: No remains of U.S. service members have been returned since last summer and the U.S. suspended efforts in May to get negotiations on the remains back on track in time to have more repatriated this year. The U.S. hopes more remains may be brought home next year.

The Pentagon's Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency, which is responsible for recovering U.S. war remains and returning them to families, "has not received any new information from (North Korean) officials regarding the turn over or recovery of remains," spokesman Charles Prichard said last month.

He said his agency is "still working to communicate" with the North Korean army "as it is our intent to find common ground on resuming recovery missions" in 2020.

Last year, in line with the first summit between Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un that June, the North turned over 55 boxes of what it said were the remains of an undetermined number of U.S. service members killed in the North during the 1950-53 war. So far, six Americans have been identified from the 55 boxes.

U.S. officials have said the North has suggested in recent years that it holds perhaps 200 sets of American war remains. Thousands more are unrecovered from battlefields and former POW camps.

The Pentagon estimates that 5,300 Americans were lost in North Korea.

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**TRUMP** on North Korea's leader: "With respect to North Korea — Kim Jong-un, who I've got to know extremely well, the first lady has gotten to know Kim Jong-un and I think she'd agree with me, he is a man with a country that has tremendous potential." — news conference on Aug. 26 with French President Emmanuel Macron.

**THE FACTS:** Melania Trump doesn't know Kim. They have never met.

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham clarified the president's comment, saying Trump confides in his wife on his relationship with Kim and "feels like she's gotten to know him, too."

## IRAN

**TRUMP** on Iran: "We gave them \$150 billion and \$1.8 billion and we got nothing. ... Look at what they did to John Kerry and to President Obama. Look what happened, where they're bringing planeloads of cash, planeloads, big planes, 757s, Boeing 757s coming in loaded up with cash. What kind of a deal is that?" — news conference with Macron.

**THE FACTS:** It's the kind of deal that did not actually take place.

When Iran signed the multinational deal to restrain its nuclear development in return for being freed from sanctions, it regained access to its own assets, which had been frozen abroad. There was no \$150 billion gift from the U.S. treasury or other countries. Iran was allowed to get its money back.

The \$1.8 billion refers to a separate matter, also misstated by Trump going back to before the 2016 election.

A payout of roughly that amount did come from the U.S. treasury. It was to pay an old IOU.

In the 1970s, Iran paid the U.S. \$400 million for military equipment that was never delivered because the government was overthrown and diplomatic relations ruptured. After the nuclear deal, the U.S. and Iran announced they had settled the matter, with the U.S. agreeing to pay the \$400 million principal along with about \$1.3 billion in interest.

The \$400 million was paid in cash and flown to Tehran on a cargo plane. The arrangement provided for the interest to be paid later.

In Trump's telling, one cargo plane with \$400 million that was owed to Iran has become "big planes, 757s, Boeing 757s," loaded with a \$1.8 billion giveaway. Kerry was then secretary of state.

## CLEAN AIR

**TRUMP:** "We're, right now, having the cleanest air and cleanest water on the planet." — remarks on Aug. 26 with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

**THE FACTS:** That's not true. Air quality hasn't improved under the Trump administration and dozens of nations have less smoggy air than the U.S.

Water? One measure, Yale University's global Environmental Performance Index, finds the U.S. tied with nine other countries as having the cleanest drinking water.

But after decades of improvement, progress in air quality has stalled. Over the last two years the U.S. had more polluted air days than just a few years earlier, federal data show.

There were 15% more days with unhealthy air in America both last year and the year before than there were on average from 2013 through 2016, the four years when the U.S. had its fewest number of those days since at least 1980.

The Obama administration set records for the fewest air-polluted days.

The nonprofit Health Effects Institute's State of Global Air 2019 report ranked the United States 37th dirtiest out of 195 countries for ozone, also known as smog, worse than the global average for population-weighted pollution. Countries such as Britain, Japan, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Albania, Cuba, Russia, Vietnam, New Zealand and Canada have less smoggy air.

The U.S. ranks eighth cleanest on the more deadly category of fine particles in the air.

