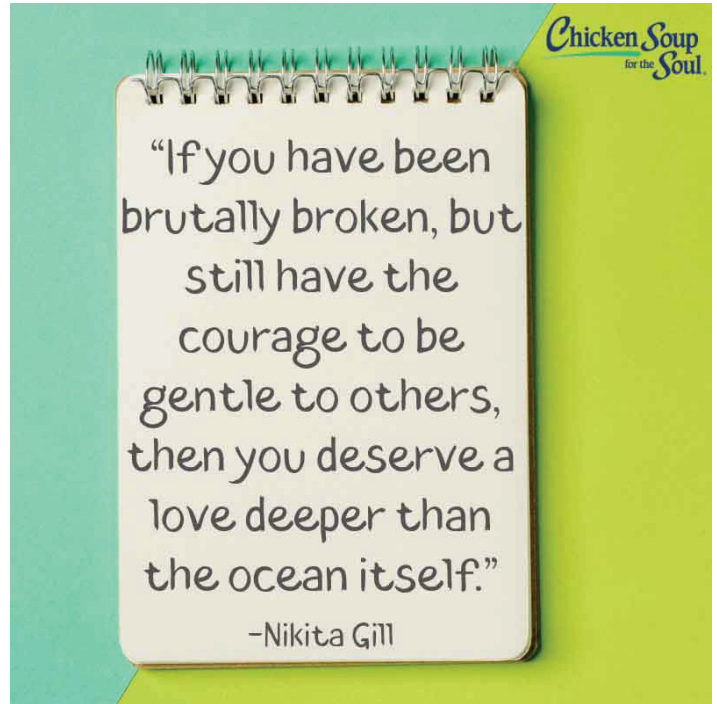


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Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

19 - Thursday

3:30 p.m.: Cross Country at Lee Park
Volleyball hosts Sisseton (7th/8th grade at 4:30, JV/C at 6 p.m. followed by varsity match)
St. John's: Quilting, 9 a.m. UMC: UMW, 1:30 p.m.
Breakfast: Eggs and Sausage Lunch: Chicken Leg, Mashed Potatoes
Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, potato salad, carrots/broccoli medley, pears, whole wheat bread.
Dress-up Day:
Elementary School: Sunglasses Day
MS/HS: Class Colors (Seniors black, juniors white, sophomores gray, freshmen gold, eighth graders purple, seventh graders blue, sixth graders red, staff pink.)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

20- Friday

1 p.m.: Homecoming Parade
3:30 p.m.: American Legion 100th Celebration at the Groton Legion
7 p.m.: Football hosts Milbank
Jungle Day Bazaar at Presbyterian Church, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
C&MA: Men's Bible Study at Dairy Queen, 6:30 a.m.
Breakfast: Waffles
Lunch: Homecoming Tailgate Party- Brats and Hot Dogs, Chips
Senior Menu: Ham and bean soup, egg salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, fresh fruit, cookie.
Dress-up Day: Black & Gold Spirit Day

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It's Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Sisseston
Redmen**

VS



Groton Area Tigers

Thursday, Sept. 19, 2019

7:30 p.m. at Groton

Broadcast Sponsors

Allied Climate Professionals

Bahr Spray Foam

BaseKamp Lodge

DeHoet Trucking

Groton Auto Works

Hanlon Brothers

John Sieh Agency

Milbrandt Enterprises

Professional Management Services

It's JV Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Sisseston
Redmen**

VS



Groton Area Tigers

Thursday, Sept. 19, 2019

6 p.m. at Groton

Broadcast Sponsor: Keith Family



Legacy donates to Groton Area Schools

Legacy, the parent company of Avantara Groton, is a community minded business, according to Jackie Thorson of Avantara Groton. She said, "Legacy is all about supporting the community they have businesses in. Avantara Groton donated \$500 to the school meal fund and also several boxes of supplies to the elementary school. Pictured are Jennifer Dirks from Avantara Groton, MS/HS Principal Kiersten Sombke, and Director of Nursing at Avantara Groton Jackie Thorson. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

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Meme Day Winners

Left to right Ashley Flihs 12 th grade, Lucas Simon 11th grade,Emilie Thurston 10th grade, Cadance Tullis 9th grade, Carly Guthmiller and Jacie Lier 8th grade, Emma Kutter 7th grade, and Ben Hoeft 6th grade. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

Groton Photography

will be doing photo sessions at the



No appointments are necessary, but if you want to set up a time, Call/Text Paul at 605/397-7460

e-mail paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Message on Facebook - theGDI

Sitting Fee: \$10

8x10 - \$8.00

5x7 - \$5.00

4x6 - \$4.00

Digital File E-mailed to you - \$10.00

Photo Button: \$5.00

Junior High Football Results

The 7th and 8th grade football players are pretty much playing just one combined game against their opponents this year as there are not enough players for Groton, or most of their opponents, to field both a 7th and an 8th grade team.

They have played two games thus far.

Groton defeated Sisseton by a score of 22 to 6. Groton scored first on a Brevin Flihs touchdown run, Sisseton soon answered though to tie things up at 6-6. Groton then pulled away with two more scores. One of the two remaining touchdowns was set up on a long pass from quarterback Lane Tietz to receiver Teylor Diegel. Tietz then punched it in on a run for the score. The 2-point conversion was also good on a pass from Tietz to tight end Colby Dunker. The other touchdown came very late in the game on a Christian Ehresmann run.

Groton also defeated Redfield by the score of 26 to 12. Groton jumped out right away setting up their first score on a pass play from Tietz to Dunker. Tietz got the score though on a TD run. The second score came on a long, perfectly executed pass from Tietz to Diegel for a touchdown. Tietz then scored the 2-point conversion with a run. Another touchdown came a bit later when Tietz scored on a long QB sweep. The final points came when Teylor Diegel on defense intercepted a Redfield pass and took it all the way to the house for the score! All Groton's scoring was done in the first half. Redfield added two scores in the 2nd half to conclude the scoring. Colby Dunker and Christian Ehresmann stood out defensively for tackles.

Members of the team include:

8th graders – Colby Dunker, Holden Sippel, Lane Tietz, Michael Powers-Dinger, Logan Ringgenberg, and Tristan Kampa.

7th graders- Korbin Kucker, Christian Ehresmann, Carter simon, Kellen Antonsen, Payton Mitchell, Teylor Diegel, Aiden Heathcote, Blake Dennert, Caden McInerney, Karsten Jeschke, Nick Morris, Logan Pearson, Kaden Kampa, Turner Thompson, Brevin Flihs, Easten Eckern, and Jaegar Kampa.

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GDI Living Heart Fitness
is a
Proud Partner with:

NIHCA

National Independent Health Club Association

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota

PreferredOne

Sanford Health Plan

Avera

Medica

Get Started Today
with Fitness Incentives

GDI Living Heart Fitness
13 North Main Street
Groton SD 57445

Call/Text Paul: 605/397-7460

NIHCA

National Independent Health Club Association

Input Sought for Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan

PIERRE, S.D. – Over the past decade, South Dakota’s suicide rates rose by nearly 40 percent. State agencies along with the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Health board are working to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent suicide in South Dakota and are seeking public input during the month of September. A draft of the plan is available for review at sdsuicideprevention.org.

“Suicide is impacting too many families, communities, and schools in our state,” said Governor Kristi Noem. “As we work together to develop a comprehensive plan for suicide prevention, it’s vital that we hear from community members, educators, faith leaders, and community-based organizations.”

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death among all South Dakotans. In 2018, 168 South Dakotans died by suicide. In addition, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 15-34.

Suicide is rarely caused by any single factor. According to a recent Vital Signs report from the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), more than half of people who die by suicide are not known to have a diagnosed mental health condition at the time of death. Other problems often contribute to suicide, such as those related to relationships, substance use, physical health and job, money, legal or housing stress.

South Dakota has resources available to help individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts and support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. If you need help call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Services are available 24/7. You can also contact any medical provider such as a family physician, psychiatrist or hospital emergency room, as well as a Community Mental Health Center or tribal mental health provider. Additional information, resources, and support are available at sdsuicideprevention.org. If you believe someone is at risk for suicide, get help immediately. Don’t wait to call.

Johnson’s Office Accepting Spring Internship Applications

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) announced that his office is seeking internship applicants for Spring 2020 in his Washington, D.C., Rapid City, Aberdeen, and Sioux Falls offices.

Duties will include researching legislation, attending committee hearings and briefings, leading tours of the U.S. Capitol, handling constituent phone calls, sorting mail and providing support to the staff and the Congressman. Interns will work closely with constituents and staff while developing their research, writing, and communications skills. Most importantly, they will gain an in-depth understanding of the South Dakota At-Large Congressional office.

“Working in the House of Representatives gives you a first-hand look at how the federal government operates on a day to day basis,” said Johnson. “Interns won’t be making coffee runs, they are a major part of our team and we always strive to provide them with meaningful work and experiences, whether that is in Washington or in the state.”

Interested applicants should complete the online internship application and submit a resume no later than November 1, 2019. More information about the internship program, along with the application, can be found online. Resumes should be submitted at dustyjohnson.house.gov/services/internships.

SD Ag Foundation now accepting applications for grant programs Projects to elevate youth ag education and empower rural communities are encouraged to apply

Pierre, S.D.; September 18, 2019— The South Dakota Agricultural Foundation is now accepting applications for its annual grant programs:

- Building Rural Communities (BRC) Grant
- Ag Innovators (AI) Youth Education Grant

The Building Rural Communities (BRC) and Ag Innovators (AI) grants are designed to support ongoing agriculture-related community and safety projects along with innovative ideas in youth agricultural education.

“These two grants are supporting key projects and organizations who are making an impact on agriculture across our state. This is the third consecutive year we have provided grant funding, and we are really proud of the 42 community and youth ag education-focused projects that were awarded grants in the last two years. Ideas like the ones they put into action are what will ensure the growth and vibrancy of our communities in the future and provide impetus to developing young leaders in the ag community,” said Greg Von Wald, SD Ag Foundation

board member, and Executive Director of the South Dakota Skilled Workforce Advocacy Council.

Schools and community organizations across South Dakota are encouraged to submit grant funding applications for projects elevating youth ag education, promoting future ag leaders, and empowering rural communities. Applications must be submitted or postmarked no later than November 15, 2019. Grant awardees will be announced by the end of December.

Ag Innovators (AI) Youth Education Grant

This grant is meant to encourage the development of creative solutions within agriculture-related innovation and leadership programs for youth. These solutions should address an educational need or opportunity in a more innovative, effective, equitable, or sustainable way than existing approaches.

Applicants should be a public, nonprofit organization as defined by IRS Publication 78, or an organization or individual working with a verified fiscal sponsor. This is a \$500-\$10,000 grant opportunity, with priority given to proposals with project budget sizes that are of appropriate scale to the applicant’s capacity to execute the project.

Building Rural Communities (BRC) Grant

Any 4-H club, FFA or FCCLA chapter in South Dakota can apply for this grant. Two types of BRC grants are available. The basic grant is used for community improvement projects and is limited to \$750 per project.

The safety grant is used for projects that enhance public safety and is limited to \$200 per project. Student participation is required.

Grant application forms and more information on the programs, including reporting requirements, are available at www.sdagfoundation.org/grantprograms.

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Roberts County Democratic Party

is hosting a

STEAK FRY DINNER

Friday, September 20, 2019 • 6:30 p.m.

Valley View Golf Course

Speaker will be Joel Heitkamp

KFGO morning show "News & Views"

TICKET PRICE: \$50

To purchase tickets call: Gary Hanson 268-0448

Jason Frerichs 605-949-2204, Dave Gleason 237-1923

Groton Class of '69 50th Year Reunion

Saturday, Sept 21st

Olive Grove Golf Course

The public is invited to attend after
6:30 to renew acquaintances
with OLD friends



2019 Groton Area Elementary Preschool Developmental Screening for 3 year olds September 24 and 25

Parents of children age 3 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to either confirm their screening time or set up a time. Letters will be send out the week of September 16. If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

The Developmental Screening will take place at Groton Area Elementary School.



(0911.0918)

Langford Front Porch Help Wanted



Immediate opening for a FT General Manager at The Front Porch Bar & Grill, Langford SD. This person will ensure a profitable and efficiently run restaurant/bar operation through innovative menus, events, staff management and business operations. Wage DOE. Must be 21 years old. Contact Paula Jensen at (605) 228-5963 or email resume by September 30, 2019 to langfordfrontporch@venturecomm.net.

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*Tribute to 100
years of the
American Legion*



*Coffee and
Birthday
Cake*

THE AMERICAN LEGION

1919

2019

100
Years

*Please help us celebrate a Century
of the American Legion*

VETERANS STILL SERVING AMERICA

Friday, Sept 20, 2019 ~ 3:30 p.m., Groton Legion Post #39

1 free drink to any Veteran

Program to include

Legion history


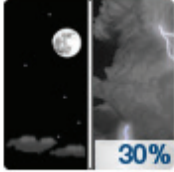



Local performers singing songs from the following periods

WW I ~ WW II ~ Korea ~ Vietnam to present time

MILITARY RITES AT THE CONCLUSION IN HONOR OF OUR DECEASED COMRADES PERFORMED BY GROTON POST #39

Groton Daily Independent

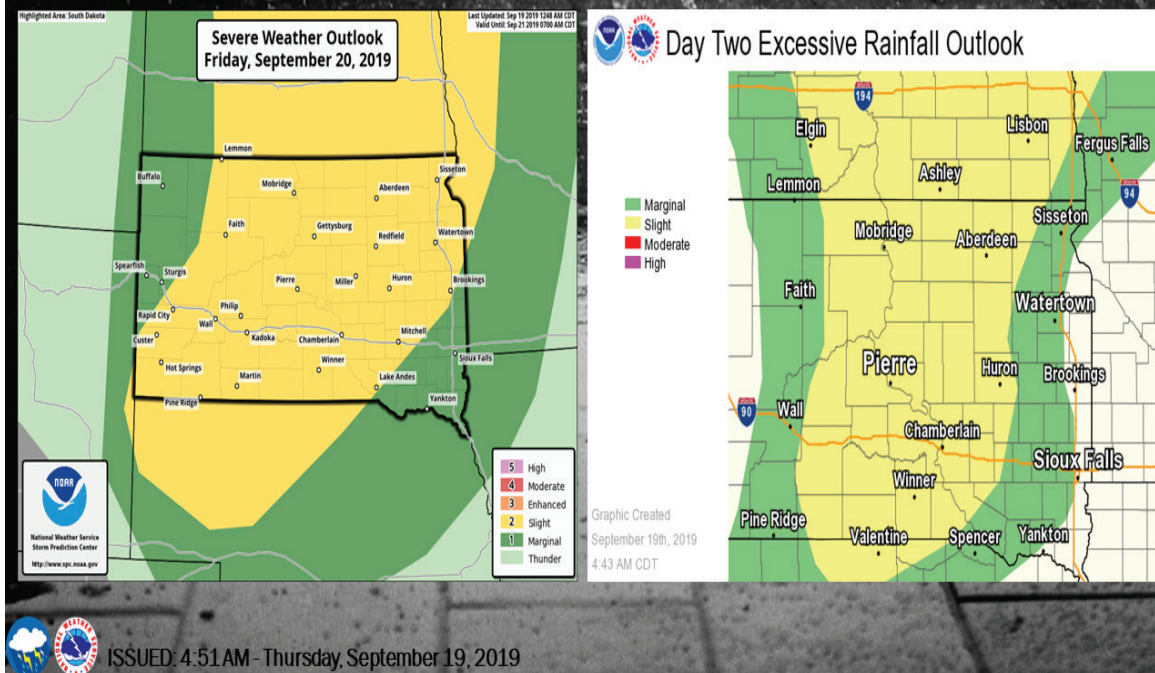
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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
				
Sunny	Mostly Clear then Chance T-storms	Heavy Rain then Heavy Rain and Breezy	T-storms	Chance T-storms
High: 82 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 83 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 74 °F

UNSETTLED PATTERN UNFOLDING

Risk Of Severe Thunderstorms

Risk Of Excessive Heavy Rainfall / Flooding



Dry and pleasant today. Rain chances begin to pick up on Friday, persisting into Friday night. Thunderstorms capable of producing excessive heavy rainfall will be possible Friday and Friday night. There is also a risk for a few storms to produce large hail or damaging winds late Friday afternoon through early Friday evening.

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Today in Weather History

September 19, 1991: Record to near record cold hit central and northeast South Dakota on this day. Temperatures fell into the 20s during the morning bringing a hard freeze to much of the area. Pierre and Mobridge had record lows of 24 degrees while Timber Lake set a record low of 21 degrees. Near record lows of 28 degrees and 22 degrees occurred at Aberdeen and Kennebec, respectively.

1947: A hurricane made landfall near the Chandeleur Islands, LA on this day. Wind gusts of 112 mph and a central pressure of 967 mb were measured at Moisant International Airport. A storm surge of 9.8 feet reached Shell Beach, Lake Borgne. Moisant Airport field was flooded by two ft. of water while Jefferson Parish was flooded to depths of 3.28 ft. New Orleans suffered \$100 million in damages. Total loss of life was 51 people. As a result of this storm, hurricane protection levees were built along the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain to protect Orleans and Jefferson Parishes from future storm surges.

1947 - The eye of a hurricane passed directly over New Orleans, and the barometric pressure dipped to 28.61 inches. The hurricane killed fifty-one persons, and caused 110 million dollars damage. It produced wind gusts to 155 mph while making landfall over Fort Lauderdale FL two days earlier. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - Hurricane Beulah deluged Brownsville, TX, with 12.19 inches of rain in 24 hours, to establish a record for that location. Hurricane Beulah made landfall on the 20th near the mouth of the Rio Grande River, where a wind gust to 135 mph was reported by a ship in the port. (19th-20th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Cool autumn-like weather invaded the Central Rockies. Temperatures dipped into the 30s and 40s, with readings in the teens and 20s reported in the higher elevations. Gunnison CO was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 15 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a fast moving cold front produced severe weather in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. Eight tornadoes were reported, including five in Indiana. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 74 mph at Wabash IND. Winds associated with the cold front itself gusted to 69 mph at Kenosha WI. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast Region. Cape Hatteras NC was deluged with nearly 3.50 inches of rain in three hours. Syracuse NY reported 1.77 inches of rain, a record for the date, and Chatham NJ reported an all-time record of 3.45 inches in one day. Hurricane Hugo headed for the Bahamas, and Tropical Storm Iris, following close on its heels, strengthened to near hurricane force. (The National Weather Summary)

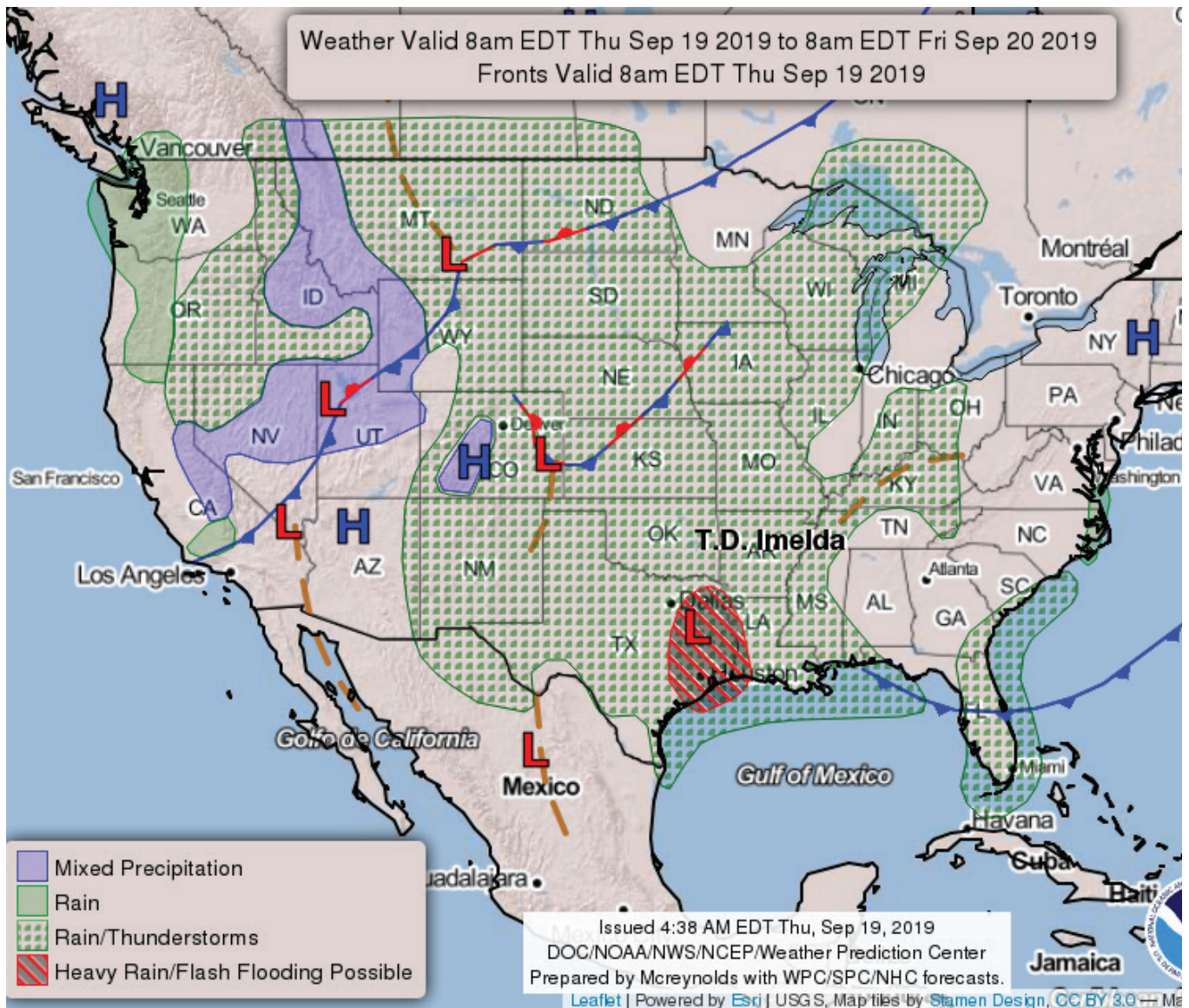
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 80 °F at 5:17 PM
Low Temp: 57 °F at 7:33 AM
Wind: 22 mph at 12:14 AM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 101° in 1895
Record Low: 26° in 1938
Average High: 71°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in Sept.: 1.34
Precip to date in Sept.: 5.14
Average Precip to date: 17.63
Precip Year to Date: 24.90
Sunset Tonight: 7:37 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:18 a.m.





SEARCHING EVERYWHERE

The phone rang and a small child answered it softly. "Hello," he said barely above a whisper.

"Hello," came the response. "Is your mother home?"

"Yes," came the reply, "but she's busy."

"Well," wondered the caller, "is your father home?"

"Yes," he said, "but he's busy, too."

"Are they both busy? What are they doing?" asked the salesman.

"They're looking for me. They think I'm lost," he whispered.

What a picture of our Savior! He said, "I, the Son of Man, have come to seek and save the lost!"

This verse comes at the end of the story of Zacchaeus. Sometimes we focus on the different facts in the story: he was very short, the son of Abraham, he was a very influential man, and he was an unpopular tax collector. None of these facts actually mattered to Jesus.

What did matter to Jesus, then and now, is that a person is not saved because of his family, his wealth, his influence in the community, his appearance or his previous way of life. It is only through faith in the Son of God that the lost can be forgiven and made new.

In one verse Jesus summarized His entire mission: to seek and to save the lost. Wherever or whoever they are, whatever they have done, Jesus continues to seek the lost.

Prayer: Lord, we may have much, but You ask little - only that we, in faith, accept You as our Savior. Help us to understand that all we need to do is to accept You! In Jesus' Name, Amen .

Scripture For Today: Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

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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 Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

01-03-20-24-31

(one, three, twenty, twenty-four, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$134,000

Lotto America

10-41-44-51-52, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 4

(ten, forty-one, forty-four, fifty-one, fifty-two; Star Ball: six; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.95 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$211 million

Powerball

14-19-39-47-51, Powerball: 15, Power Play: 3

(fourteen, nineteen, thirty-nine, forty-seven, fifty-one; Powerball: fifteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$70 million

Judge partially blocks law aimed at oil pipeline protests

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

A federal judge on Wednesday temporarily blocked enforcement of some new South Dakota laws that aim to prevent disruptive demonstrations against the Keystone XL pipeline.

A lawsuit spearheaded by the American Civil Liberties Union against Gov. Kristi Noem and state Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg alleges that the legislation chills protected speech. In issuing a preliminary injunction halting several provisions of the legislation, U.S. District Judge Lawrence Piersol said the ACLU is likely to win most of its challenges to the bill "with the possible exception for direction of another person participating in a riot to use force or violence."

Piersol added that protesters must be allowed to plan and seek public support and money "before and in anticipation" of the next construction season. Conversely, supporters of the pipeline should also have the opportunity to respond rather than waiting for confrontation during actual construction, the judge said.

"We're glad the court recognized that these vague and overbroad laws threaten the First Amendment rights of South Dakotans on every side of the issue," said Stephen Pevar, an ACLU attorney.

The legislation hastily passed in March by the Republican-dominated Legislature allows officials to pursue criminal or civil penalties against demonstrators who engage in "riot boosting," defined in part as encouraging violence during a riot. It's meant to head off Keystone XL protests like those mounted against the Dakota Access pipeline in North Dakota that resulted in 761 arrests over a six-month span beginning in late 2016.

Kristin Wileman, Noem's spokeswoman, said the "governor and her team" are reviewing the ruling and won't be making public comments as long as the case remains active. Noem has said the legislative package was developed to address problems caused by "out-of-state rioters funded by out-of-state interests."

The 1,184-mile (1,900 kilometer) pipeline is intended to ship up to 830,000 barrels a day of Canadian crude through Montana and South Dakota to Nebraska, where it would connect with lines to carry oil to Gulf Coast refineries. The \$8 billion project has the backing of President Donald Trump but is being fought in the courts by opponents.

John Harter, board chair of Dakota Rural Action, one of several activists groups involved in the suit, said

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the government has dismissed Native Americans, farmers, ranchers and others who oppose the Keystone XL pipeline.

"Our opposition to the pipeline construction may agitate Gov. Noem, but the First Amendment guarantees us the right to make our voices heard," he said.

Piersol filed a separate order earlier Wednesday removing Pennington County Sheriff Kevin Thom as a defendant. The ACLU maintained that Thom would be enforcing laws that amount to an unconstitutional infringement on free speech. Piersol said Thom is not making any choices on state policy.

Pennington County is one of eight counties in South Dakota along the pipeline route.

Noem seeks investigation of prosecutor in populous county

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem is asking South Dakota's attorney general to investigate Minnehaha County's top prosecutor over his absence from work.

Noem sent a letter Wednesday to Attorney General Jason Ravensborg requesting an investigation into State's Attorney Aaron McGowan.

McGowan was out of his office starting in mid-July. He returned to work Sept. 9, telling the Argus Leader he was out for medical reasons.

In her letter to Ravensborg, Noem cited the prosecutor's "extended absence" and said "an investigation is necessary to determine if grounds for removal exist or not."

Ravensborg said Wednesday that a formal investigation will begin immediately.

McGowan said he welcomes the investigation and "looks forward to an accurate and credible determination of the facts."

McGowan was first elected in 2008. Minnehaha is South Dakota's most populous county.

Federal agency resists paying North Dakota oil protest cost

By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The federal government is contesting North Dakota's claims that the state should be reimbursed for the \$38 million the state spent policing prolonged protests against the Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The Army Corps of Engineers filed a motion Tuesday asking a federal judge to dismiss the state's lawsuit seeking to recoup the costs, arguing it has "limited authority to enforce its rules and regulations" on land it manages.

"The federal government acquired the Corps-managed land ... without accepting any special criminal jurisdiction over this property," the agency said in court documents. "Thus, North Dakota has the authority and responsibility to enforce criminal law on the Corps-managed lands..."

North Dakota Attorney General Wayne Stenejem called the Corps' claim that it is "toothless" in enforcing law on its land "preposterous."

Stenejem filed the claim in Bismarck federal court in July after the agency ignored an administrative claim he filed a year earlier.

Thousands of opponents of the \$3.8 billion pipeline that's been moving oil from the Dakotas through Iowa to Illinois for more two years gathered in southern North Dakota in 2016 and early 2017, camping on federal land and often clashing with police, resulting in 761 arrests over six months.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe opposed the pipeline built by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners over fears it would harm cultural sites and the tribe's Missouri River water supply — claims rejected by the company and the state.

Stenejem has said the Corps "allowed and sometimes encouraged" protesters to illegally camp without a federal permit. The Corps has said protesters weren't evicted due to free speech reasons.

The agency said in court papers it used discretion, calling the federal government's relationship with the Indian tribes "contentious and tragic."

The Corps said its "enforcement decisions" occurred in the "context of this complex and contentious

history.”

The pipeline construction began while Barack Obama was in the White House. President Donald Trump just days after taking office in January 2017 pushed through completion of the stalled project.

The company announced plans this year to double the pipeline’s capacity.

Trump last year denied a state-requested disaster declaration to cover the state’s costs. The Justice Department later gave the state a \$10 million grant for policing-related bills. The pipeline developer gave the state \$15 million to help with the costs that were funded from loans from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota.

Stenehjem has said the \$25 million the state has received to offset the costs doesn’t get the Corps off the hook for the state’s \$38 million total cost.

South Dakota man gets nearly 32 years for ax slaying, arson

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A federal judge has sentenced a South Dakota man to nearly 32 years in prison for randomly killing a man with an ax and setting fire to the mobile home where the victim was sleeping.

Judge Jeffrey Viken told 19-year-old Emery Arapahoe in court Tuesday in Rapid City that in 42 years as a judge, defense lawyer and prosecutor he has rarely seen the type of violence the defendant displayed. The case was heard in federal court because the crime occurred on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation.

The Rapid City Journal says Arapahoe was sentenced after pleading guilty to second-degree murder for killing 24-year-old Raymond Waters Jr., and to arson for setting the trailer on fire in October 2017 in Allen.

He received nearly 22 years for the murder, the maximum recommended under federal sentencing guidelines, and 10 years for the arson. Both crimes have a maximum punishment of life in prison.

Viken said he would recommend the Bureau of Prisons first send Arapahoe to a mental health treatment facility. As part of a plea deal, charges of first-degree burglary and larceny were dropped as well as charges in two assault cases.

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

Attorney seeks dismissal of DAPL cigarette butt DNA case

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — An attorney for a South Dakota man says DNA evidence found on a cigarette butt doesn’t prove his client participated in a riot during the Dakota Access pipeline protest three years ago.

The Bismarck Tribune reports attorney Bruce Nestor on Monday filed a motion in state court seeking dismissal of the charges against Lawrence Malcolm Jr., of Sisseton.

Nestor says it’s impossible to determine where the butt originated or how long it might have been there.

Prosecutors charged Malcolm earlier this month with felony conspiracy to commit criminal mischief and engaging in a riot.

The charges relate to protest on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. An affidavit says more than 100 demonstrators, many with their faces covered, halted construction and vandalized equipment.

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

Grandmother given 9½ years for accessory to grandson’s death

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A grandmother has been sentenced in South Dakota to 9½ years in prison for being an accessory to the beating death of her 2-year-old grandson.

Federal Judge Jeffrey Vixen gave 51-year-old Sonya Dubray a sentence longer than guidelines recommend on Tuesday afternoon in Rapid City. Viken asked Dubray how she didn’t know her grandson, Kylan Shangreaux, was murdered when she found him unresponsive in Porcupine.

The Rapid City Journal says Dubray, in a deal with prosecutors, earlier pleaded guilty to being an accessory to second-degree murder in the July 2016 beating death.

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Dubray's daughter, the child's mother, was sentenced last year to 40 years in prison for fatally beating her son. The grandmother did not call 911 right away after finding the boy unresponsive and lied to federal investigators.

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

The Latest: Iran's foreign minister warns of 'all-out war'

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The Latest on tensions in the Persian Gulf (all times local):
2:40 p.m.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is warning that any U.S. or Saudi military strike on Iran will result in "all-out war."

Zarif made the comment in an interview published by CNN Thursday.

It comes after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called an attack on Saudi oil installations an "act of war."

The U.S. accuses Iran of being behind the attack. Iran denies that.

Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels have claimed the attack, saying it is over the yearslong Saudi-led war there that's killed tens of thousands of people. However, experts told The Associated Press the cruise missiles used in the assault did not have the range to have been launched from Yemen and reach their targets.

12:50 p.m.

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Germany says his country has not ruled out any options in response to the recent attacks on its oil infrastructure.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan told Deutschlandfunk radio Thursday it's not yet clear where the attacks originated but "Iran is definitely behind them."

Asked whether military retaliation was being considered, he said "everything is on the table."

He says his country's ultimate response to the oil attacks would also depend on the international community.

He says the situation could deescalate if Iran can be convinced "something like this is not acceptable."

11:55 a.m.

France's top diplomat is expressing doubt at claims by Yemen's rebel Houthis that they are responsible for recent drone attacks on Saudi Arabian oil facilities.

Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Thursday on CNews television that the claims are "not very credible." He would not speculate on who was responsible, but reiterated that France sent its own experts to Saudi Arabia to investigate what happened.

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia suspect Iran was behind Saturday's attack on the world's largest oil processing facility and a major oil field.

Le Drian urged Iran to respect its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and "come back to the table" to restore calm in the increasingly tense Persian Gulf region.

He said France is talking to "everyone in the region" as it pushes for a diplomatic solution instead of a new military conflict.

9:20 a.m.

The United Arab Emirates says it has joined a U.S.-led coalition to protect waterways across the Mideast after an attack on Saudi oil installations.

The state-run WAM news agency announced the UAE's decision in a statement Thursday.

It quoted Salem al-Zaabi of the Emirati Foreign Ministry as saying the UAE joined the coalition to "ensure global energy security and the continued flow of energy supplies to the global economy."

Saudi Arabia joined the coalition on Wednesday. Australia, Bahrain and the United Kingdom also are taking part.

The U.S. formed the coalition after attacks on oil tankers that American officials blame on Iran, as well as Iran's seizure of tankers in the region. Iran denies being behind the tanker explosions.

The Saudi oil installation attack Saturday has further heightened Mideast tensions.

Despite tough talk, Trump leery of foreign conflict

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A president with few ideological constants, Donald Trump has consistently been leery of getting entangled in overseas military engagements. It's a stance shaped by his belief that wars in places like Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq have drained America's resources at home and its reputation abroad.

Despite his tough talk about American military might, Trump has largely kept the United States out of international conflicts, a dynamic that has come into focus this week as his administration builds the case that Iran was directly responsible for a crippling attack on a Saudi oil field. Even as tensions escalate, fueled in part by Trump's own rhetoric, the president has hesitated, harking back to his campaign pledge to avoid military conflict.

Trump told reporters in Los Angeles on Wednesday that he believed it was "a great sign of strength" that he had gone no further against Iran thus far than imposing fresh sanctions.

"How did going into Iraq work out?" the president asked, adding that wars were "very easy to start."

As for Iran, he said, "If we have to do something, we'll do it without hesitation."

The Republican president's reluctance to engage in full-on military intervention long predates the current situation in the Middle East.

Outside of ordering a pair of missile strikes in Syria, and the downing of an Iranian drone earlier this year, Trump has kept his fingers off the trigger. But he's used his phone to unleash harsh Twitter posts, from threatening to obliterate North Korea to warning Iran in recent days that the U.S. armed forces were "locked and loaded."

"He is the opposite of Teddy Roosevelt: He is walking loudly and carrying a twig," said Tim O'Brien, a Trump biographer. "He wants to bluster, he wants to look tough and overcome his insecurities and he wants to occupy center stage. But he doesn't follow up that talk with strong military action. By and his large, his inclinations are more dovish than hawkish."

Fourteen months before voters will decide on his reelection, Trump has become increasingly mindful of his 2016 campaign promises, from his pledge to produce record economic growth to his promise to bring American troops home.