On environmental quality overall, the Yale index put the U.S. 27th, behind a variety of European coun-

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tries, Canada, Japan, Australia and more. Switzerland was No. 1.

## ENERGY

TRUMP: "I feel that the United States has tremendous wealth. The wealth is under its feet. I've made that wealth come alive. ... We are now the number one energy producer in the world." — news conference with Macron.

THE FACTS: Sole credit to himself is not accurate. The greatest energy revolution of the past half-century happened on Obama's watch as U.S. petroleum and natural gas production achieved preeminence.

In 2013, the U.S. became the world's top producer both of natural gas and petroleum hydrocarbons, says the government's U.S. Energy Information Administration. As for crude oil specifically, the agency says the U.S. became the world's top crude oil producer last year. That is largely attributed to the shale oil boom that began late in George W. Bush's administration and proceeded apace during the Obama years.

The boom came because of fracking and other technology, such as horizontal drilling, that made it possible to find much more oil and gas without drilling more holes. As well, Obama lifted a decades-long ban on shipping U.S. oil overseas in 2015, helping increase demand for U.S. crude.

TRUMP, on addressing climate change: "I feel that the United States has tremendous wealth. The wealth is under its feet. ... I'm not going to lose it on dreams, on windmills, which frankly aren't working too well." — news conference with Macron.

THE FACTS: In criticizing wind power, Trump misidentified his target. Wind turbines produce energy. Windmills mill grain and flummox Don Quixote.

Trump has ascribed a variety of evils to wind power over the years, usually with scant evidence, while praising coal, a well-documented cause of health problems.

Associated Press writers Cal Woodward, Robert Burns, Jill Colvin, Josh Boak and Michael Biesecker in Washington and Tom Krisher in Detroit contributed to this report.

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## Police unsure why man went on West Texas shooting rampage

By PAUL J. WEBER and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

ODESSA, Texas (AP) — Police say they are not sure why a man with a misdemeanor on his record and no warrant for his arrest erupted in a spate of violence after a routine traffic stop in West Texas, killing seven, including a man slain outside his parents' home and a teenager fatally shot as she left a car dealership with her family.

Authorities said that Seth Aaron Ator, 36, also injured 22 people Saturday afternoon before officers killed him outside a busy movie theater in Odessa.

Online court records show Ator was arrested in 2001 for a misdemeanor offense that would not have prevented him from legally purchasing firearms in Texas, although authorities have not said where Ator got the "AR style" weapon he used.

Authorities said those killed were between 15 and 57 years old but did not immediately provide a list of names. Family and employers, however, said that among the dead were Edwin Peregrino, 25, who ran out of his parents' home to see what the commotion was; mail carrier Mary Granados, 29, slain in her U.S. Postal Service truck; and 15-year-old high school student Leilah Hernandez, who was walking out of an auto dealership.

Hundreds of people gathered at a local university in the Permian Basin region known for its oil industry Sunday evening for a prayer vigil to console each other and grieve the loss of life.

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"We're out here in the middle of nowhere," Midland Mayor Jerry Morales told the crowd. "All we've talked about is oil forever. And then this happens."

Odessa Police Chief Michael Gerke said there were still no answers pointing to a motive for the chaotic attacks, which began when Texas state troopers tried pulling over a gold car on Interstate 20 for failing to signal a left turn.

Before the vehicle came to a complete stop, the driver "pointed a rifle toward the rear window of his car and fired several shots" toward the patrol car stopping him, according to Texas Department of Public Safety spokeswoman Katherine Cesinger. The gunshots struck a trooper, Cesinger said, after which the gunman fled and continued shooting. He fired at random as he drove in the area of Odessa and Midland, two cities more than 300 miles (482 kilometers) west of Dallas.

Police used a marked SUV to ram the mail truck outside the Cinergy Movie Theater in Odessa, disabling the vehicle. The gunman then fired at police, wounding two officers before he was killed.

"Local law enforcement and state troopers pursued him and stopped him from possibly going into a crowded movie theater and having another event of mass violence," FBI special agent Christopher Combs said.

Police said Ator's arrest in 2001 was in the county where Waco is located, hundreds of miles east of Odessa. Online court records show he was charged then with misdemeanor criminal trespass and evading arrest. He entered guilty pleas in a deferred prosecution agreement where the charge was waived after he served 24 months of probation, according to records.

Gerke, the Odessa police chief, refused to say the name of the shooter during a televised news conference, saying he wouldn't give him notoriety. But police later posted his name on Facebook. A similar approach has been taken in some other recent mass shootings in an effort to deny shooters notoriety.

The shooting came at the end of an already violent month in Texas, where on Aug. 3 a gunman in the border city of El Paso killed 22 people at a Walmart. Sitting beside authorities in Odessa, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott ticked off a list of mass shootings that have now killed nearly 70 since 2016 in his state alone.

"I have been to too many of these events," Abbott said. "Too many Texans are in mourning. Too many Texans have lost their lives. The status quo in Texas is unacceptable, and action is needed."

But Abbott, a Republican, remains noncommittal about imposing any new gun laws in Texas at a time when Democrats and gun-control groups are demanding restrictions. And even as Abbott spoke, a number of looser gun laws that he signed this year took effect on the first day of September, including one that would arm more teachers in Texas schools.

Saturday's shooting brings the number of mass killings in the U.S. so far this year to 25, matching the number in all of 2018, according to The AP/USATODAY/Northeastern University mass murder database. The number of people killed this year has already reached 142, surpassing the 140 people who were killed of all last year. The database tracks homicides where four or more people are killed, not including the offender.



**Celeste Lujan, left, and Yasmin Natera hold a sign in honor of Leilah Hernandez during a vigil for victims of the shooting spree the day before, Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019, at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin quad, in Odessa, Texas.** (Jacy Lewis/Reporter-Telegram via AP)

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Daniel Munoz, 28, of Odessa, was headed to a bar to meet a friend when he noticed the driver of an approaching car was holding what appeared to be a rifle.

"This is my street instincts: When a car is approaching you and you see a gun of any type, just get down," said Munoz, who moved from San Diego about a year ago to work in oil country. "Luckily I got down. ... Sure enough, I hear the shots go off. He let off at least three shots on me."

He said he was treated at a hospital and is physically OK, though bewildered by the experience.

"I'm just trying to turn the corner and I got shot — I'm getting shot at? What's the world coming to? For real?"

Weber reported from Austin. Associated Press journalists Jeff Karoub in Detroit; Eric Tucker, Michael Balsamo, Meghan Hoyer and Michael Biesecker in Washington; and Tim Talley in Oklahoma City contributed to this report.

## In escalating trade war, US consumers may see higher prices

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and China on Sunday put in place their latest tariff increases on each other's goods, potentially raising prices Americans pay for some clothes, shoes, sporting goods and other consumer items before the holiday shopping season.

President Donald Trump said U.S.-China trade talks were still on for September. "We'll see what happens," he told reporters as he returned to the White House from the Camp David presidential retreat. "But we can't allow China to rip us off anymore as a country."

The 15% U.S. taxes apply to about \$112 billion of Chinese imports. All told, more than two-thirds of the consumer goods the United States imports from China now face higher taxes. The administration had largely avoided hitting consumer items in its earlier rounds of tariff increases.

But with prices of many retail goods now likely to rise, the Trump administration's move threatens the U.S. economy's main driver: consumer spending. As businesses pull back on investment spending and exports slow in the face of weak global growth, American shoppers have been a key bright spot for the economy.

"We have got a great economy," said Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa. "But I do think that the uncertainty caused by volatile tariff situation and this developing trade war could jeopardize that strength, and that growth, and that is, I think, that's a legitimate concern," he told ABC's "This Week."

As a result of Trump's higher tariffs, many U.S. companies have warned that they will be forced to pass on to their customers the higher prices they will pay on Chinese imports. Some businesses, though, may decide in the end to absorb the higher costs rather than raise prices for their customers.

In China, authorities began charging higher duties on American imports at midday Sunday, according to



**With cloudy skies in Washington, President Donald Trump speaks to the media as he returns to the White House from Camp David, Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019, in Washington.** (AP Photo/

Jacquelyn Martin)

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employees who answered the phone at customs offices in Beijing and the southern port of Guangzhou. They declined to give their names.