For Trump, who ran for office on the split promises of ending foreign entanglements and applying fresh pressures on Iran, the latest provocation from Tehran is a conundrum. The administration's at-times conflicting messages, officials said, mirror internal staff divisions and even the president's own hesitations.

"You know, I'm not looking to get into new conflict," Trump said Monday, "but sometimes you have to."

Trump is mindful of the example of the Iraq War, which he briefly supported before becoming one of its most vehement critics. Trump later wielded that conflict as a cudgel against political rivals George W. Bush and John Bolton, who was recently ousted as his national security adviser.

Whenever he and Bolton disagreed, which was frequently, aides said, Trump was known to mock Bolton over his role in advocating for the 2003 invasion.

Trump is likely to get much the same sort of advice from Bolton's replacement, Robert O'Brien. Allies said the former Bolton aide agrees with the former national security adviser on many issues but is expected to take a softer approach in advising the president.

In the wake of the attack in Saudi Arabia, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo directly blamed Iran for what he called "an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply." But Pompeo offered no evidence and Trump deliberately hedged on that conclusion, believing that sending contradictory messages kept

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Tehran off guard while also allowing the president to preserve his negotiating options. That's according to two people familiar with the conversations who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss them.

"The president's being cautious," said deputy White House press secretary Hogan Gidley, "and if he were banging the gong today about Iran being the culprit, inevitably, without presenting the case to the American people, everyone would be saying he's a warmonger. The fact is the president is taking this attack very clear-eyed."

There are risks with the approach: Too much incendiary language could lead to a strike, while a refusal to engage could embolden a rogue regime to test Trump further.

"The risk is that the rhetoric can take on a life of its own yet if you never follow through, people will try to take advantage," said Julian Zelizer, presidential historian at Princeton University. "It creates this tension: Will other countries bite and respond? It's a very chaotic approach to foreign policy."

Trump never served in the military and received multiple draft deferments to avoid going to Vietnam. He later was a fierce opponent of the war, not because he was a pacifist, but because he felt that the United States looked weak for being stuck in the Asian quagmire.

"Vietnam was a disaster," Trump said in a 1999 interview. "It was too far away. It didn't affect us. I guess if you do it, you have to go to win. We didn't go to win. But I think Vietnam would have been a good place for us to stay out of."

During his 2016 campaign, Trump time and again denounced "endless wars" and vowed to not be entangled in similarly drawn-out affairs. That October, Trump said of the Washington establishment: "They've dragged us into foreign wars. They've made us less safe. And these are wars that they never win; we don't win."

Lemire reported from New York.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> and Miller at <http://twitter.com/@zekejmilller>

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. 'IT WAS A DUMB THING TO DO'

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologizes and begs the nation for forgiveness following the publication of a yearbook photo showing him in brownface makeup at a 2001 costume party.

2. TRUMP LEERY OF FOREIGN CONFLICT

It's a stance shaped by his belief that wars in places like Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq have drained America's resources at home and its reputation abroad.

3. SAUDIS WEIGHING RESPONSE AFTER ATTACK

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to German says his country has not ruled out any options in response to the recent attacks on its oil infrastructure, adding that "Iran is definitely behind them."

4. HOW TRUMP DESCRIBES NEW BORDER WALL

Visiting the San Diego section of the newly constructed barrier, the U.S. president calls it a "world-class security system" that will be virtually impenetrable.

5. ISRAELIS CONTEND WITH PROSPECT OF 3RD POLL DAYS AFTER VOTE

With neither Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nor his rivals holding a clear path to a coalition government, conditions set by the parties could hobble the task within the allotted time, prompting a political impasse.

6. CHALLENGE TO PARLIAMENT SHUTDOWN WRAPPING UP

Britain's top court is hearing final arguments in a case that will determine whether Boris Johnson broke the law by suspending Parliament just weeks before the U.K. is due to leave the EU.

7. WHAT WOMEN WANT IN NEW SUDAN

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Sudanese women played a pivotal role in ending three decades of autocratic rule and now they hope for more freedom and equality.

8. MANY CANDIDATES 'FEELING THE BERN'

Bernie Sanders acknowledges that many of his top proposals, dismissed as radical four years ago, have been adopted by much of the 2020 Democratic presidential primary field.

9. BIG MONEY URGES GOVERNMENTS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

A group of more than 500 major institutional investors warn that failure to combat global warming could have serious economic consequences.

10. NEVADA DESERT TOWNS PREP FOR 'STORM AREA 51' INFLUX

The craze sparked by an internet joke inviting people to "see them aliens" might become a cultural marker — or a monumental dud.

Imelda's deluge won't let up over Texas and Louisiana

By **JUAN A. LOZANO** Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Rain from Tropical Depression Imelda was still deluging parts of Texas and Louisiana on Thursday. Forecasters warned of life-threatening flash floods as an additional five to 10 inches falls through Friday, and predicted even "25 to 35 inches" in some places as the system moves slowly over the area.

Glenn LaMont, deputy emergency management coordinator in Brazoria County, south of Houston along the Gulf Coast, said he had seen no reports of flooded homes or people stranded despite heavy rainfall as of late Wednesday, but cautioned: "It's too early to breathe a sigh of relief."

Most of the heaviest showers had moved to the east of Houston, into Beaumont, Texas, and southwestern Louisiana, by Wednesday evening, but the storm's remnants spawned several weak tornadoes in the Baytown area, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Houston, damaging trees, barns and sheds and causing minor damage to some homes and vehicles.

Forecasters said the Houston area could still face some heavy rainfall on Thursday, even as the system's center shifted to about 110 miles (180 kilometers) north of the city, moving north-northwest at 5 mph (7 kph).

Parts of East Texas could get up to 10 inches (254 millimeters) of rain through Thursday morning as the remnants of Imelda continue moving north and away from Houston, according to the National Weather Service.

Coastal counties, including Brazoria, Matagorda and Galveston, got the most rainfall so far. Some parts of the Houston area had received nearly 8 inches (203 millimeters) of rain, while the city of Galveston, which had street flooding, had received nearly 9 inches (229 millimeters), according to preliminary rainfall totals released Wednesday afternoon by the National Weather Service.

Sargent, a town of about 2,700 residents in Matagorda County, had received nearly 20 inches (508 millimeters) of rain since Tuesday.

Karen Romero, who lives with her husband in Sargent, said this was the most rain she has had in her neighborhood in her nine years living there.

"The rain (Tuesday) night was just massive sheets of rain and lightning storms," said Romero, 57.

She said her home, located along a creek, was not in danger of flooding as it sits on stilts, like many others nearby.

In the Houston area, the rainfall flooded some roadways, stranding drivers, and caused several creeks and bayous to rise to high levels.

Many schools in the Houston and Galveston area canceled classes Wednesday. However, the Houston school district, the state's largest, remained open. At least one school district — Galveston — said it was also canceling classes on Thursday.

The National Hurricane Center said Imelda, weakened after a tropical depression after making landfall Tuesday near Freeport, Texas, with maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (64 kph).

The weather service said Imelda is the first named storm to impact the Houston area since Hurricane

Harvey dumped nearly 50 inches (130 centimeters) of rain on parts of the flood-prone city in August 2017, flooding more than 150,000 homes in the Houston area and causing an estimated \$125 billion in damage in Texas.

Follow Juan A. Lozano on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/juanlozano70>

AP source: Joe Kennedy to challenge Sen. Markey in primary

By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Massachusetts U.S. Rep. Joe Kennedy III, a scion of one of America's most storied political families, is set to announce he will challenge U.S. Sen. Edward Markey in the state's Democratic primary in 2020.

A person with knowledge of Kennedy's plans told The Associated Press that Kennedy will formally make the announcement Saturday. The person wasn't authorized to preempt Kennedy's announcement and spoke Wednesday on the condition of anonymity.

The 38-year-old grandson of Robert Kennedy has been quietly laying down the foundation of a run, building up his staff and formally announcing his interest in the race by filing preliminary paperwork with the Federal Election Commission last month.

"I don't think primaries are something that people should shy away from," Kennedy told reporters at the state Democratic convention last Saturday. "The idea behind it is that every seat, my own included, the one that I currently occupy as a member of the House of Representatives, it's up every two years. It's a two-year term. You have to go out and make that case to voters every two years."

Kennedy has shied away from directly criticizing Markey, calling him "a good man."

Markey, who's already facing two lesser-known challengers, has said he's ready to take on anyone, even Kennedy.

"I run every day on the issues that I've been fighting for throughout my career and that I'm continuing to fight for right now on the floor of the Senate. That's women's reproductive rights, climate change, gun safety laws, income inequality — and I'm going to continue to campaign on those issues," the 73-year-old Markey said at the same convention. "It's been the core of my agenda."

Kennedy is the latest in a long line of members of America's most celebrated political clan to seek elected office — most famously his uncle President John F. Kennedy, felled by an assassin's bullet in 1963.

Others include his father, former U.S. Rep. Joseph Kennedy; his grandfather Robert F. Kennedy, who was JFK's attorney general and was a senator running for the Democratic presidential nomination when he was slain in 1968; his uncle Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who died in 2009; former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy II, a son of Edward Kennedy; and his aunt Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who served two terms as Maryland's lieutenant governor.

A senior campaign adviser to Markey said in a statement Wednesday that the incumbent is up for the political battles ahead.

"Elections are about choices, and Ed looks forward to spending the next 14 months campaigning hard every day to show the people of the Commonwealth why he's the right choice," said John Walsh, a long-time political Democratic operative in Massachusetts.

Given his political pedigree, Kennedy has been seen as a rising star in the party. In 2018, Kennedy was tapped to deliver the Democratic response to President Donald Trump's State of the Union address.

A Kennedy-Markey contest will put more than a few high-profile Democrats in an awkward position, most notably White House hopeful Elizabeth Warren.

Warren has worked with Markey in the Senate and taught Kennedy at Harvard Law School. She formally endorsed Markey before Kennedy floated the idea of a challenge to Markey.

"I endorsed Sen. Markey back in February. I couldn't ask for a better partner in the Senate than Ed Markey. He is a good friend," Warren said. "Joe Kennedy is also a good friend. I have worked with him since he was a student of mine; both he and his wife were my students. I have worked with him as a

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congressman. I have nothing but the highest respect for him. And I have no criticism.”

Kennedy has tried to position himself as more of a pragmatist than those on the left of his party.

Although he’s adopted many of the causes driving the party’s liberal wing — Kennedy has called for Congress to initiate impeachment efforts against Trump and has backed a “Medicare for All” bill in the House — he’s also tried to carve out his own path.

In January 2017, as many Democrats were still reeling from Trump’s win, Kennedy — first elected to Congress in 2012 — suggested that party leaders should be listening better to the economic worries of Democratic voters who bolted the party for Trump, saying that not taking the time to understand those voters would be folly.

He also argued that Democrats — then in the minority in the House — had to try to cut the best deals they could with Republicans.

“You’ve got to fight, but you’ve got to also try to move an agenda forward,” he said at the time. “If you’re just out there screaming and yelling, there are people out there who need help and need help now and they deserve progress, too.”

Kennedy has also spoken frequently about what he calls “moral capitalism” — a less politically fraught term than “socialism” but one that has become central to his political worldview in the Trump era.

Markey is a formidable opponent. He served for decades in the House before joining the Senate in 2013.

Markey has been quick to point out his endorsement by Democratic U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York. The two have worked to push for the Green New Deal initiative.

“The Green New Deal will be the greatest force for blue-collar job creation in a generation,” Markey has said.

Markey has also called for the House to begin an impeachment inquiry into Trump.

Kennedy and Markey have worked together at times.

Earlier this year the two reintroduced a bill that would end the use of “gay panic” and “trans panic” defenses in federal court — a defense that argues that the revelation of an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity helped provoke a defendant’s violent reaction.

Markey is already facing two lesser-known candidates: Shannon Liss-Riordan, a workers’ rights lawyer, and Steve Pemberton, a former senior executive at Walgreens.

The contest could be expensive.

Markey reported having more than \$4 million in his campaign account as of June 30. Kennedy reported having slightly more — \$4.2 million — in his House campaign account as of the same period.

Challenge to Parliament shutdown wrapping up at UK top court

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain’s Supreme Court was hearing final arguments Thursday in a case that will determine whether Prime Minister Boris Johnson broke the law by suspending Parliament just weeks before the U.K. is due to leave the European Union.

Judges at the country’s top court were set to hear from a lawyer for the former prime minister, John Major, who is among those challenging the decision by Johnson, one of his successors as Conservative leader.

Opponents claim Johnson sent lawmakers home until Oct. 14 to prevent them scrutinizing his plan to take Britain out of the EU at the end of next month, with or without a divorce deal. They also accuse the prime minister of misleading Queen Elizabeth II, whose formal approval was needed to suspend the legislature.

The government says the suspension is routine and not motivated by Brexit, and argues that judges should not interfere in politics.

The 11 Supreme Court justices are unlikely to give their judgment before Friday at the earliest. If the court rules that the suspension was illegal, Johnson could be forced to call lawmakers back to Parliament.

It would be a new blow for Johnson, who is battling to fulfil his pledge to lead Britain out of the EU on the scheduled date of Oct. 31 come what may.

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Johnson insists he is working hard to get an agreement with the EU that will ensure a smooth departure. EU leaders are skeptical of that claim, saying the U.K. has not produced any concrete proposals.

Finland's Prime Minister Antti Rinne warned that "it's all over" if Britain didn't come up with solid new Brexit proposals by the end of the month.

"If the U.K. wants to discuss alternatives to the existing exit agreement, then these must be presented before the end of the month," Rinne said after meeting French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Wednesday.

Finland currently holds the rotating presidency of the 28-nation bloc.

Britain says it has not revealed detailed proposals because they would likely leak, to the detriment of negotiations.

U.K. Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay said the six weeks until Oct. 31 were "sufficient for a deal" if both sides provided "creative and flexible solutions."

"A rigid approach now at this point is no way to progress a deal and the responsibility sits with both sides to find a solution," he said during a visit to Madrid.

Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen and Jari Tanner in Tallinn, Estonia contributed to this story.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

Trump calls new border wall a 'world-class security system'

By KEVIN FREKING and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — President Donald Trump signed his name on a newly constructed section of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, calling it a "world-class security system" that will be virtually impenetrable.

Trump toured a section of the border wall in San Diego's Otay Mesa area on Wednesday. It was a return trip for the Republican president, who traveled there in March 2018 to see border wall prototypes that authorities later destroyed to make way for 14 miles (22.4 kilometers) of steel, concrete-filled bollards currently under construction.

Before construction began, the border in San Diego was protected by an initial layer of sheet metal that was easily blow-torched and a second, more formidable layer that could be compromised with powerful, battery-operated saws.

"It was like a sheet metal, and people would just knock it over like just routinely," Trump said, referring to the initial layer that was replaced. He stood with construction workers and top Customs and Border Protection, Army Corps of Engineers and homeland security officials.

Mark Morgan, acting commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, defended the project, dismissing critics who call it the "president's vanity wall."

"I'm here to tell you that's false," he said, telling reporters that Trump reached out to border experts to find out what they needed. "You listened to the agents," he told Trump.

Trump highlighted features of the wall, which he said have been studied by three other countries. He said the wall absorbs heat — "You can fry an egg on that wall." The concrete goes deep into the ground to prevent tunneling. And agents can see through it to spot possible threats on the Mexican side of the border, he said.

"When the wall is built, it will be virtually impossible to come over illegally, and then we're able to take border control and put them at points of entry," Trump said.

He heaped praise on the Mexican government, especially for sending tens of thousands of troops to its northern and southern borders to help slow the flow of migrants headed toward the United States. He said President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador "has been great."

"We're all thrilled," Trump said. "You know Mexico has never done anything to impede people from pouring into our country and now they're doing just the opposite. They've really been incredible."

The president revealed in details of construction, saying Border Patrol and military officials persuaded him

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to adopt more expensive designs. He said he dropped a preference for solid concrete, instead opting for concrete-filled steel bollards that allow agents to see through to Mexico to spot assailants throwing rocks or other projectiles. He agreed to go along with barriers that are 30 feet (9 meters) high and double-layered in heavily traveled areas.

"It's the Rolls-Royce version," Trump said.

When Trump asked Army Corps Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite to explain how technology embedded in the wall alerts agents to illegal activity, he was told, "Sir, there could be some merit in not discussing it."

Semonite offered new details on the pace of construction that underscored how quickly the administration plans to move.

It has built 66 miles (106 kilometers), has 251 miles (403 kilometers) in various stages of construction at 17 sites and has contracts for 163 miles (262 kilometers) planned in the next 90 days, the general said. Additional land on private property is expected to take more time.

Crews are installing 270 panels a day, each one with eight bollards.

Trump, whose construction targets have shifted, said he expects to build up to about 550 miles (885 kilometers) of wall along the 1,954-mile (3,126-kilometer) border and said the administration will pause at about 400 miles (643 kilometers) to assess what more is needed.

Trump said cost concerns led him to put aside his preference to paint the wall black, which absorbs heat. He said the wall was "a good, strong rust color" and could be painted later.

Trump is riding a string of wins on the wall and on immigration in general. Arrests on the Mexican border plunged in August, well beyond the usual summer dip, from a 13-year high reached in May. Arrests are still relatively high, topping 50,000 in 10 of the last 11 months, compared with only eight months over the previous decade.

Last week, the Supreme Court gave Trump a green light to deny asylum to anyone who passes through another country on the way to the U.S. border with Mexico without having first sought protection in the third country.

The Pentagon recently diverted \$3.6 billion from 127 military construction projects to build 175 miles (280 kilometers) of barriers on the border. Trump had promised during the 2016 presidential campaign that Mexico would pay for the wall.

Pompeo says US backs Saudi Arabia's 'right to defend itself'

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Thursday that America backs Saudi Arabia's "right to defend itself" after a weekend attack targeted the heart of its oil industry, comments coming after he described the assault as an "act of war."

The attacks have reignited fears over a wider conflagration in the region, as tensions remain high over Iran's collapsing nuclear deal with world powers.