Tariffs of 10% and 5% apply to items ranging from frozen sweet corn and pork liver to marble and bicycle tires, the government announced earlier.

After Sunday's move, 87% of textiles and clothing the United States buys from China and 52% of shoes will be subject to import taxes.

On Dec. 15, the Trump administration is scheduled to impose a second round of 15% tariffs — this time on roughly \$160 billion of imports. If those duties take effect, virtually all goods imported from China will be covered.

The Chinese government has released a list of American imports targeted for penalties on Dec. 15 if the U.S. tariff hikes take effect. In total, Beijing says Sunday's penalties and the planned December increases will apply to \$75 billion of American goods.

Washington and Beijing are locked in a war over U.S. complaints that China steals U.S. trade secrets and unfairly subsidizes its own companies in its drive to develop global competitors in such high-tech industries as artificial intelligence and electric cars.

"I give the president credit for challenging China on some of its really egregious behavior" on intellectual property and technology transfers, for example, Toomey said. He said he hopes that's what Trump's focus is, "not just the fact that Chinese clothing and shoes are popular among consumers. That's not the problem."

If China changes its behavior "in a meaningful way in that area ... then we will have ended up in a better place. That's what I'm hoping for. But let's be honest. In the meantime, we're doing damage. It's a double-edged sword," he said.

To try to force Beijing to reform its trade practices, the Trump administration has imposed import taxes on billions of dollars' worth of Chinese imports, and China has retaliated with tariffs on U.S. exports.

"It's a good thing taking on China. Unfortunately, he's done it the wrong way," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said on "Fox News Sunday."

"To take on China there has to be a multilateral approach. One country can't take on China to try to dry up its overcapacity because they just send it through to you in other ways," he said.

Trump has insisted that China itself pays the tariffs. But in fact, economic research has concluded that the costs of the duties fall on U.S. businesses and consumers. Trump had indirectly acknowledged the tariffs' impact by delaying some of the duties until Dec. 15, after holiday goods are already on store shelves.

A study by J.P. Morgan found that Trump's tariffs will cost the average U.S. household \$1,000 a year. That study was done before Trump raised the Sept. 1 and Dec. 15 tariffs to 15% from 10%.

The president has also announced that existing 25% tariffs on a separate group of \$250 billion of Chinese imports will increase to 30% on Oct. 1.

That cost could weaken an already slowing U.S. economy. Though consumer spending grew last quarter at its fastest pace in five years, the overall economy expanded at just a modest 2% annual rate, down from a 3.1% rate in the first three months of the year.

The economy is widely expected to slow further in the months ahead as income growth slows, businesses delay expansions and higher prices from tariffs depress consumer spending. Companies have already reduced investment spending, and exports have dropped against a backdrop of slower global growth.

Americans have already turned more pessimistic. The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index, released Friday, fell by the most since December 2012.

"The data indicate that the erosion of consumer confidence due to tariff policies is now well underway," said Richard Curtin, who oversees the index.

Some retailers may eat the cost of the tariffs. Target confirmed to The Associated Press that it warned suppliers that it won't accept cost increases arising from the China tariffs. But many smaller retailers won't have the bargaining power to make such demands and will pass the costs to customers.

Philip Levy, chief economist at the San Francisco freight company Flexport who was an adviser in President George W. Bush administration, said it's hard to say for sure when the latest tariffs may hit U.S.

customers in the form of higher prices.

But, he added, "If you had to pick a time to do it, this is the worst possible time" because it's when the bulk of holiday goods are brought into the country.

AP Radio Correspondent Julie Walker in New York contributed to this report.

## Verlander pitches 3rd career no-hitter, Astros beat Jays 2-0

By IAN HARRISON Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Justin Verlander took the mound for the ninth inning, fully aware of the no-hitters he finished — and his near misses, too.

Zeroed in, he wouldn't be denied this time.

Verlander pitched his third career no-hitter, punctuating a dominant season by striking out 14 to lead the Houston Astros past the Toronto Blue Jays 2-0 on Sunday.