Pompeo's comments on Twitter came as he was in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, after meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's defense minister. The Saudis on Wednesday displayed missile and drone wreckage at a press conference, and cited other evidence they alleged shows the raid was "unquestionably sponsored by Iran."

Iran, which has denied involvement in the attack, warned the U.S. it will retaliate immediately if it is targeted. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif separately accused U.S. allies and officials of trying to "deceive" President Donald Trump into entering a war against Tehran.

Pompeo wrote his tweet early Thursday after his meeting with Prince Mohammed over Saturday's drone and cruise missile attack on a crucial oil processing facility and oil field. Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels have claimed the attack, but the U.S. alleges Iran carried out the assault.

Pompeo called the attacks "unprecedented."

"The U.S. stands with #SaudiArabia and supports its right to defend itself," Pompeo said. "The Iranian regime's threatening behavior will not be tolerated."

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Pompeo did not elaborate. President Donald Trump has been noncommittal on whether he would order U.S. military retaliation. He separately said Wednesday he is moving to increase financial sanctions on Tehran over the attack, without elaborating. Iran already is subject to a crushing American sanctions program targeting its crucial oil industry.

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Germany, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, told Deutschlandfunk radio on Thursday that the kingdom was still discussing how it should react to the attacks.

"I won't say right now that a military strike is being considered," the prince said. "It depends upon how the world community deals with this topic."

Pompeo left Jiddah on Thursday heading to the United Arab Emirates to meet with Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The UAE is a close ally of Saudi Arabia and joined the kingdom in its war in Yemen against the Houthis.

The UAE announced Thursday it had joined a U.S.-led coalition to protect waterways across the Mideast after an attack on Saudi oil installations.

The state-run WAM news agency quoted Salem al-Zaabi of the Emirati Foreign Ministry as saying the UAE joined the coalition to "ensure global energy security and the continued flow of energy supplies to the global economy."

Saudi Arabia joined the coalition on Wednesday. Australia, Bahrain and the United Kingdom also are taking part.

Pompeo tweeted his appreciation for the UAE and Saudi Arabia joining the coalition.

"Recent events underscore the importance of protecting global commerce and freedom of navigation," he wrote.

The U.S. formed the coalition after attacks on oil tankers that American officials blame on Iran, as well as Iran's seizure of tankers in the region. Iran denies being behind the tanker explosions, though the attacks came after Tehran threatened to stop oil exports from the Persian Gulf.

At the press conference Wednesday, the Saudis displayed broken and burned drones and pieces of a cruise missile that military spokesman Col. Turki Al-Malki identified as Iranian weapons collected after the attack. He also played surveillance video that he said showed a drone coming in from the north. Yemen is to the south of Saudi Arabia.

Eighteen drones and seven cruise missiles were launched in the assault, Al-Malki said, with three missiles failing to make their targets. He said the cruise missiles had a range of 700 kilometers (435 miles), meaning they could not have been fired from inside Yemen. That opinion was shared by weapons experts who spoke to The Associated Press.

"This is the kind of weapon the Iranian regime and the Iranian IRGC are using against the civilian object and facilities infrastructure," Al-Malki said, referring to Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

He added: "This attack did not originate from Yemen, despite Iran's best effort to make it appear so."

Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian similarly was skeptical of the Houthi claim of responsibility.

"This is not very credible, relatively speaking," he told CNews television on Thursday. "But we sent our experts to have our own vision of things."

Pompeo, who landed in Saudi Arabia shortly after the news conference Wednesday, took a harder line than his hosts, telling reporters: "The Saudis were the nation that was attacked. It was on their soil. It was an act of war against them directly."

Zarif in his own tweet criticized Pompeo for calling the attack an "act of war."

"Act of war' or AGITATION for WAR? Remnants of #B_Team (+ambitious allies) try to deceive @realdonaldtrump into war," Zarif wrote, with a hashtag he often used to refer to former national security adviser John Bolton and other world leaders.

He added: "For their own sake, they should pray that they won't get what they seek."

Meanwhile, Iran sent a note to the U.S. via Swiss diplomats Monday, reiterating that Tehran denies involvement in the aerial attack, the country's state-run IRNA news agency reported. The Swiss have looked after American interests in Iran for decades.

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"If any action takes place against Iran, the action will be faced by Iran's answer immediately," IRNA quoted the note as saying. It added that Iran's response wouldn't be limited to the source of the threat.

IRNA also reported that Iran's delegation to the annual U.N. General Assembly meeting has yet to receive the necessary U.S. visas. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was to travel to New York on Friday, with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani following on Monday.

The U.N. meeting had been considered as an opportunity for direct talks between Rouhani and Trump.

Asked in Los Angeles whether Rouhani will come to New York, Trump said, "I really don't know. If it was up to me, I'd let them come."

As the host of the U.N.'s headquarters, the U.S. is required to offer world leaders and diplomats visas to attend meetings. But as tensions have risen, the U.S. has put increasing restrictions on Iranians like Zarif.

Associated Press writers David Rising in Berlin and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

'Deeply sorry' Trudeau begs forgiveness for brownface photo

By **ROB GILLIES** Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canadian leader Justin Trudeau's campaign moved to contain a growing scandal Thursday, following the publication of a yearbook photo showing him in brownface makeup at a 2001 costume party. The prime minister apologized and begged Canadians to forgive him.

Time magazine published the photo on Wednesday, saying it was taken from the yearbook from the West Point Grey Academy, a private school in British Columbia where Trudeau worked as a teacher before entering politics. It depicts the then 29-year-old Trudeau wearing a turban and robe, with dark makeup on his hands, face and neck.

Trudeau, who launched his reelection campaign exactly one week ago, said he should have known better.

"I'm pissed off at myself, I'm disappointed in myself," Trudeau told reporters traveling with him on his campaign plane.

The Canadian prime minister is but the latest politician to face scrutiny over racially insensitive photos and actions from their younger days. Earlier this year, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam faced intense pressure to resign after a racist picture surfaced from his 1984 medical school yearbook page. He denied being in the picture but admitted wearing blackface as a young man while portraying Michael Jackson at a dance party in the 1980s. Since then, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring has acknowledged wearing blackface in college, and Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has publicly apologized for donning blackface during a college skit more than 50 years ago. None has resigned.

The photo of Trudeau was taken at the school's annual dinner, which had an "Arabian Nights" theme that year, Trudeau said, adding that he was dressed as a character from "Aladdin." The prime minister said it was not the first time he has painted his face; once, he said, he performed a version of Harry Belafonte's "Banana Boat Song (Day-O)" during a talent show.

"I should have known better then but I didn't, and I am deeply sorry for it," Trudeau said. "I'm going to ask Canadians to forgive me for what I did. I shouldn't have done that. I take responsibility for it. It was a dumb thing to do."

He said he has always been more enthusiastic about costumes than is "sometimes appropriate."

"These are the situations I regret deeply," Trudeau added.

The prime minister, who champions diversity and multiculturalism, said he didn't consider it racist at the time but said society knows better now.

The photo's publication could spell more trouble for Trudeau, who polls say is facing a serious challenge from Conservative leader Andrew Scheer.

Trudeau has been admired by liberals around the world for his progressive policies in the Trump era, with Canada accepting more refugees than the United States. His Liberal government has also strongly advocated free trade and legalized cannabis nationwide.

But the 47-year-old son of late Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was already vulnerable following one of

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the biggest scandals in Canadian political history, which arose when Trudeau's former attorney general said he improperly pressured her to halt the criminal prosecution of a company in Quebec. Trudeau has said he was standing up for jobs, but the scandal rocked the government and led to multiple resignations earlier this year, causing a drop in the leader's poll ratings.

Following the release of the brownface photo, Trudeau said he would talk to his kids in the morning about taking responsibility.

His quick apology did not stem the criticism from political opponents, who took the prime minister to task for what they said was troubling behavior.

"It is insulting. Any time we hear examples of brownface or blackface it's making a mockery of someone for what they live, for what their lived experiences are. I think he has to answer for it," said Leftist New Democrat leader Jagmeet Singh, a Sikh who wears a turban and the first visible minority to lead a national party.

Scheer, the opposition Conservative leader, said brownface was racist in 2001 and is racist in 2019.

"What Canadians saw this evening was someone with a complete lack of judgment and integrity and someone who is not fit to govern this country," Scheer said.

Robert Bothwell, a professor of Canadian history and international relations at the University of Toronto, said he was "gobsmacked" at the development and wondered how it would land in Parliament and with voters.

"We'll just have to see how the party reacts," he said. "I'm very curious to know how Liberal members of Parliament that are black will react."

He added: "The case has never been conclusively made that Justin is a person of substance. I mean he may well be. But that impression is just not out there."

How the scandal will affect Trudeau's campaign remains in question. Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto, said he didn't think the photo's release would cause people to vote differently. Wiseman said race and blackface play a much bigger role in U.S. politics than in Canada.

"I don't think this will swing the vote, although the story will get a lot of media play for a couple of days," Wiseman said. "The Liberals may very well lose the election — they almost certainly will not do as well as in 2015 — but this is not the type of scandal that will drive voters to the Conservatives."

Sanders still wants a revolution. But now he's got company.

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Bernie Sanders is still leading a revolution. But his ideas no longer feel quite so revolutionary.

The Vermont senator acknowledges that many of his top proposals, which were dismissed as radical four years ago, have been adopted by much of the crowded 2020 Democratic presidential primary field: "Medicare for All," tuition-free college, spending trillions to combat climate change and a national \$15 per hour minimum wage. But he's out to prove that his second presidential campaign is still about fresh energy and ideas even if its refrains now sound familiar.

"Not only can I lead it, I think I am the person to lead it," Sanders said in an interview at a plumbers and pipefitters union hall in Las Vegas, when asked if he could helm a revolution when so many of his presidential rivals agree with him.

"What we need to do is to look at somebody who four years ago had the courage to break new ground in this country," he added. "We're continuing to break new ground today."

But there are signs that may not be enough. The campaign is restructuring its staff in key early voting states as the 78-year-old Sanders faces crosscurrents that weren't in play four years ago. No longer the sole progressive alternative to an overwhelming favorite in Hillary Clinton, Sanders is one of several candidates making explicit appeals to the party's left wing. This time, his rivals have taken him seriously from the start, a sign of his name recognition but also a status that subjects Sanders to more scrutiny and criticism than at this stage of the 2016 campaign.

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And some of Sanders' younger competitors are calling for generational change — an issue that could resonate because of questions raised about the readiness for the presidency of another senior candidate, 76-year-old former Vice President Joe Biden.

Not all Democrats have embraced Sanders' core principles. Kamala Harris is a co-sponsor of his Medicare for All legislation, but the California senator now says she doesn't favor its call to scrap all private health insurance. Biden, the primary's early front-runner, has repeatedly hammered Sanders over the plan's costs.

Few candidates line up more closely with Sanders than Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren. While they don't agree on everything, Warren is such a fan of Medicare for All that she's repeatedly declared, "I'm with Bernie," when it comes to health care.

Because they agree on so much, Warren is becoming a growing threat to Sanders. She packed tens of thousands of supporters into New York's Washington Square Park on Monday, harkening back to Sanders' success in attracting massive 2016 crowds. On the same day, she picked up an endorsement from the progressive Working Families Party, which backed Sanders' first campaign.

A national NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll released Tuesday found Warren leading Sanders among Democratic primary voters 25% to 14%. Biden still came out on top at 31%. Sanders is in second behind Biden in other national and early state surveys.

Sanders is working to fortify his campaign, recently parting ways with his political director in Iowa, which holds the nation's first caucus, and replacing his state director in New Hampshire, a state critical to Sanders' efforts given his landslide primary victory there in 2016.

"They have some challenges," Brian Fallon, who was chief spokesman for Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, said of Sanders' team. "In a binary race, there were a lot of people who united around an alternative to Clinton. There continue to be true blue Bernie supporters and that probably gives him the most stubborn floor of support of any candidate, but those numbers are smaller. The non-establishment vote is spread around."

Sanders rejected the notion that the primary may eventually force liberal Democrats to choose between him and Warren, saying, "I think that Sen. Warren, who is a friend of mine, is running her campaign. We are running our campaign."

Warren has similarly praised her longtime friendship with Sanders rather than answer questions about whether a showdown is coming.

Still, there are questions about how long the holding pattern can last. On Sunday, Sanders will travel to Oklahoma, where he'll attend a Comanche Nation Fair Powwow. While he's not expected to directly talk about Warren, the trip will take Sanders to her native state a month after she apologized to Native Americans over her past claim to tribal heritage. Sanders has also gotten more aggressive with Biden lately, ticking through a list of the former vice president's unpopular votes while he was in the Senate — including supporting the Wall Street bank bailout.

With just over four months before primary voting begins, Sanders said he doesn't believe anyone in so crowded a field will carry states with 50% of the vote.

"So the question is, who is going to get the 30, 35, 40% of the vote that you need to carry the states?" he said. "I think that because of our strong grassroots movement we are in a strong position to do that."

Sanders' advisers, meanwhile, argue that his appeal now goes beyond political insurgency, noting that he campaigned hard for Clinton after the 2016 primary and that he has begun working more closely with state parties this cycle, trying to build support through traditional channels.

Fallon also noted that Sanders has been ahead of many of his rivals on things like joining striking McDonald's workers in Iowa — giving him revolutionary political cred that rises above policy overlap with other candidates.

"With the Bernie crowd, that's the space to say, 'Don't settle for imitators,'" Fallon said.

A lot of Sanders' central message remains the same, though, and still appeals to voters.

"I think I've heard a lot of what he's said already," said Alejandro Hernandez Jr., a 23-year-old federal employee who saw Sanders at a recent Latino issues forum in Las Vegas. "But just to see his actual en-

ergy and presence, the way he commands the room and really the elegance with which he speaks, it's truly impressive."

US says attack on Saudi oil site was an Iranian 'act of war'

By JON GAMBRELL, AYA BATRAWY and FAY ABUELGASIM Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday called the attack on Saudi Arabia's oil installations an "act of war" against the kingdom by Iran, as the Saudis displayed missile and drone wreckage and cited other evidence they said shows the raid was "unquestionably sponsored by Iran."

Iran, which has denied involvement in the attack, warned the U.S. it will retaliate immediately if it is targeted.

President Donald Trump, meanwhile, said he is moving to increase financial sanctions on Tehran over the attack. He was noncommittal on whether he would order U.S. military retaliation.

At a news conference, Saudi military spokesman Col. Turki al-Malki said the attack Saturday that did heavy damage to the heart of the Saudi oil industry was "launched from the north and was unquestionably sponsored by Iran." Yemen is south of Saudi Arabia, while Iran and Iraq lie to the north.

Al-Malki stopped short of accusing Iran of actually firing the weapons itself or launching them from Iranian territory.

Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels have claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was in response to the Saudi-led war in Yemen that has killed tens of thousands of people.

At the news conference, the Saudis displayed broken and burned drones and pieces of a cruise missile that Al-Malki identified as Iranian weapons collected after the attack. He also played surveillance video that he said showed a drone coming in from the north.

Eighteen drones and seven cruise missiles were launched in the assault, Al-Malki said, with three missiles failing to make their targets. He said the cruise missiles had a range of 700 kilometers (435 miles), meaning they could not have been fired from inside Yemen.

"This is the kind of weapon the Iranian regime and the Iranian IRGC are using against the civilian object and facilities infrastructure," Al-Malki said, referring to Iran's Revolutionary Guard. He added: "This attack did not originate from Yemen, despite Iran's best effort to make it appear so."

Pompeo, who landed in Saudi Arabia shortly after the news conference, took a harder line, telling reporters: "The Saudis were the nation that was attacked. It was on their soil. It was an act of war against them directly."

He said en route to Saudi Arabia that "it doesn't matter" whether the Houthis claim they were behind the attack. "This was an Iranian attack," he said.

"It doesn't change the fingerprints of the ayatollah as having put at risk the global energy supply," Pompeo said, referring to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The attack came after a summer of heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S. over Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal.

Iran sent a note to the U.S. via Swiss diplomats Monday, reiterating that Tehran denies involvement in the aerial attack, the country's state-run IRNA news agency reported. The Swiss have looked after American interests in Iran for decades.

"If any action takes place against Iran, the action will be faced by Iran's answer immediately," IRNA quoted the note as saying. It added that Iran's response wouldn't be limited to the source of the threat.

The U.S. State Department had no comment on the warning.

Trump, meanwhile, tweeted: "I have just instructed the Secretary of the Treasury to substantially increase Sanctions on the country of Iran!"

He did not elaborate, and it was not immediately clear what further means are available since he has already cut deeply into Iran's oil market. National Security Council officials declined to comment.

IRNA also reported that Iran's delegation to the annual U.N. General Assembly meeting has yet to receive

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the necessary U.S. visas. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was to travel to New York on Friday, with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani following on Monday.

The U.N. meeting had been considered as an opportunity for direct talks between Rouhani and Trump. Asked in Los Angeles whether Rouhani will come to New York, Trump said, "I really don't know. If it was up to me, I'd let them come."

"I've always felt the United Nations is very important," he added. "I think it's got tremendous potential. I don't think it's ever lived up to the potential it has. But I would certainly not want to keep people out if they want to come."

As the host of the U.N.'s headquarters, the U.S. is required to offer world leaders and diplomats visas to attend meetings. But as tensions have risen, the U.S. has put increasing restrictions on Iranians like Zarif.

In Tehran, Rouhani told his Cabinet that Saudi Arabia should see the weekend attack as a warning to end its war in Yemen, where it has fought the Houthi rebels since 2015 and sought to restore the internationally recognized government.

Rouhani said Yemenis "did not hit hospitals, they did not hit schools or the Sanaa bazaar," referring to the Saudi-led coalition's airstrikes.

He said the Houthis were responsible for the attack on the oil installations: "They attacked an industrial center to warn you. Learn the lesson from the warning."

Gambrell and Batrawy reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Robert Burns, Deb Riechmann and Darlene Superville in Washington and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's name.

Nevada desert towns prep for possible 'Storm Area 51' influx

By KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Visitors descending on the remote Nevada desert for "Storm Area 51" are from Earth, not outer space.

No one knows what to expect, but the two tiny towns of Rachel and Hiko near the once-secret military research site are preparing for an influx of people over the next few days.