Verlander became just the sixth pitcher to throw at least three no-hitters in the majors, an elite club that includes the likes of Nolan Ryan, Sandy Koufax and Cy Young.

"It means a lot," Verlander said. "I'd be lying if I said I didn't know that. I've come so close. Since I've had two, I think I've blown two in the ninth and another couple in the eighth."

"I was definitely aware of the history aspect of it. Definitely a big hurdle to get over and a very special moment for me," he said.

Verlander (17-5) is the first pitcher to throw two no-hitters as a visitor in the same park — he also threw one at Rogers Centre in 2011 with Detroit. His other no-no was in 2007 for the Tigers against Milwaukee.

"I guess I have to like this mound a lot now," Verlander joked.

Verlander allowed only one runner, with Cavan Biggio drawing a one-out walk in the first inning. The Blue Jays, with a lineup full of young, aggressive batters, never came close to a hit in the Astros' second no-hitter of the season — four Houston pitchers combined to blank Seattle a month ago.

The 36-year-old Verlander joined Ryan (seven), Koufax (four) and Young, Bob Feller and 1880s-era Larry Corcoran (three each) in rarefied air on the no-hitter list.

"Some of the guys I've idolized," Verlander said.

And it came after a series of close calls.

Verlander lost a no-hit try in the eighth inning late in 2011, had bids broken in the ninth in 2012 and 2015 and had another attempt spoiled last May in the seventh by Jose Abreu of the White Sox.

Verlander's wife, model Kate Upton, is currently attending the Venice Film Festival, where she tweeted out a message of congratulations.



**Houston Astros starter Justin Verlander reacts after pitching a no-hitter against the Toronto Blue Jays in a baseball game in Toronto, Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019.** (Fred Thornhill/

The Canadian Press via AP)



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"She was the first one I called," Verlander said. "She was actually up very late watching the whole thing, so that's awesome."

Verlander threw a season-high 120 pitches, mixing a fastball that reached the upper 90s mph with a sharp curve.

The right-hander retired the last 26 hitters in a row. But he still needed help because the game was scoreless going into the last inning — according to baseball rules, Verlander had to pitch a complete game to get credit for a no-hitter.

That's when Canadian-born rookie Abraham Toro stepped up for the AL West leaders. The Astros newcomer hit a two-out, two-run homer in the ninth inning off Ken Giles (2-3) that cleared the way for Verlander to complete the no-hitter.

"The whole dugout was going crazy because everybody knew what was on the line," Toro said.

Toro made a routine play on Bo Bichette's grounder to third base for the last out. Verlander joked the 22-year-old Toro, playing just his eighth game in the majors, was in for quite a nice reward.

"I could not be happier for that kid," said Verlander, who sought out Toro for an on-field hug after the game. "Just an incredible moment for him, from Canada, able to do that and then get the last out as well. Such a special moment and I'm happy I'm able to celebrate with him."

Said Bichette: "I honestly thought I was going to get him, but then he made a really good pitch."

"He is who is for a reason," Bichette said.

Only one Toronto player hit a ball harder than 100 miles per hour off the bat.

Billy McKinney sent a grounder that first baseman Aledmys Diaz, playing an unfamiliar position in place of the injured Yuli Gurriel, stopped in the fifth. Diaz fed Verlander to end the inning.

"I think every no-hitter needs something to go your way," Verlander said. "That was a pretty poor pitch that was hit pretty hard, fortunately on the ground, and AD over there is a great athlete and was able to knock it down and make a great play."

Just two other pitchers have no-hit the same team more than once. Cleveland's Addie Joss did it to the White Sox in 1908 and 1910, while San Francisco's Tim Lincecum held San Diego hitless in 2013 and 2014.

This was the fourth no-hitter in the majors this year. The last one was by the Astros, a combined effort from Aaron Sanchez, Will Harris, Joe Biagini and Chris Devenski against Seattle on Aug. 3. Sanchez and Biagini did it in their first game since being acquired in a trade with Toronto.

Houston is the first team to pitch two no-hitters in a season since Max Scherzer threw a pair for Washington in 2015.

Oakland's Mike Fiers and a tandem effort by Taylor Cole and Felix Pena of the Angels accounted for this year's other gems.