"It's happening. We already have people from all over the world," Little A'Le'Inn proprietor Connie West said Wednesday from her bustling cafe and motel, where volunteers have arrived from Poland, Scotland, Australia, Florida, Idaho and Oklahoma.

Neighbors, elected officials and event organizers said the craze sparked by an internet joke inviting people to "see them aliens" might become a cultural marker, a monumental dud or something in between.

Area 51's secrecy has long fueled fascination about extraterrestrial life, UFOs and conspiracy theories, giving rise to the events this week and prompting military warnings not to approach the protected site.

"This phenomenon is really a perfect blend of interest in aliens and the supernatural, government conspiracies, and the desire to know what we don't know," said Michael Ian Borer, a University of Nevada, Las Vegas, sociologist who researches pop culture and paranormal activity.

The result, Borer said, was "hope and fear" for events that include the "Area 51 Basecamp," featuring music, speakers and movies, and two festivals competing for the name "Alienstock" starting Thursday.

Some neighbors and officials in two counties near Area 51 are nervous. The area of scenic mountains and rugged desert is home to a combined 50,000 people and compares in size with New England.

Elected officials signed emergency declarations after millions of people responded to the Facebook post this summer.

"We are preparing for the worst," said Joerg Arnu, a Rachel resident who could see from his home a makeshift stage and cluster of portable toilets in a dusty area recently scraped of brush surrounding West's little motel and cafe.

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Arnu said he installed outdoor floodlights, fencing and "No Trespassing" signs on his 30-acre property. He's also organized a radio-equipped night watch of neighbors, fearing there won't be enough water, food, trash bins or toilets for visitors.

"Those that know what to expect camping in the desert are going to have a good time," Arnu said. "Those who are looking for a big party are going to be disappointed."

He predicts people showing up in the desert in shorts and flip-flops.

"That doesn't protect you against critters, snakes and scorpions," Arnu said. "It will get cold at night. They're not going to find what they're looking for, and they are going to get angry."

Officials expect cellular service to be overwhelmed. The nearest gas station is 45 miles (72 kilometers) away. Campers could encounter overnight temperatures as low as 41 degrees (5 degrees Celsius).

"We really didn't ask for this," said Varlin Higbee, a Lincoln County commissioner who voted to allocate \$250,000 in scarce funds to handle anticipated crowds.

"We have planned and staged enough to handle 30,000 to 40,000 people," Higbee said. "We don't know how many will come for sure."

Though the creator of the Facebook event later called it a hoax, the overwhelming response sent local, state and military officials scrambling. Promoters began scouting sites. A beer company produced alien-themed cans. A Nevada brothel offered discounts to "E.T. enthusiasts."

The Federal Aviation Administration closed nearby air space this week.

"People desire to be part of something, to be ahead of the curve," said Borer, the sociologist. "Area 51 is a place where normal, ordinary citizens can't go. When you tell people they can't do something, they just want to do it more."

George Harris, owner of the Alien Research Center souvenir store in Hiko, welcomed the attention and planned a cultural program focused on extraterrestrial lore Friday and Saturday.

The "Area 51 Basecamp" promises up to 60 food trucks and vendors, trash and electric service, and a robust security and medical staff.

Harris said he was prepared for up to 15,000 people and expected they would appreciate taking selfies with a replica of Area 51's back gate without having to travel several miles to the real thing.

"It's exactly the same," Harris said. "We just want people to be safe. As long as they don't go on the desert floor and destroy the ecosystem, everyone will have a good time."

West, the motel owner, is planning an "Alienstock" Thursday through Sunday in Rachel, a town of about 50 residents a more than two-hour drive north of Las Vegas on a normally lonely road dubbed the Extraterrestrial Highway. She plans 20 musical acts, plus food vendors and souvenir sellers.

West said she refunded some camping reservations after Matty Roberts, who created the Facebook post, broke ties with her event. Roberts, 20, of Bakersfield, California, is supporting an "Alienstock" festival scheduled for Thursday at an outdoor venue in downtown Las Vegas.

Roberts' attorneys told West to stop using the "Alienstock" name, but she refused, saying, "I'll just worry about the legalities later."

The U.S. Air Force has issued stern warnings for people not to approach the gates of the Nevada Test and Training Range, where Area 51 is located.

Area 51 tested aircraft ranging from the U-2 in the 1950s to the B-2 stealth bomber in the 1980s. The government spent decades refusing to acknowledge the site even existed, before releasing documents confirming it in 2013. Its secrecy still fuels speculation that it's where the government studies aliens.

County lawmakers in Nye County, home to a conspicuously green establishment called the Area 51 Alien Center, are discouraging Earthlings from trying to find extraterrestrials there.

"We're taking precautions and checking the back roads," Sheriff Sharon Wehrly said.

Her deputies last week arrested two Dutch tourists attracted by "Storm Area 51." The men pleaded guilty to trespassing at a secure U.S. site nowhere near Area 51 and promised to pay thousands in fines.

Arnu said the military added razor wire to barbed cattle fencing on the Area 51 boundary near his home, installed more cameras and battery-powered lighting, and erected an imposing spike barrier just inside a gate. He noted a new sign telling trespassers they'll be arrested and fined \$1,000.

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Hundreds of law enforcement officers and medics will be on hand, along with the Nevada National Guard.

'Everybody cries here': Hope and despair in Mexican shelter

By CEDAR ATTANASIO and TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — Long after midnight, when the heat has finally relented and the walled courtyard is scattered with men sleeping in the open, someone begins to sob.

The sound is quiet, muffled. The only light comes from streetlights shimmering above the razor wire. It's impossible to see who is crying.

Is it the Ugandan bodybuilder who came here fleeing political violence? Or the 27-year-old El Salvadoran who often wears a Cookie Monster t-shirt? Maybe it's the young Honduran husband who rarely leaves his wife's side.

It could have been any of them.

This story is part of an occasional series, "Outsourcing Migrants," produced with the support of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

This is the cobbled-together community of El Buen Pastor — The Good Shepherd — 130 or so migrants from around the world locked into a shelter every evening at 5:30 p.m., trapped in an immigration purgatory. They are barely three miles from the Paso del Norte Bridge and their goal: the United States.

"Everyone cries here," says Yanisley Estrada Guerrero, a 33-year-old Cuban economist and former bank manager. She's now working illegally as a housekeeper at a Juarez hotel for \$60 a month, less than half Mexico's minimum wage. "I still cry almost every day. But I do it in the shower, because I don't want anyone to see."

These are turbulent days for the migrants of El Buen Pastor. For the first time since World War II, the U.S. government is turning away thousands of asylum seekers regardless of their need for refuge.

A series of Trump Administration immigration rule changes have effectively sealed the border to the vast majority of asylum seekers, leaving tens of thousands of migrants in limbo, and shifting responsibility for U.S. immigration policy to the Mexican government and dozens of Mexican shelters.

For migrants, El Buen Pastor is both a haven and a prison. It's a small place — four sleeping rooms, four showers, four toilets and a chapel — that provides each arrival with a mattress, two meals a day, spotty wi-fi and protection from gangsters who trawl for targets in migrant enclaves of Juarez. But it's also a place where the front gate is locked at 5:30 p.m., and coming in late means facing Marta, the fearsome Bible-quoting unpaid staffer who never seems to leave.

The shelter ripples with often-unspoken bigotries, with ribbons of race and class and education in nearly every interaction. Daily life is marked by brutal summer heat, occasional dust storms, crushing boredom and the guilt of mothers who can't afford dinner for their children.

But occasionally, it's also a place of muchene enkoko (Ugandan-style chicken and rice) and arroz a la Valenciano (Nicaraguan-style chicken and rice). It's a place of children's games, young romance and Scrabble matches that seem to stretch into eternity. Anything to make the time pass.

It's home, at least for now, for those 130 or so people.

This is how they spend their days. Not in the countries they fled. Not in the country where they want to be. But somewhere else, in between.

The Ugandan bodybuilder wakes early, often before everyone else, and heads out into the streets of Juarez to run.

Alphat runs relentlessly. People stop to stare, surprised to see a black man with ham-sized biceps and impossibly broad shoulders running through this city.

Until recently, most migrants to Juarez came from poor, rural Mexican states, often looking for jobs in the city's hundreds of factories. These days they come from around the world, hoping to reach the U.S.

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El Buen Pastor is home to migrants from 11 countries, from Cameroon to Cuba, Ethiopia to Guatemala. Mexican officials estimate there are roughly 13,000 of these migrants in Juarez, a city of 1.3 million people. Across Mexico, there are an estimated 50,000. They arrived after hiking through the jungles of Panama or flying directly to Mexico City. They took buses through Guatemala. They walked. Most migrants at El Buen Pastor fled political violence, authoritarian rulers or the relentless extortion of gang-controlled neighborhoods. Some have college degrees. Some are barely literate. Many dream of leaving behind generations of poverty. Most have no idea when they'll go anywhere.

Alphat runs to escape the stifling closeness of the shelter, and to forget for a few minutes what happened back home.

A 29-year-old competitive bodybuilder, Alphat also owned a gym and a security company that provided bodyguards. His nightmare began, he says, when he agreed to handle security for a politician who has clashed repeatedly with Yoweri Museveni, the strongman who has run Uganda for more than 30 years.

Eventually, he says, he was arrested, beaten and tortured because of his opposition ties. Policemen used string to hang heavy blocks from his penis. While he was in detention, his wife and two young daughters were shot and killed by military policemen, who had warned him to drop his political client.

He has struggled with depression but he doesn't weep when he talks about their killings, doesn't ask for sympathy.

"They wanted to punish me," he says simply.

He sold his gym and his car and fled to Kenya. When that didn't feel far enough he found a murky middleman named Moses. Alphat paid him \$7,000 to arrange a series of flights: Kenya to Ethiopia to Argentina to Mexico City.

At first, he thought he'd find refuge in Mexico. But after being detained, released and then robbed, he took the advice of a Mexican he'd met and rode a bus to Juarez. Here, he'd been told, he could walk to a U.S. border post and ask for asylum.

The bridge linking Juarez and El Paso is one of America's busiest border crossings, channeling roughly 20,000 pedestrians a day back and forth.

Alphat's taxi driver, taking pity on him, gave him a five-peso coin, worth 25 cents, to cross the bridge.

"OK, now I'm settled," he thought as he dropped the coin into the turnstile and began walking above the dry riverbed of the Rio Grande. "Now I'll get my freedom."

But halfway across he was stopped by U.S. customs officers.

Little did he know that the Trump administration was turning away more and more asylum seekers with a vague promise to process them later. So many migrants lined up on the bridge waiting to cross that local Mexican authorities started assigning numbers, like a ticket for service at a deli, updating the number every day on Facebook.

Alphat's number: 12,631.

In February, the delay was a few days. When Alphat arrived on April 23, it was two months. In July, processing had virtually stopped, and he had no idea if his asylum interview would ever happen.

But Alphat doesn't complain. Most people don't. It's pointless, and people here are careful not to use up too much energy.

Alphat shrugs: "I've been here almost four months, waiting for them to call."

Mornings are the worst, when another heat-blasted day stretches out before them and the courtyard is scattered with half-asleep people blinking at the sun.

Mattresses are taken in, folding metal chairs are dragged out, clanging across the concrete. Parents snap at their children. A handful of people have jobs, many working illegally as housekeepers or construction workers, though Mexican officials have been more generous recently with work permits — recognition that the migrants are here for a while. The workers trudge from the shelter to their bus stops through the neighborhood of rocky hills, potholed roads and small concrete homes with barred windows.

On bad days, Marta calls out the women for a lecture.

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Marta Esquivel Sanchez is the moody 59-year-old assistant who cooks most of the meals at the shelter and runs it overnight.

She is both loved and feared. Her lectures are layer cakes of chastisement, the Gospels and guilt.

"I'm human. I get tired," she tells a half-dozen or so women seated on benches in the courtyard on a July morning. "But I'm here with you doing this for the love of God."

She ticks through problems: messiness; noisy children; people who come in past the 5:30 curfew, "Wise up or watch what happens!" she declares.

The women say nothing.

The man who makes all this work is a retired high school math teacher with jet black hair and the thin moustache of a bygone movie star. Juan Fierro is a 70-year-old lapsed Catholic and recovering alcoholic who eventually found direction in the Methodist church. He's also a preacher who can lay a hand gently on believers and watch them slump to the floor unconscious, overcome by the Holy Spirit.

But at the shelter, Fierro is simply "El Pastor."

"The pastor, he sees everything," says Esquivel, pointing to the shelter's security cameras.

El Pastor is the lawgiver (no drinking, no smoking, no fighting) and the genial benefactor who supplies everything from food to bus fare to toilet paper.

His desk faces the shelter's entryway and on most mornings he sits behind it, hands resting on his generous belly, smiling quietly and keeping track of everything. The walls are speckled with framed letters of appreciation, diplomas from workshops and photographs of him with visitors. A monitor displays feeds from more than a dozen security cameras.

He's an unrepentant optimist — the good cop to Esquivel's bad cop. But he's also astonished that in a place full of disparate, frustrated people, there's so little trouble.

"I don't understand why they're not at odds with each other," he said. Prejudices lurk just beneath the surface: Cubans are bossy, the migrants tell each other. Africans smell. Guatemalans are ignorant.

In the spring, trouble appeared ready to explode when a Mexican aid organization brought a group of African migrants to the shelter.

"Everyone stood still, watching them," Fierro said.

"Are they going to stay with us?" the stunned residents asked him.

A few weeks later, a Central American teenager hurled racial slurs at the Africans and Fierro stepped in. He called all the Latinos together and said talk like that had to stop immediately. Then he took a group of Africans out for ice cream and a drive around town.

The Central Americans in particular, many from isolated villages with little exposure to the wider world, are often shocked to be living with black people.

"We have to show them that we are OK," said Samrah, a Ugandan migrant, rolling her eyes. "But when a new person comes, we have to do it all over again."

For the most part the migrants have learned to get along. Why bother fighting in a place where everyone is sleeping on the same cheap sponge mattresses, and lining up every morning for the same off-brand corn flakes smothered in sugar?

Prejudices melt most quickly among the children, who play together in a tangle of languages and ethnicities and races. The 16-year-old Congolese girl watches the Honduran baby. Sometimes, the adults laugh as they try to learn a few words of someone else's language.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security insists the January policy returning migrants to Mexico is designed to bring order to the asylum process and "decrease the number of those taking advantage of the immigration system."

Before the new policy, migrants who passed a so-called "credible fear" screening could stay in the U.S. while immigration courts decided their case. Now, it's often not clear how the process works.

At first, only Central Americans were sent back to Mexico under the new policy. Then, starting in June, Cubans were also sent back. Pregnant women, non-Spanish speakers, and other vulnerable migrants are

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sometimes — but not always — allowed into the U.S.

A second administration order, on July 16, effectively denied asylum to most migrants arriving at the border from that day forward, insisting they must first seek asylum in another country they had passed through.

That order split the shelter into winners and losers, and punished many of those who had waited for their number to come up.

Suddenly, people who had asked for asylum before July 16 — even if they had done so after arriving in the U.S. illegally — could proceed with their asylum applications while they waited in Mexico. But nearly everyone who tried to put in an asylum request after that date would first have to apply for asylum in Mexico or another country they had passed through.

A series of court rulings have made the situation more confusing.

Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court let the July 16 order stand while it considers the case. In a celebratory tweet, acting U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services chief Ken Cuccinelli said his agency would start enforcing the rule "ASAP."

Said another Ugandan, a former used car dealer: "It's very complicated and if you put your brain to thinking about it, you'll just burn out."

In June, a union representing U.S. asylum officers challenged the January policy of returning migrants to Mexico in a legal brief, saying it's "fundamentally contrary to the moral fabric of our Nation."

Fierro, whose family has been on both sides of the border for generations, presumes the waiting list is designed to exhaust the migrants, to push them to the point where they simply give up and go home.

They "have been worn out emotionally, physically," he says. "Maybe the moment will come when they don't want to keep fighting. And I think that's part of what" U.S. officials want.

The twins are hungry.

The 11-year-old boys are thin and gangly and growing fast, but El Buen Pastor can only afford two meals a day for the migrants. Once lunch is over there's nothing until breakfast the next morning. For those who arrived with a little hoard of money, or who have family that can occasionally wire them a few dollars, that's not a big problem. They stock up at grocery stores and cook in the kitchen of a nearby corner market where the owner, an ever-smiling man with a huge cowboy hat, has befriended many of them. Or at least they can buy cookies and potato chips to fend off hunger until morning.

But not the twins' mother. Jennifer Jimenez-Sanchez, 29, is a single mother from El Salvador with an eighth-grade education who depended on relatives and hawked clothes on the street to make a living back home. Her father and brother were both killed by gangs, which wield immense power in much of the country.

In the end, though, it was an encounter on the street earlier this year that drove her to leave.

She says a man approached her one day as she walked the twins home from school.

She knew who he was. Everyone did in her neighborhood. He was from MS-13, one of El Salvador's most murderous gangs.

"You have to deliver your sons," he told her, she recalls. "They are now old enough to come with us."

He continued: "We're not asking permission. We're informing you."

Her husband was gone. Going to the police was pointless. They fear MS-13 as much as she does.

So she made a decision: "Dawn came, and without saying goodbye to anyone, I went out of my house and I left," she said. In America, she thought, they'd be safe.

They headed north, through Guatemala. After she ran out of money, the family slept at a gas station in southern Mexico. A widower took them in for a week. Eventually her sister wired her a little money and she made it to Juarez.

Early this summer she slipped into the U.S. illegally and filed an asylum request. While she was quickly deported back to Mexico, her request came days before the July 16 deadline. Because of that, she'll eventually be able to argue her case in a credible fear interview.

She's been waiting at El Buen Pastor ever since, dreading each evening when she has to explain to

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hungry boys why they have nothing to eat.

If she can, she gets extra milk at lunch and holds onto it until dinner. Then she takes the boys into a quiet corner of the chapel, and gives them the little she has: "I tell them 'Come over here.' Because everyone is eating, and they're kids so they don't understand."

"That's when my tears begin to overflow, and I tell them to forgive me," she said. "This wasn't my intention. To bring them here to suffer."