Verlander is tied for the big league lead in wins. The eight-time All-Star and former AL MVP and Cy Young Award winner tops the majors in strikeouts (257) and innings (193) and leads the AL with a 2.56 ERA.

With the crowd of 24,104 getting to its feet to begin the ninth, Verlander retired Brandon Drury on an easy grounder and struck out Reese McGuire.

After that second out, catcher Robinson Chirinos went to the mound for a quick visit with Verlander. The count went full on Bichette, who fouled off a pitch before hitting a bouncer to Toro.

Verlander took a couple hops toward first as he watched Toro field the ball, saw the throw on target and then began the celebration in the middle of the diamond.

Not bad for an ace who was ejected in his previous start. Verlander was tossed last Tuesday at home shortly after a close pitch didn't go his way against Tampa Bay.

It was Verlander's ninth career shutout and first this season. This was the 13th no-hitter for the Astros, including one by Ryan.

The Blue Jays were no-hit for the sixth time. Before Sunday, the last to do it was Seattle's James Paxton, who became the first Canadian pitcher to throw a big league no-hitter north of the border when he beat the Blue Jays on May 8, 2018.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Astros: Gurriel (left elbow contusion) was scratched from the lineup. He was hit on the elbow by a pitch

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Saturday. ... RHP Josh James (right shoulder) was activated off the injured list.

Blue Jays: Reinstated RHP Ryan Tepera (right elbow) from the 60-day injured list. To make room on the 40-man roster, RHP Neil Ramirez was designated for assignment. ... OF Lourdes Gurriel Jr. (strained left quadriceps) took batting practice on the field before the game and could be activated off the injured list Thursday. ... OF Derek Fisher (sprained right ankle) was scratched from the lineup and replaced by Drury. Fisher ran into the wall while fielding a double Saturday. ... LHP Clayton Richard (strained left lat) allowed three runs and four hits in two innings in his first rehab start at Triple-A Buffalo Saturday. He struck out one and walked one.

## ROSTER REPORT

Astros: Manager AJ Hinch said Houston will likely add two or more players before Monday's game at Milwaukee, and said more players will arrive when the team returns home Thursday to face Seattle.

Blue Jays: Toronto recalled C Beau Taylor from Triple-A Buffalo. ... The Blue Jays completed their July 28 trade with Tampa Bay by acquiring minor league RHPs Edinson Gonzalez and Curtis Taylor. Toronto traded INF Eric Sogard to the Rays. Gonzalez, 19, was 4-2 with a 2.45 ERA at Class A. Taylor, 24, had seven saves in nine opportunities at Double-A.

## UP NEXT

Astros: RHP Gerrit Cole (15-5, 2.85) starts against the Brewers on Monday in the opener of a two-game interleague series. RHP Adrian Houser (6-5, 3.52) starts for Milwaukee.

Blue Jays: RHP Jacob Waguespack (4-2, 3.93) starts Monday in the opener of a two-game interleague series at Atlanta. RHP Mike Soroka (103, 2.44) starts for the Braves.

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## Today in History By The Associated Press

### Today in History

Today is Monday, Sept. 2, the 245th day of 2019. There are 120 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 2, 1969, in what some regard as the birth of the Internet, two connected computers at the University of California, Los Angeles, passed test data through a 15-foot cable. The first automatic teller machine (ATM) to utilize magnetic-striped cards was opened to the public at Chemical Bank in New York. (Called a "Docuteller," it was developed by Donald C. Wetzel.)

### On this date:

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union Gen. William T. Sherman's forces occupied Atlanta.

In 1930, the first nonstop airplane flight from Europe to the U.S. was completed in 37 hours as Capt. Dieudonne Costes and Maurice Bellonte of France arrived in Valley Stream, New York, aboard their Breguet 19 biplane, which bore the symbol of a large question mark.

In 1945, Japan formally surrendered in ceremonies aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, ending World War II.

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the National Defense Education Act, which provided aid to public and private education to promote learning in such fields as math and science.

In 1960, Wilma Rudolph of the United States won the first of her three gold medals at the Rome Summer Olympics as she finished the 100-meter dash in 11 seconds.