In the evening, when the heat is fading and no one has to hide anymore from the sun, the shelter comes alive.

People who have slept through the day shuffle outside, the "thwop-flop" of their plastic sandals echoing in the courtyard. Scattered laughter is heard. Children run around almost frantically, playing with anything they can find: a balled-up piece of paper, a crushed water bottle stuck to the bottom of a shoe, a broken skateboard. A 17-year-old Nicaraguan girl sits on a bench close to her new boyfriend, a Ugandan in his 20s. He's learned enough Spanish to flirt and gossip, and they sometimes hold hands as they sit on a bench.

"Weird," she says. "I never thought I'd have a boyfriend here."

The young Honduran couple stand near the toilets, heads inclined toward one another as usual. They just arrived a few weeks ago.

Samrah, the Scrabble player, looks at them sadly.

"When you first get here you think 'Tomorrow I'm going to leave!' So you close up and don't talk to people. But eventually you realize nothing is happening, and that you'll be here a long time, and you understand that you have to start interacting with people."

Samrah is 45 but looks a decade younger. She's a fierce woman with strong opinions and hair pulled back in neat cornrows. She worked with computers once, years ago, but eventually opened a small store selling cosmetics and jewelry. She won't say much about her family or why she left home: "Politics," she says with finality one evening, daring anyone to ask any questions. No one does.

She's been at El Buen Pastor for four months, time crawling so slowly through her personal limbo that sometimes it seems each day will never end.

Scrabble has saved her. Every evening she takes out the game and plays for hours, sometimes until after midnight. The games go slowly. Players sometimes takes 15 minutes to spell out a word. Sometimes, you can walk away from a game for an hour, and when you come back it looks like nothing has happened. No one is in a rush.

The Ugandans are the most avid players. Their games regularly go through dinner, where gentle bickering about rules and correct spellings mix with wistful talk about the pleasures of steamed bananas and ground nut stew.

Some word choices feel steeped in symbolism: War. Sieges. Quit.

Samrah can still tell you about her best word: Squeeze. She got 50 points for it. The spiral notebook where she keeps score in blue ballpoint pen is filling quickly, interspersed with notes. "LEGAL STANDARD FOR ASYLUM," one shouts in capital letters.

An 8-year-old Congolese girl is playing in the courtyard when she suddenly asks for her mother. A Cuban walking back from the shower area overhears her.

"Your mother is far from here," he tells her. They're speaking Portuguese, a language they share because he once lived in Portuguese-speaking Brazil and she was born in a village in Congo near the border with Portuguese-speaking Angola.

"Where?" the girl asks.

The girl's mother is dead, killed in political violence in 2016. The woman she calls her mother is the aunt who helped raise her, and who stayed behind when the girl's family left, hoping to reach America.

"Far," the Cuban tells her. "In Africa."

Long after sunset the Congolese girls' father sits silently on a bench near a row of power outlets, charging

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his phone as he scrolls through the news, messages friends and watches videos to work on his English skills.

He's a distinguished-looking man with close-cropped hair and a beard going gray. He speaks three languages fluently and a smattering of others. He studied to work on large-scale electrical projects, but in the chaos of Congo, where the economy barely functions in many regions, he survived as an electrician.

Shelter life weighs heavily on him. He worries what it's doing to his children. He's known among the migrants for agonizing about what he should do.

In the spring, he and his three children flew from Angola to Colombia, where they met up with a couple hundred other Congolese migrants. The caravan spent 70 days in the jungles of Panama before making their way to Mexico. Then they separated, each rolling the dice on the limited information they had. He went to Juarez; his friends went elsewhere. At least a handful got through U.S. immigration. Some are now living in Maine.

"I could make a life there. This is not a life," he says, the words spilling out rapidly and bitterly. "My head isn't in a good place here. The stress is not bearable."

He spends his days sifting among the rumors that filter through migrant discussions on Facebook and WhatsApp: Try a border crossing into New Mexico, someone says. Try near San Antonio says another. Just go illegally, some say, arguing there are plenty of places to cross.

One day, he takes his children to a Juarez park that runs along the border. El Paso is right in front of them, just a few steps away. Migrants sometimes slip through the park and cross the border in broad daylight, though most are grabbed as soon as they reach U.S. soil.

He insists he wasn't thinking of crossing illegally.

"I was just going into town," he grumbled. "I like to get my kids out of here."

"I can't stay here all the time."

A few weeks later, he is gone.

Just before he disappeared with his family, the Congolese man told Fierro they had to leave. They'd cross illegally.

"Pastor, I'm out of hope," he told the pastor. "I can't wait anymore."

Fierro doesn't know what happened to them. It's unclear if they turned themselves in to Border Patrol agents, or if they made it to Maine.

Some other changes have come to El Buen Pastor.

Alphat made it to the United States. He slipped through a narrow loophole in the ever-tightening U.S. immigration policies. Although he didn't request asylum until after the July 16 ruling requiring migrants to first ask for asylum in another country, his claims of torture meant the U.S. had to admit him under international treaty obligations. He is currently being held in detention while his asylum case is reviewed, according to lawyers who have been in touch with him.

The Nicaraguan teenager and the Ugandan man broke up. The teenager's family, still waiting for their number to be called to legally ask for asylum in the U.S., will likely be deported back home or to another country they passed through — regardless of the merits of their claims.

For those who remain at El Buen Pastor, each day is just another in limbo.

By 11 p.m. the courtyard is crowded with mattresses. Nearly everyone is asleep. It's quiet, except for the gentle rumble of snoring and the occasional dog barking in the neighborhood.

A half-hour or so later, a little girl emerges from the chapel where the families sleep, and where the clock on the wall has stopped at 10:14. She begins dancing in the courtyard under a streetlight, swinging a thin blanket around her like a dancer twirling her skirt. Her face is filled with joy.

Her mother is one of the few people still awake, sitting on a wooden bench staring absently at her phone.

Five minutes later the girl is lying across her mother's lap, sound asleep. Her mother, face bathed in the phone's electric glow, barely notices.

Cuccinelli emerging as Trump's leading voice on immigration

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lady Liberty, constructed in this case of paper-mâché, stands about 7-feet-tall or so in the corner of the office of Ken Cuccinelli, the acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. It overlooks Massachusetts Avenue from floor-to-ceiling windows.

It wasn't a gift. It was meant to shame him.

Protesters left it outside the agency's headquarters last month after Cuccinelli reinterpreted the inscription at the Statue of Liberty's base to align it with policy changes aimed at restricting legal immigration.

Cuccinelli brought it upstairs, took a selfie, and tweeted it.

"It's our newest office decoration!" he wrote.

Like his boss, Cuccinelli has a knack for Twitter trolling. He's also experienced at talking-head television — another skill that pays dividends with President Donald Trump. And he's now emerging as the public face of the president's hard-line immigration policies.

"The most important thing is that communication was part of the charge I got from the president," he said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"So, we just charge ahead. It's probably the top policy of interest to the American people and it's not going to change any time soon," he said.

The Department of Homeland Security under Trump is making massive changes to U.S. immigration policy. It is denying asylum claims by rendering ineligible anyone who came to the U.S.-Mexico border through a third country, tightening immigration benefits, and moving toward a merit-based system. The changes are thrilling Trump's base and enraging opponents who say the U.S. is abandoning its humanitarian mission.

Cuccinelli took over USCIS, a part of Homeland Security, a few months ago, following a White House-orchestrated staff shake up at the department that also felled then-Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. He replaced L. Francis Cissna, who changed the motto of USCIS to delete "nation of immigrants."

The agency manages green cards, benefits, naturalization, visas and asylum. But the various Homeland Security immigration agencies tend to blend these days with the ever-changing leaders promoting Trump's overall immigration agenda.

They all appeared together this week in Laredo, Texas, to tour tent courts where hundreds of migrants forced to wait in Mexico pleaded their asylum cases. Cuccinelli took the lead in talking to media. He frequently comments on Twitter and TV about immigration subjects outside his agency.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection acting head Mark Morgan, another frequent TV commenter, joked that no one knows the difference among them.

"Which is a major problem in one sense, but it also gives us the opportunity to just address the issue and not have to create these buckets," he said.

But Cuccinelli's impact has been felt at his agency. There are reports of staff reassignments, asylum officers in tears over policy changes, and friction over increasing restrictions.

Michael Knowles, an asylum officer and spokesman for the union, AFGE National CIS Council 119, said morale among asylum officers is very low. He said Cuccinelli has scolded them for approving too many initial screenings.

"And it seemed like every administration — whether left, right or center — has supported our country's asylum and refugee programs, because giving safe haven to the oppressed was always seen as the patriotic, American thing to do," he said. "Until now."

Despite the criticism, nearly 34,000 new U.S. citizens will be naturalized this week in more than 300 special ceremonies in celebration of Constitution Week. During 2018's budget year, the agency naturalized than 756,000 people, a five-year high in new oaths of citizenship.

Cuccinelli is proud of those figures. He talked in-depth about the challenges with asylum case backlogs. He says he does not view USCIS as an immigrant benefits agency, but rather a vetting agency.

"That doesn't mean we don't offer benefits, but it does mean that our first obligation is to uphold the standards, including security standards," he said.

The 51-year-old was born in Edison, New Jersey, a descendant of Italian immigrants who came through

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Ellis Island. He has said his relatives were required to speak English well enough to work and prove they would not be a burden to the system. He also has said it's not possible to compare immigrants coming today with those years ago, in part because there was no "welfare state" then.

Cuccinelli has long held views on immigration that he says align closely with Trump's. And, so far, he has the president's enthusiastic support.

"He's fantastic," Trump told the morning show "Fox & Friends." "He's tough as you get and smart and he's doing much of the legal work."

Cuccinelli's name had been tossed around for months for an immigration-related position, but there were always concerns about his ability to be confirmed.

A former Virginia attorney general, he ran for governor in 2013 but lost to Democrat Terry McAuliffe. He has in the past advocated for denying citizenship to American-born children of parents living in the U.S. illegally.

"Mr. Cuccinelli is an anti-immigrant fringe figure. Besides being a right-wing commentator, Cuccinelli is completely unqualified ... and likely wants to decimate the agency," said the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss.

But it wasn't just immigration views that generated unease among senators. As the former head of the Senate Conservatives Fund, Cuccinelli was highly critical of Senate GOP leadership, once advocating for the removal of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and his entire leadership team.

Serving in an acting capacity does not require Senate confirmation. Acting directors have become common at Homeland Security, a sprawling, 240,000-person department that also handles election security and natural disasters.

"Of course, it would always be better," Cuccinelli said of Senate confirmation. "But the most important thing is getting the job done."

For Cuccinelli, that meant getting regulation changes finalized that could deny green cards to immigrants who use Medicaid, food stamps, housing vouchers or other forms of public assistance. Critics have argued that many immigrants won't seek the benefits they need because they fear the consequences.

It was that change that prompted the arrival of the paper-mâché Statue of Liberty.

In a television interview, Cuccinelli had been pressed about whether the new rules contradicted the inscription at the base of the statue, written by poet Emma Lazarus, welcoming "huddled masses" of immigrants to American shores. He said Lazarus was referring to "people coming from Europe" and that the nation is looking to receive migrants "who can stand on their own two feet." (Her biographer said the poem embraces immigrants from "all places.")

The statue appeared after that, with a sign that read "Immigrants Welcome."

But, Cuccinelli noted, it was missing the inscription at the base.

Humberto brushes Bermuda as new hurricane threatens Mexico

MIAMI (AP) — Hurricane Humberto lashed Bermuda with strong winds Wednesday as the powerful Category 3 storm passed just to the north of the British Atlantic territory, while a newly formed hurricane threatened tourist resorts along Mexico's Pacific coast.

The hurricane came within about 75 miles (120 kilometers) of Bermuda before moving away out toward open waters late Wednesday.

Bermuda Gov. John Rankin put 120 soldiers of the Royal Bermuda Regiment on alert for possible recovery efforts and National Security Minister Wayne Caines cautioned everyone to stay inside until Humberto's winds subsided Thursday. Authorities had ordered early closings of schools, clinics and government offices.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said hurricane-force winds began to hit the island of some 70,000 people by late afternoon and tropical storm-strength winds would last into early Thursday.

Humberto's maximum sustained winds were holding at 120 mph (195 kph) late Wednesday. The storm was centered about 130 miles (205 kilometers) north-northeast of Bermuda and was moving east-northeast at 23 mph (37 kph).

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James Dodgson, director of the Bermuda Weather Service, warned that the storm could produce tornadoes and dangerous storm surge.

"Humberto's a big hurricane and we're looking at the conditions already deteriorating. There's some very strong winds kicking in," he said.

Caines said non-emergency medical services would be closed until Thursday. Evening flights from the U.S. and Britain had been canceled.

"We'd like to ask all of Bermuda to prepare for the storm, to know that the government and everyone is rooting for us, and we can get through this," Caines said. "We've been through this before."

Meanwhile, new Hurricane Lorena posed an increasing threat to tourist resorts on Mexico's Pacific Coast and the Baja California Peninsula.

Forecasters said Lorena's core was expected to pass "near or over the southwestern coast" somewhere between the port of Manzanillo and Puerto Vallarta on Wednesday night and Thursday. The still-uncertain long-term forecast track showed it approaching the Los Cabos resort area Friday night and Saturday.

Maximum sustained winds were 75 mph (120 kph) Wednesday night. It was centered about 35 miles (55 kilometers) southwest of Manzanillo and was moving northwest at 12 mph (19 kph).

Hurricane warnings were in effect from Punta San Telmo to Cabo Corrientes.

Heavy rains were spreading onshore along the coast, the Hurricane Center said. Mexican officials voiced concern that some parts of southern Mexico, which have seen a lack of rainfall, could now get torrential rains that could result in dangerous flash floods and landslides.

In parts of Colima, Jalisco and Michoacan states, "it is forecast that the total accumulations of rain could ... represent 40% of the rain for an entire year in that part of the country," said Blanca Jiménez Cisneros, director-general of Mexico's National Water Commission.

Classes were suspended in Colima as a precaution.

In Texas, the remnants of Tropical Storm Imelda drenched parts of Southeast Texas, but officials in the Houston region said that there had been no severe problems by late Wednesday. It was the first named storm to hit that area since Hurricane Harvey's much heavier rains flooded more than 150,000 homes around the city and caused an estimated \$125 billion in damage in Texas.

Tropical Storm Jerry also formed Wednesday morning far out in the Atlantic and was forecast to become a hurricane before closing in on the outermost Caribbean islands Thursday night or Friday.

No truce: Trump keeps up feud with California during visit

By KEVIN FREKING and MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — President Donald Trump remains on a war footing. With California.

Trump's primary mission during his two-day visit to the state was to raise millions from wealthy Republicans. But he also made a point of deriding the state's handling of its homeless crisis, and on Wednesday, he issued a long-expected challenge to California's authority to reduce car emissions.

Later, he threatened to sic the Environmental Protection Agency on San Francisco over its homeless population, accusing the city of allowing a tremendous amount of waste, including needles, to go through storm drains into the ocean.

"It's a terrible situation that's in Los Angeles and in San Francisco," Trump told reporters on Air Force One as he returned to Washington. "And we're going to be giving San Francisco — they're in total violation — we're going to be giving them a notice very soon."

Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, publicly called out the Trump White House for a lack of "moral authority" and lamented the state's "unfortunate relationship" with the president.

The president and many Republicans see little downside to him making the nation's most populous state a ready villain.

"The voters that he's targeting in rural America look at California as an out-of-touch liberal state," said Republican consultant Alex Conant. "There's no political cost to him bashing California."

Trump and the Democratic-led state have battled throughout his 2½ years in office, with state Attorney

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General Xavier Becerra filing more than 50 lawsuits against the Trump administration. They cover the president's initiatives on immigration, health care and the environment, and have slowed and occasionally stopped the administration altogether.

And it's not just the president's agenda that California has gone after; the sparring has gotten personal, too. The state passed a law that requires candidates for president and governor to release five years' worth of tax returns to appear on the state's primary ballot, a pointed slap at Trump, who veered from historical precedent by declining to release his tax returns.

Trump began his latest criticisms of the state before he had even landed on Tuesday, faulting the cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco for not doing enough on homelessness. On Wednesday, he jumped ahead of his EPA to announce via tweet that his administration was revoking California's authority to set auto mileage standards, insisting the action will result in safe, less expensive cars and more jobs for Americans.

With all sides acknowledging the state's serious problems with homelessness, the issue stands as a vulnerability for Democratic leaders, and one that Trump can use as part of his broader effort to paint Democrats as out of touch and extreme. The president has yet to provide any specifics on how to deal with the complex homelessness problem, though.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., allowed that Trump was "right that homelessness is a big problem in California. But how he explains the situation is wrong and raises significant concerns that his so-called solutions will only make matters worse."

GOP Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader and an early ally of the president, said Trump wasn't bashing his home state but pointing out the shortcomings of Democratic leadership that has dominated California politics for years, especially as the Golden State has become the forefront of the Trump resistance.

"When he's talking about homelessness and solving that problem, and affordability, that goes across party lines," McCarthy told The Associated Press.

"Drive around — every community, even in Bakersfield — homelessness is the No. 1 issue," he said, referring to his own district in the rural Central Valley, just outside Los Angeles.

"They want to try to attack him, but you see how much support he has out there?" he said. "I think Californians are getting tired of the governor just fighting this president instead of trying to work with him. You don't have to agree with him all the time, but you can find common ground."

Newsom, in return, said he wants to work with Trump but is determined to "push back when he tries to go after our dreams" on diversity, reproductive rights and more.

"I don't think the attorney general wakes up looking for a lawsuit," but most of the cases involved are an attack on the state, he said. "And so it's an unfortunate relationship."

That may not be unfortunate for Trump politically, though.

Tim Miller, a former spokesman for Jeb Bush and a longtime Trump critic, said that when Trump talks about the homeless problem in California and criticizes its political leaders, "he's not speaking to California Republicans. He's speaking to Republicans and independents nationally. I anticipate he'll continue that through 2020."

Trump's presence in California and his attacks on its policies and politics were a welcome boost for the state's Republicans.

"My Republican friends in California keep their heads down and think the place has lost its mind," Conant said. "It's not as if he's going into South Dakota and attacking the state's politics."

But while Trump's swipes at the state's Democratic leadership were cheered by the GOP faithful, the political dynamics will be more complicated in closely divided congressional districts the party hopes to retake in 2020. Democrats picked up a string of Republican House seats in 2018, including in the onetime GOP stronghold of Orange County. In those contests, Democrats frequently sought to link GOP candidates to Trump, who is widely unpopular in California outside his Republican base.

Trump used his last stop in the state Wednesday to take a tour of border wall going up near San Diego. He visited two of the earlier wall projects funded on his watch. Last month, the administration completed 14 miles (23 kilometers) of steel bollards up to 30 feet (9 meters) high, except for a small stretch where

homes in Tijuana, Mexico, blocked the construction path, triggering bilateral talks about whether to knock them down. The \$147 million project replaced a much shorter fence made of surplus airstrip landing mats from the Vietnam War.

For Trump, building the wall is one of the biggest priorities of his presidency. "Build that wall" is a chant heard still at his campaign rallies.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington and Adam Beam in Sacramento contributed to this report.

Trump names hostage envoy O'Brien national security adviser

By **ERIC TUCKER, DEB RIECHMANN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Wednesday named Robert O'Brien, his chief hostage negotiator and an established figure in Republican policy circles, as his new national security adviser.

O'Brien, the fourth person in two years to hold the job, becomes the administration's point person on national security amid rising tensions with Iran following the weekend attack on Saudi oil installations and fresh uncertainty in Afghanistan after the halt in peace talks with the Taliban.

The announcement of O'Brien's selection comes a week after Trump ousted John Bolton from the post, citing policy disagreements. O'Brien, who made headlines in July when he was dispatched to Sweden to monitor the assault trial of American rapper A\$AP Rocky, was among five candidates Trump said Tuesday were under consideration.

"He's worked with me for quite awhile now on hostages, and we have a tremendous track record on hostages," Trump said Wednesday on a tarmac in Los Angeles, hours after revealing the pick on Twitter. "Robert has been fantastic. We know each other well."

O'Brien, standing alongside Trump, said it was a "privilege" to be picked.

"We've had tremendous foreign policy successes under President Trump's leadership. I expect those to continue. We've got a number of challenges," he added. O'Brien said the administration's focus will continue to be on keeping the U.S. safe and rebuilding the military. He said he would advise Trump privately on the situation in Saudi Arabia.

Trump abruptly forced out Bolton on Sept. 10, after he and his hawkish national security adviser found themselves in strong disagreement over the administration's approach to Iran, Afghanistan and a host of other global challenges. The sudden exit marked the latest departure of a prominent voice of dissent from Trump's inner circle as the president has grown more comfortable following his gut instinct over the studious guidance offered by his advisers.

Former Missouri Sen. Jim Talent, who has been a friend of O'Brien's for years, said that while he is tough, has a high degree of stamina and doesn't fold under pressure, he is not the type of person who is going to try to steamroll his own policy opinions.

"He does not have the ... brand of Bolton," Talent said, adding that it would be hard to "pigeonhole" O'Brien as a "neo-con" or label him with other foreign policy tags.

Talent said O'Brien formerly arbitrated international legal cases and probably wore a tie more often than others in Los Angeles. But he's not a "buttoned-up" kind of person, Talent said.

As the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs at the State Department, O'Brien worked closely with the families of American hostages and advised administration officials on hostage issues.

He helped secure the release in February of American citizen Danny Burch, who was freed after 18 months in captivity in Yemen. He has also worked on the case of missing U.S. journalist Austin Tice, who was captured in Syria in 2012. O'Brien has said the U.S. is confident Tice is still alive.

The White House sent O'Brien to Sweden to monitor the case of A\$AP Rocky, who was charged with assault. The rapper, whose real name is Rakim Mayers, was permitted to return to Los Angeles to await the verdict of a Swedish court, which found him guilty in a street brawl.

Last month, Hua Qu, the wife of a Princeton University graduate student detained in Iran, told report-

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ers that she would like to see the same level of personal attention from the government as A\$AP Rocky received.

On Wednesday, a Twitter account that advocates for the release of the student, Xiyue Wang, congratulated O'Brien on the appointment but also said: "We watched with frustration as this administration put all its energies into releasing celebrity A\$AP Rocky from Sweden; meanwhile, multiple Americans suffer under terrible conditions in #Iran. Let's put all Americans first, not just famous ones. #AmericansFirst."

O'Brien previously helped lead the department's public-private partnership for justice reform in Afghanistan during the Bush and Obama administrations.

He began to emerge as a front-runner to replace Bolton last week when it became clear that an early favorite, Iran envoy Brian Hook, would face opposition from hawks who think he has not been tough enough on Iran, according to Republicans familiar with the matter.

Another short-listed candidate, the North Korea envoy Stephen Biegun, was taken out of the mix when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo suggested he might be better placed as deputy secretary of state to replace John Sullivan, who is widely expected to be nominated to be the next U.S. ambassador to Russia, officials said.

From 2008 through 2011, O'Brien was a presidentially appointed member of a government committee that advises on issues related to the trafficking of antiquities and other cultural items. In 2005, President George W. Bush nominated O'Brien to be U.S. representative to the U.N. General Assembly, where he worked with Bolton. O'Brien was confirmed by the Senate.

He also was an adviser on the Republican presidential campaigns of former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas.

Earlier in his career, O'Brien was a senior legal officer for the U.N. Security Council commission that decided claims against Iraq that arose from the Gulf War. He was a major in the U.S. Army Reserve.

O'Brien has a law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and co-founded a law firm in Los Angeles focused on litigation and international arbitration issues. O'Brien is the author of "While America Slept," a collection of essays on U.S. national security and foreign policy billed as a "wake-up call to the American people."

The book warned that the world had become more dangerous "under President Obama's lead-from-behind foreign policy."

Associated Press writer Matthew Lee contributed to this report.

Trump bars California from setting stricter fuel standards

By MICHAEL BIESECKER and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump announced Wednesday that his administration is revoking California's authority to set auto mileage standards stricter than those issued by federal regulators, a move critics said would result in less fuel-efficient cars that create more planet-warming pollution.

In a tweet, Trump said his action would result in less expensive, safer cars. He also predicted Americans would purchase more new cars, which would result in cleaner air as older models are taken off the roads.

"Many more cars will be produced under the new and uniform standard, meaning significantly more JOBS, JOBS, JOBS! Automakers should seize this opportunity because without this alternative to California, you will be out of business," Trump tweeted.

U.S. automakers contend that without year-over-year increases in fuel efficiency that align with global market realities their vehicles could be less competitive, potentially resulting in job losses. However, most of the industry favors increases in standards that are less than the Obama-era requirements, saying their consumers are gravitating to SUVs and trucks rather than buying more efficient cars.

Top California officials and environmental groups pledged legal action on Wednesday to stop the rollback, potentially tying up the issue for years in federal courts. The U.S. transportation sector is the nation's biggest single source of greenhouse gasses.

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"You can't get serious about climate change unless you are serious about vehicle emissions, said California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat. "This is such a pivotal moment in the history of the climate change debate."

It's not clear yet what the Trump administration will propose as its final fuel-efficiency rules, but in the past it has favored freezing Obama-era mileage standards at 2021 levels. Under the Obama administration requirements, the fleet of new vehicles would have to average 30 mpg in real-world driving by 2021, rising to 36 mpg in 2025. Currently the standard is 26 mpg.

Under Trump, the Environmental Protection Agency contends that freezing the fuel economy standards will reduce the average sticker price of new vehicles by about \$2,700 by 2025, though that predicted savings is disputed by environmental groups and is more than double the EPA estimates from the prior administration.

Trump's tweet does not address the money consumers would save at the gas pump if cars got better mileage. A study released by Consumer Reports in August found that the owner of a 2026 vehicle will pay over \$3,300 more for gasoline during the life of a vehicle if the standards are frozen at 2021 levels.

Trump's claim that his proposal would result in a cleaner environment is contrary to his own administration's estimate that by freezing economy standards U.S. fuel consumption would increase by about 500,000 barrels per day, a 2% to 3% increase. Environmental groups predict even more fuel consumed, resulting in higher pollution.

The administration argues that lower-cost vehicles would allow more people to buy new ones that are safer, cutting roadway deaths by 12,700 lives through the 2029 model year. But The Associated Press reported last year that internal EPA emails show senior career officials privately questioned the administration's calculations, saying the proposed freeze would actually modestly increase highway fatalities, by about 17 deaths annually.

Trump traveled to California for GOP fundraising events Tuesday and Wednesday near San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego.

California's authority to set its own, tougher emissions standards goes back to a waiver issued by Congress during passage of the Clean Air Act in 1970. In 2007, when Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger was governor, President George W. Bush's administration denied California's bid to place first-in-the-nation greenhouse gas limits on cars and trucks. But the state asked the EPA to reconsider its decision, and in 2009 — when Democratic President Barack Obama took office — the feds granted California's request.

California has 35 million registered vehicles, the most of any state. A dozen other states and the District of Columbia also follow California's fuel economy standards.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said the Trump administration's action will hurt both U.S. automakers and American families. He said California would fight the administration in federal court.

"You have no basis and no authority to pull this waiver," Becerra, a Democrat, said in a statement, referring to Trump. "We're ready to fight for a future that you seem unable to comprehend."

Trump's Justice Department recently opened an antitrust investigation into a deal between California and four major automakers for tougher pollution and related mileage requirements than those sought by the Trump administration.

The deal struck in July between California and four of the world's largest automakers — Ford, Honda, BMW and Volkswagen — bypassed the Trump administration's plan to freeze emissions and fuel economy standards adopted under Obama at 2021 levels.

The four automakers agreed with California to reduce emissions by 3.7% per year starting with the 2022 model year, through 2026. That compares with 4.7% yearly reductions through 2025 under the Obama standards. Emissions standards are closely linked with fuel economy requirements because vehicles pollute less if they burn fewer gallons of fuel.

In a speech to the National Automobile Dealers Association on Tuesday, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, a former fossil fuels lobbyist, said California will be able to keep in place and enforce programs to address smog and other forms of air pollution caused by motor vehicles. But fuel economy has been

one of the key regulatory tools the state has used to reduce harmful emissions.

Environmentalists and former EPA officials condemned the Trump administration's move, which comes as gasoline prices have crept higher following a weekend drone attack that hobbled Saudi Arabian oil output.

"If the courts allow this unprecedented reversal, and the Trump EPA massively rolls back the federal clean car standards, then President Trump will have done more to destroy the planet than any other president in history," said Jeff Alson, a former EPA senior environmental engineer and policy adviser who recently retired after 40 years at the agency.

Beam reported from Sacramento, California. Associated Press auto writer Tom Krisher in Detroit contributed.

Follow AP investigative reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

This story has been corrected to fix the spelling of former EPA official Jeff Alson's last name.

Washington Monument reopens after 3-year closure for repairs

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After a three-year closure, the Washington Monument is reopening to the public. The 555-foot stone obelisk was closed in September 2016 in order to replace the aging elevator and upgrade security systems. The monument will reopen to the public at noon Thursday, and first lady Melania Trump is expected to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"We're just excited to open it again," said National Park Service Spokesman Mike Litterst, during a Wednesday tour of the site. "The views from up here are like nothing else."

The monument has been closed for most of the past eight years. An August 2011 earthquake left cracks in the stones near the top of the obelisk. It reopened in 2014, but Park Service officials were forced to close it again two years later after a series of elevator malfunctions.

"It was two or three times a week," Litterst said. "We couldn't guarantee that you wouldn't get stuck."

Construction on the monument began in 1848 and took nearly 40 years to complete. The private organization that was running the project ran out of funding and construction was halted in 1854 at around 150 feet; that delay was exacerbated by the Civil War.

Construction resumed in 1879, but builders were forced to use stone from a different quarry — giving the obelisk its distinctive two-tone color.

At the time of its completion, it was the tallest building in the world, but was soon overtaken by the Eiffel Tower in 1889.

It remains the tallest building in Washington and, when open, averages about 500,000 visitors per year.

Saudis couldn't stop oil attack, even with top US defenses

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Saudi Arabia spent billions to protect a kingdom built on oil but could not stop the suspected Iranian drone and missile attack, exposing gaps that even America's most advanced weaponry failed to fill.

In addition to deciding whether that firepower should be turned on Iran in retaliation, the Saudis and their American allies must now figure out how to prevent a repeat of last weekend's attack -- or worse, such as an assault on the Saudis' export facilities in the Persian Gulf or any of the desalination plants that supply drinking water.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was asked Wednesday on his way to Saudi Arabia how it was possible that the kingdom could have dropped its guard, failing to stop any of the low-flying cruise missiles or armed drones that struck the Abqaiq oil processing center -- the largest of its kind in the world -- and the

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Khurais oil field.

Even the best air defenses sometimes fail, he replied.

"We want to make sure that infrastructure and resources are put in place such that attacks like this would be less successful than this one appears to have been."

Easier said than done.

"This is an attack of a scale we've just not seen before," Pompeo said. He called the strike "an act of war" but not say what military response might follow.

President Donald Trump, in California on a political fundraising trip, said, "We know very much what happened." But he, too, was noncommittal on whether he would order U.S. military retaliation.

Saudi Arabia has multiple batteries of advanced U.S. Patriot air defense missiles, which are meant to shoot down hostile aircraft or shorter-range ballistic missiles. Patriots provide "point defense" -- not protection of wide swaths of territory -- and it's unclear whether any were positioned close to the oil sites.

The U.S. provides intelligence and surveillance support to the Saudi military, but that, too, has its limitations.

"We don't have an unblinking eye over the entire Middle East at all times," said Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The U.S. military this summer returned American forces to Saudi Arabia, at Prince Sultan air base south of Riyadh, after an absence of more than a decade. Those forces include a Patriot missile battery. Prince Sultan became a hub of American air power in the Middle East in the 1990s but was abandoned by Washington after Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein was toppled in 2003.

The Saudis clearly were not prepared for this assault, which was unusual in its execution and unprecedented in its targeting. They have largely focused their air defenses on threats from the south, in the direction of Houthi rebels who frequently launch shorter-range missile and drone attacks on Saudi territory. Saudi officials said Wednesday the low-flying cruise missiles and armed drones struck from the north, suggesting they came from Iran.

The strike interrupted the equivalent of about 5% of the world's daily oil supply. Saudi Arabia's energy minister said Tuesday that more than half of the country's daily crude oil production that was knocked out by the attack had been recovered and production capacity at the targeted plants would be fully restored by the end of the month.

Seth Jones, a counterterrorism expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said "almost no state" could have fully thwarted such an unconventional attack. Saudi Arabia, given the scope of its oil infrastructure, is especially at risk to Iran's multi-dimensional threat.

"The vulnerability of Saudi Arabia's ... critical infrastructure is probably impossible to entirely defend," Jones said, though the Saudis are "fairly well prepared" to defend against conventional threats such as warplanes.

Though the Saudis' energy minister talked of a rapid bounce-back, the attack seemed to herald a new era of energy vulnerability.

"Never in the history of global energy markets has a malevolent act targeted at energy infrastructure been felt globally," Pierre Noel, an analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies, wrote on Tuesday. He called it the "archetypal event that oil security specialists talk about all the time but never happens."

Iran denies it was to blame. But its alleged fingerprints on the destruction in the desert point to a trend toward a shadowy form of warfare that can sneak past traditional defenses.

Anthony Cordesman, a Middle East expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote this week that the use of cruise missiles and armed drones - whether by Iran or its Houthi proxies in Yemen - reflects a move toward unconventional military capabilities, including cyberattack, that defies traditional thinking about defense and security.

"Analysts have been warning about these shifts in the nature of war for years, but the recent strikes on Saudi Arabia have made it clear that they are now at least a limited reality," Cordesman wrote.

Saudi officials on Wednesday said the attack was "unquestionably sponsored by Iran," naming but not

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directly accusing its Gulf rival of launching the assault.

By stopping short of saying the missiles were launched from Iran, the kingdom potentially avoids making a response that could lead to war among the heavyweight countries of the region and the United States. However, not retaliating also carries the risk of leaving Saudi Arabia exposed to further attacks.

For decades, particularly in the wake of Iraq's invasion of neighboring Kuwait in 1990, the Saudis have spent tens of billions of dollars on foreign military equipment and training -- most of it from the United States.

Between 2014 and 2018, the Saudis ranked as the world's No. 1 arms importer. In that period, they accounted for 22 percent of the United States' global arms sales, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. In recent years they have acquired some of America's top-shelf weapons, including F-15 fighter aircraft, Apache attack helicopters and the Patriot air defense systems.

None of that made a difference last weekend in the face of an attack that exposed Saudi weaknesses that might seem obvious in retrospect.

Just last month, Jones of the Center for Strategic and International Studies gave a presentation that pinpointed Saudi vulnerabilities to Iranian attack, although he focused mainly on the threat of Iranian cyberattacks and ballistic missiles.

"Saudi Arabia is so vulnerable that defensive measures, while they are important, will not ever solve the problem," Jones said in his video presentation. The best approach, he said, is deterrence -- making Iran believe it would pay an enormous cost for targeting Saudi oil infrastructure.

John Hultquist, director of intelligence analysis at FireEye, Inc., a security firm, told The Associated Press he believes that Iran had collected intelligence using cyber intrusions during acts of sabotage against oil tankers in the Gulf region earlier this year.

"Frogmen, drones, third-party proxies and cyberattack are all capabilities Iran can use to turn up the heat," Hultquist said. "All of them are on the table right now, and companies operating in the Gulf should take notice and prepare."

AP writers Lolita C. Baldor, Tami Abdollah and Sagar Meghani contributed.

A divided Fed reduces rates but may not cut again this year

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A sharply divided Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate Wednesday for a second time this year but declined to signal that further rate cuts are likely this year.

The Fed's move reduced its key short-term rate — which influences many consumer and business loans — by an additional quarter-point to a range of 1.75% to 2%.