In 1963, Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace prevented the integration of Tuskegee High School by encircling the building with state troopers. "The CBS Evening News" with Walter Cronkite was lengthened from 15 to 30 minutes, becoming network television's first half-hour nightly newscast.

In 1998, a Swissair MD-11 jetliner crashed off Nova Scotia, killing all 229 people aboard.

In 2001, actor Troy Donahue, a one-time teen movie idol, died in Santa Monica, Calif., at age 65.

In 2003, a federal appeals court in San Francisco threw out more than 100 death sentences in Arizona,

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Montana and Idaho because the inmates had been sent to death row by judges instead of juries.

In 2004, President George W. Bush pledged "a safer world and a more hopeful America" as he accepted his party's nomination for a second term at the Republican National Convention in New York.

In 2005, a National Guard convoy packed with food, water and medicine rolled into New Orleans four days after Hurricane Katrina. Scorched by criticism about sluggish federal help, President George W. Bush toured the Gulf Coast and met with state and local officials, including New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin; at one point, Bush praised FEMA Director Michael Brown, telling him, "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job."

In 2013, on her fifth try, U.S. endurance swimmer Diana Nyad became the first person to swim from Cuba to Florida without the help of a shark cage.

Ten years ago: Pfizer agreed to pay a record \$2.3 billion settlement for illegal drug promotion. A Taliban suicide bomber attacked officials leaving a mosque in Afghanistan, killing the country's deputy intelligence chief and 23 others. Gunmen killed 17 people at a drug rehabilitation center in Ciudad Juarez (SEE'-yoo-dahd wahr-EHZ'), Mexico. A magnitude-7.0 earthquake rocked Indonesia, killing dozens of people.

Five years ago: Islamic State group extremists released a video showing the beheading of American journalist Steven Sotloff, and warned President Barack Obama against further U.S. airstrikes on the group. Apple said that hackers had obtained nude photos of actress Jennifer Lawrence and other female celebrities by pilfering images from individual accounts rather than through a broader attack on the company's services.

One year ago: Sen. John McCain was laid to rest on a grassy hill at the U.S. Naval Academy, after a horse-drawn caisson carrying the senator's casket led a procession of mourners from the academy's chapel to its cemetery. A huge fire engulfed Brazil's 200-year-old National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, as firefighters and museum workers raced to save historical relics.

Today's Birthdays: Dancer-actress Marge Champion is 100. Former Sen. Alan K. Simpson, R-Wyo., is 88. Former United States Olympic Committee Chairman Peter Ueberroth is 82. Actor Derek Fowlds (TV: "Yes, Minister"; "Yes, Prime Minister") is 82. Singer Jimmy Clanton is 81. Rhythm-and-blues singer Sam Gooden (The Impressions) is 80. Rhythm-and-blues singer Rosalind Ashford (Martha & the Vandellas) is 76. Singer Joe Simon is 76. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Terry Bradshaw is 71. Basketball Hall of Famer Nate Archibald is 71. Actor Mark Harmon is 68. Former Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., is 68. International Tennis Hall of Famer Jimmy Connors is 67. Actress Linda Purl is 64. Rock musician Jerry Augustyniak (10,000 Maniacs) is 61. Country musician Paul Deakin (The Mavericks) is 60. Pro Football Hall of Famer Eric Dickerson is 59. Actor Keanu Reeves is 55. International Boxing Hall of Famer Lennox Lewis is 54. Actress Salma Hayek is 53. Actor Tuc Watkins is 53. Actress Kristen Cloke is 51. Actress Cynthia Watros is 51. Rhythm-and-blues singer K-Ci is 50. Actor-comedian Katt Williams is 46. Actor Michael Lombardi is 45. Actress Tiffany Hines is 42. Rock musician Sam Rivers (Limp Bizkit) is 42. Actor Jonathan Kite is 40. Actor Joshua Henry is 35. Actress Allison Miller is 34. Rock musician Spencer Smith is 32. Electronic music DJ/producer Zedd is 30.

Thought for Today: "Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else." — Margaret Mead, American anthropologist (1901-1978).

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