The action was approved 7-3, with two officials preferring to keep rates unchanged and one arguing for a bigger half-point cut. The divisions on the policy committee underscored the challenges for Chairman Jerome Powell in guiding the Fed at a time of high economic uncertainty.

The Fed did leave the door open to additional rate cuts — if, as Powell suggested at a news conference, the economy weakens. For now, he suggested, the economic expansion appears durable in its 11th year, with a still-solid job market and steady consumer spending.

At the same time, the Fed is trying to combat threats including uncertainties caused by President Donald Trump's trade war with China, slower global growth and a slump in American manufacturing. The Fed noted in its statement that business investment and exports have weakened.

Financial markets closed mostly higher after the Fed's afternoon announcement although the diverging opinions on the Fed left some investors uncertain how many more rate cuts the Fed will deliver. The Dow Jones Industrial Average after being down most of the day finished up 36.28 points, or 0.1%, to 27,147.08.

At his news conference, Powell acknowledged that Fed officials are sharply divided about the wisest course for interest rates, especially given uncertainties, like trade conflicts, whose outcomes are out of the Fed's control.

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"This is a time of difficult judgments and disparate perspectives," the chairman said.

In any case, many business leaders are skeptical that the Fed's slight rate cuts will deliver much economic benefit.

Wednesday's rate cut "makes virtually no difference to the U.S. economy in and of itself," said Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase, who suggested, as many corporate leaders have, that Trump's trade war remains an overarching threat.

"I don't think cutting rates will offset trade, personally," said Dimon, head of the largest U.S. bank.

Among Powell's challenges is that the trade war's uncertainties are likely affecting the nation's economic data, making it hard for the Fed to set an interest-rate policy for the months ahead.

"It doesn't make sense to commit to a path of policy today when monetary policy is now responding to future developments in the trade policy," said Bill Adams, a senior economist at PNC Financial Services.

Wednesday's modest rate cut irritated Trump, who has attacked the central bank and insisted that it slash rates more aggressively. The president immediately signaled his discontent:

"Jay Powell and the Federal Reserve Fail Again," Trump tweeted. "No 'guts,' no sense, no vision! A terrible communicator!"

Asked about Trump's latest personal taunt, Powell declined, as he has before, to respond directly, while adding that the Fed's long-standing independence from political pressures "has served the public well."

Updated economic and interest rate forecasts issued Wednesday by the Fed show that only seven of 17 officials foresee at least one additional rate cut this year. And at least two Fed officials expect a rate hike next year.

None of the policymakers foresee rates falling below 1.5% in 2020 — a sign that the turbulence from a global slowdown and Trump's escalation of the trade war is viewed as manageable.

The median forecasts show the economy is expected to grow a modest 2.2% this year, 2% next year and 1.9% in 2021. Those forecasts are well below the Trump administration's projection that the president's policies will accelerate growth to 3% annually or better. But they also suggest that policymakers do not envision a recession.

Unemployment is projected to be 3.7% and inflation 1.5%, below the Fed's target level of 2%

A resumption of trade talks between the Trump administration and Beijing and a less antagonistic tone between the two sides have supported the view that additional rate cuts might not be necessary. So has a belief that oil prices will remain elevated, that inflation might finally be reaching the Fed's target level and that there are increasing signs that the U.S. economy remains sturdy.

The job market looks solid, wages are rising, consumers are still spending and even such sluggish sectors as manufacturing and construction have shown signs of rebounding.

Yet no one, perhaps not even the Fed, is sure of how interest rate policy will unfold in coming months. Too many uncertainties exist, notably the outcome of Trump's trade war.

Trump has meantime kept up a stream of public attacks on the central bank's policymaking, including referring to Powell as an "enemy" and the Fed's policymakers as "boneheads." Even though the economy looks resilient, the president has insisted that the Fed slash its benchmark rate more deeply — even to below zero, as the European Central Bank has done — part to weaken the U.S. dollar and make American exports more competitive.

The Fed is monitoring the global slowdown, especially in Europe, and Britain's effort to leave the European Union. A disruptive Brexit could destabilize not just Europe but the U.S. economy, too

U.S. inflation, which has long been dormant, has begun to show signs that it is reaching the Fed's 2 percent target and might remain there. If the Fed's policymakers conclude that inflation will sustain a faster pace, it might give them pause about cutting rates much further.

The most serious threat to the expansion is widely seen as Trump's trade war. The increased import taxes he has imposed on goods from China and Europe — and the counter-tariffs other nations have applied to U.S. exports — have hurt many American companies and paralyzed their plans for investment and expansion.

In recent days, the Trump administration and Beijing have acted to de-escalate tensions before a new round of trade talks planned for October in Washington. Yet most analysts foresee no significant agreement emerging this fall in the conflict.

AP Economics Writer Josh Boak contributed to this report.

Prosecutor: Man charged in killings of 4 women in Detroit

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — A prosecutor announced murder charges Wednesday against a 34-year-old man in the slayings of four women in Detroit whose deaths authorities have characterized as the work of a serial killer.

Deangelo Martin is charged with four counts of first-degree murder and four counts of felony murder in the killings of the women whose bodies were found in abandoned houses in the city as far back as February 2018, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy said at a news conference.

Martin was arraigned Wednesday afternoon. A probable cause conference was scheduled for Oct. 2 and a preliminary examination on Oct. 9.

Martin, who was arrested in June, was already charged in the stabbing and sexual assault of 26-year-old woman in May and the kidnapping and assault of a 51-year-old woman in June.

Police Chief James Craig has said he sees similarities between three of the slayings and the assaults of at least two other women who survived attacks.

"I think it's pretty clear that we believe he is a serial killer," Worthy said.

She named the victims as Annetta Nelson, 57, whose body was found Feb. 26, 2018; Nancy Harrison, 52, who was discovered March 19, 2019; Trevesene Ellis, 55, was found March 24; and Tamara Jones, 55, who was found June 5.

All the victims were found face down with a used condom beside them, she said. A coroner determined that Nelson and Harrison died of blunt force trauma but the cause of death for the other two couldn't be determined because their bodies were too badly decomposed, Worthy said.

Police are investigating two additional possible homicide cases that might also be connected, she said.

The Associated Press left a message Wednesday seeking comment from Martin's appointed defense attorney in the assault and kidnapping cases.

Police have said they believe all the women were sex workers.

"Predators ... look for people who are seemingly vulnerable, left out and left behind," Worthy said. "People that they think will not fight back, people that they think nobody cares about, people that they think won't be missed. But they're wrong."

She continued: "We worked tirelessly to make sure that we can bring them some modicum of justice, of respect and of dignity, no matter what they were engaged in before, during, after they were reported missing."

Martin was initially arrested in June in the rape and attempted murder of a woman who was able to escape the attack. At that point, police had already uncovered three homicide victims, and teams of police officers and other city workers were searching hundreds of vacant buildings for more bodies.

"This is the kind of case that creates so much fear in our community," Craig said during the news conference. "We're very diligent, relentless in how we approach these matters."

Six years ago, Detroit had at least 30,000 empty houses and 20 square miles (50 square kilometers) of vacant land. Mayor Mike Duggan has said removing blighted houses is a priority in his efforts to revive Detroit since the city's 2014 exit from the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history.

Duggan this week announced plans to ask voters to approve the sale of up to \$250 million in bonds to eradicate residential blight across the city. A proposed resolution to put the initiative on the March 2020 ballot has been submitted to the City Council.

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Democrats to argue Republicans rushing top Labor nominee

By RICHARD LARDNER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's nominee to run the Labor Department faces a Senate confirmation hearing, even as Democrats argue that they haven't had enough time to scour his record of legal work for corporate interests.

Although Trump tweeted in mid-July that Eugene Scalia was his pick, the committee didn't officially receive the nomination until Sept. 11, the week before Thursday's hearing. The Republican GOP-led Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee panel has set a vote on the nomination early next week.

A Democratic aide who wasn't authorized to speak publicly and requested anonymity said Democratic lawmakers see the compressed timeframe as not allowing senators to properly investigate Scalia's history as an attorney for dozens of clients. But a Republican aide, who also requested anonymity for the same reason, said all of Scalia's required paperwork, which would include his financial disclosure and ethics agreements, has been available for committee members to review since late August.

Trump's nomination of Scalia is opposed by the AFL-CIO, which has described him as a union-busting lawyer who has eroded labor rights and consumer protections. But business groups are squarely behind Scalia, viewing him as a reliable opponent of regulatory overreach and red tape. If Scalia is confirmed by the Senate, he'll be the seventh former lobbyist to hold a Cabinet-level post in the Trump administration.

Scalia, 56, served for a year as the Labor Department's top lawyer, its solicitor, during the George W. Bush administration. But most of his career has been spent as a partner in the Washington office of the Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher firm, where he has run up a string of victories in court cases on behalf of business interests challenging labor and financial regulations.

On his financial disclosure form filed with the Office of Government Ethics, Scalia listed 49 clients who paid him \$5,000 or more for legal services, including e-cigarette giant Juul Labs, Facebook, Ford, Walmart and Bank of America. Disclosure records show Scalia was registered in 2010 and 2011 to lobby for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Scalia is likely to be questioned about changes the Labor Department is making to an Obama-era rule on overtime pay. The Obama regulations were scheduled to take effect in 2016 but were put on hold by a federal lawsuit.

A revised proposal issued in March raised the annual pay threshold at which workers would be exempt from overtime to \$35,308 from the current \$23,660, expanding overtime pay to roughly 1 million workers. The Obama plan set the threshold at more than \$47,000 and would have affected an estimated 4.2 million people.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, expressed concern Wednesday over Scalia's record on protecting government whistleblowers. Grassley said on a call with reporters that while serving as Labor's top lawyer Scalia argued not all disclosures made to Congress are protected under federal whistleblower laws and that the separation of powers doctrine prevents whistleblowers from disclosing certain information to Congress.

Trump's previous labor secretary, Alexander Acosta, resigned in July. He'd come under renewed criticism for his handling of a 2008 secret plea deal with financier Jeffrey Epstein, who was found dead last month in his cell at a federal jail in Manhattan after a July arrest on sex trafficking charges.

Deputy Labor Secretary Pat Pizzella has been serving as acting secretary until Scalia is confirmed.

Asian shares mixed following Fed's decision to cut rates

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares were mixed in Asia on Thursday, with Tokyo and Sydney logging modest gains after the Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate for a second time this year, citing slowing global economic growth and uncertainty over U.S. trade conflicts.

Japan's central bank opted to keep its own monetary policy unchanged and its key interest rate at minus 0.1%, as expected.

The decision came amid signs of weaker consumer demand and exports and dimming confidence in the

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business outlook.

"The bank did highlight increasing downside risks from external demand and stated that it will pay closer attention to the possibility that momentum towards reaching its 2% inflation target will be lost," Marcel Thieliant of Capital Economics said in a commentary.

The Nikkei 225 index gained 0.3% to 22,031.22 while the Kospi in Seoul climbed 0.4% to 2,078.30. Australia's S&P ASX 200 added 0.6% to 6,721.00, while the Shanghai Composite index was unchanged at 2,985.66.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng declined 1.2% to 26,436.41 and shares also fell in Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia.

Brazil's central bank also cut its benchmark rate, by 0.5%, and more decisions were expected later in the day from Indonesia, the Bank of England and the central banks in Sweden and Norway.

On Wall Street, gains in banks, utilities and technology companies outweighed losses elsewhere in the market, which were broadly lower until the last hour of trading. Bond yields moved lower.

Stocks initially declined after the central bank announced the widely expected rate cut. Its policy statement failed to indicate whether more rate cuts were likely this year, though the central bank left the door open for additional rate cuts if the economy weakens.

"We're not on a preset course," Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said in an afternoon press conference.

The S&P 500 index inched 1.03 points higher, or less than 0.1%, to 3,006.73, within 0.7% of its all-time high set in July.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, added 0.1% to 27,147.08. The Nasdaq slid 0.1%, to 8,177.39, while the Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks dropped 0.6%, to 1,568.34.

The Fed is trying to combat threats to the U.S. economy, including uncertainties caused by President Donald Trump's trade war with China, slower global growth and a slump in American manufacturing.

Investors have been expecting the Fed to cut short-term interest rates by another quarter of a percentage point, following a similar cut in late July. The rate, which is now at a range of 1.75% to 2%, influences many consumer and business loans.

A look at how each of the central bank's policymakers voted offered few clues as to the likelihood of further rate cuts.

The market has been wobbling this week and is so far on track for a slight weekly loss after three consecutive weeks of gains. Those gains came as both sides in the U.S.-China trade war took steps to ease tensions ahead of planned negotiations in October.

Bond prices rose and the yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 1.79% from 1.81% late Tuesday. Investors typically shift money into bonds when they grow more concerned about the economy's health.

ENERGY: Oil prices were steady as Saudi Arabia said it was restoring production at an oil facility attacked over the weekend. Benchmark U.S. crude fell gained 11 cents to \$58.22 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Overnight, it lost \$1.23 to settle at \$58.11 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, picked up 5 cents to \$63.65.

The dollar slipped to 107.83 Japanese yen from 108.42 yen on Wednesday. The euro rose to \$1.1035 from \$1.1029.

AP Business writers Damian J. Troise, Alex Veiga and Stan Choe contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 19, the 262nd day of 2019. There are 103 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 19, 2008, struggling to stave off financial catastrophe, the Bush administration laid out a radical bailout plan calling for a takeover of a half-trillion dollars or more in worthless mortgages and other bad debt

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held by tottering institutions. Relieved investors sent stocks soaring on Wall Street and around the globe.

On this date:

In 1777, the first Battle of Saratoga was fought during the Revolutionary War; although British forces succeeded in driving out the American troops, the Americans prevailed in a second battle the following month.

In 1796, President George Washington's farewell address was published. In it, America's first chief executive advised, "Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all."

In 1881, the 20th president of the United States, James A. Garfield, died 2½ months after being shot by Charles Guiteau; Chester Alan Arthur became president.

In 1934, Bruno Hauptmann was arrested in New York and charged with the kidnap-murder of 20-month-old Charles A. Lindbergh Jr.

In 1970, the "Mary Tyler Moore" show debuted on CBS-TV.

In 1982, the smiley emoticon was invented by Carnegie Mellon University professor Scott E. Fahlman, who suggested punctuating humorously intended computer messages with a colon followed by a hyphen and a parenthesis as a horizontal "smiley face." :-)

In 1985, the Mexico City area was struck by a devastating earthquake that killed at least 9,500 people.

In 1986, federal health officials announced that the experimental drug AZT would be made available to thousands of AIDS patients.

In 1995, The New York Times and The Washington Post published the manifesto of Unabomber Ted Kaczynski (kah-ZIHN'-skee), which proved instrumental in identifying and capturing him.

In 1996, IBM announced it would extend health benefits to the partners of its gay employees.

In 2001, The Pentagon ordered dozens of advanced aircraft to the Persian Gulf region as the hour of military retaliation for deadly terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 drew closer.

In 2004, Hu Jintao (hoo jin-tow) became the undisputed leader of China with the departure of former President Jiang Zemin (jahng zuh-MEEN') from his top military post.

Ten years ago: Russia said it would scrap a plan to deploy missiles near Poland after Washington dumped a planned missile shield in Eastern Europe. Art Ferrante, 88, half of the piano duo Ferrante and Teicher, died in Longboat Key, Florida. (Lou Teicher had died in 2008 at age 83.)

Five years ago: President Barack Obama signed legislation authorizing the military to arm and train moderate Syrian rebels fighting Islamic State militants in the Middle East. Shortly after President Obama and his daughters left the White House by helicopter, a man with a knife jumped the fence and made it into the presidential residence before being tackled. (Omar Gonzalez, an Army veteran with mental health issues, was later sentenced to 17 months in prison.) Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba debuted as a publicly traded company and swiftly climbed nearly 40 percent in a mammoth IPO.

One year ago: President Donald Trump visited North and South Carolina to survey the wreckage left by Hurricane Florence. Wanda Barzee, who had helped her then-husband kidnap Utah teen Elizabeth Smart 15 years earlier, was released from prison; Smart had said she was shocked and disappointed by the news that Barzee would be freed.

Today's Birthdays: Author Roger Angell is 99. Host James Lipton (TV: "Inside the Actors Studio") is 93. Actress Rosemary Harris is 92. Actor David McCallum is 86. Singer-songwriter Paul Williams is 79. Singer Bill Medley is 79. Singer Sylvia Tyson (Ian and Sylvia) is 79. R&B singer Freda Payne is 77. Retired professional golfer Jane Blalock is 74. Singer David Bromberg is 74. Actor Randolph Mantooth is 74. Rock singer-musician Lol Creme (10cc) is 72. Former NFL running back Larry Brown is 72. Actor Jeremy Irons is 71. Actress Twiggy Lawson is 70. TV personality Joan Lunden is 69. Singer-producer Daniel Lanois (lan-WAH') is 68. Actor Scott Colomby is 67. Musician-producer Nile Rodgers is 67. Singer-actor Rex Smith is 64. Rock singer Lita Ford is 61. Actor Kevin Hooks is 61. Actress Carolyn McCormick is 60. Celebrity chef Mario Batali is 59. Actress-comedian Cheri Oteri is 57. Country singer Jeff Bates is 56. Country singer Trisha Yearwood is 55. News anchor Soledad O'Brien is 53. Rhythm-and-blues singer Espranza Griffin (Society of Soul) is 50. Celebrity chef Michael Symon is 50. Actor Victor Williams is 49. Actress Sanaa Lathan (suh-NAH' LAY'-

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thun) is 48. Actress Stephanie J. Block is 47. Rock singer A. Jay Popoff (Lit) is 46. "Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon is 45. TV personality Carter Oosterhouse is 43. Actress-TV host Alison Sweeney is 43. Rock musician Ryan Dusick is 42. Folk-rock singers-musicians Sara and Tegan (TEE'-gan) Quin are 39. Actor Columbus Short is 37. Rapper Eamon is 36. Christian rock musician JD Frazier is 36. Actor Kevin Zegers is 35. Actress Danielle Panabaker is 32. Actress Katrina Bowden is 31.

Thought for Today: "Do not let yourself be tainted with a barren skepticism." — Louis Pasteur, French scientist (1822-1895).

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