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Saturday, July 8

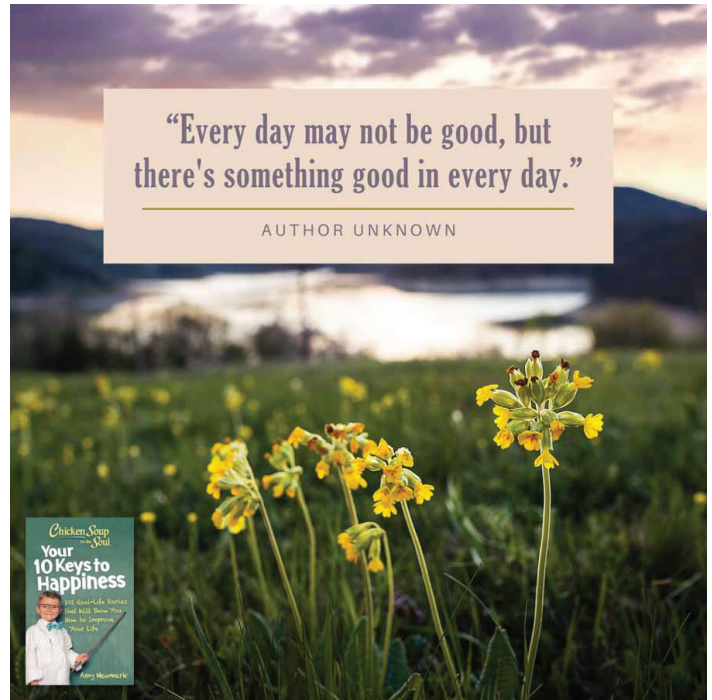
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. ago 1 p.m.
Avantara Summer Event, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
U12 State Tournament at Webster
Legion at Clark Tournament

Sunday, July 9

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
United Methodist: Conde worship at 8:30 a.m., coffee hour 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship at 10:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

OPEN: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
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“Every day may not be good, but there's something good in every day.”

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Groton Summer Fest/Car Show, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., City Park

Amateurs at Northville, 5 p.m.

Monday, July 10

Senior Menu: Lasagna rotini, spinach salad with dressing, ambrosia fruit salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.

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

Food Pantry open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Groton Community Center

Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

Legion host Claremont, DH, 6 p.m.

U10 W/B at Columbia, DH, 6:30 p.m.

Softball hosts Claremont (U8 at 5:30 p.m., U10 at 7 p.m.); hosts Warner, DH

T-Ball at Columbia, 5:30 p.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

Grubhub also filed a separate lawsuit challenging the law, which is poised to raise the minimum wage for delivery drivers to nearly \$18 an hour.

The U.S. destroyed the last of its declared chemical weapons Friday as Blue Grass Army Depot workers destroyed rockets containing the GB nerve agent.

The University of Idaho has received consent from prosecution and defense attorneys to tear down the property where four of its students were murdered in November— a date has not been announced.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has outlined a roadmap for Ukraine to become a member of the military alliance, telling this week's summit that the bloc will "reaffirm" an earlier commitment that Ukraine will join the alliance in the future.

No charges will be filed after Britney Spears alleged she was hit by a San Antonio Spurs security guard in Las Vegas. Metro police said the star inadvertently "hit herself in the face" when her hand was pushed off of Spurs rookie Victor Wembanyama.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, the White House announced the U.S. is providing a controversial package of cluster munition for Ukraine, despite numerous countries having banned such weapons due to their potential for causing civilian casualties.

The Dutch government collapsed on Friday after, according to exiting Prime Minister Mark Rutte, the ruling coalition parties could not agree on migration policy.

TALKING POINTS

"Why don't they appoint me and give me a couple of lie detector analysts and a couple of forensic experts, and I'll catch him. We'll first figure out everybody that went through that area. It is not heavily trafficked. That's absurd. That lying press secretary made it sound like it's Grand Central Station," Rudy Giuliani said on Newsmax's Eric Bolling the Balance while discussing cocaine recently found at the White House.

"I believe that humanoid robots have the potential to lead with a greater level of efficiency and effectiveness than human leaders. We don't have the same biases or emotions that can sometimes cloud decision-making and can process large amounts of data quickly in order to make the best decisions," said robot Sophia, the United Nations Development Program's first robot innovation ambassador, during the AI For Good Global Summit in Geneva.

"I recorded this album when I was 32 (and still growing up, now) and the memories it brought back filled me with nostalgia and appreciation. For life, for you, for the fact that I get to reclaim my work. Thank you a million times, for the memories that break our fall," Taylor Swift wrote on Instagram about the release of Speak Now (Taylor's Version)..

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

President Joe Biden is traveling to London today ahead of the 74th NATO Summit in Lithuania next week. He is expected to meet with King Charles III and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak while in the U.K.

Former President Donald Trump is slated to visit Las Vegas today to speak at a Nevada volunteer recruitment event.

2023 Public Presentation Day

Three Brown County 4-H Members participated in Public Presentation Day on July 6, 2023, at the Aberdeen Regional Extension Office. Participants gave illustrated talks, which are related to a 4-H project they were enrolled in. Each participant could receive a purple, blue, red or white ribbon placing. Receiving top purples were Logan Warrington, Ashlynn Warrington, and Greyson Warrington. All the participants will be giving their presentations at the Brown County Fair during 4-H Night on Thursday, August 17, under the Ken's Tent at 6:00 p.m. As well as, they have the option to give their presentations at the State Fair over Labor Day weekend.

Gov. Noem's "Freedom Works Here" Clears 2,000 Applications

PIERRE, S.D. – Over 2,000 people have applied to find career opportunities in South Dakota thanks to Governor Noem's "Freedom Works Here" national workforce recruitment campaign.

"The enthusiasm from folks looking to move to South Dakota has just blown us away," said Governor Noem. "With the lowest unemployment in American history and open jobs to spare, we're ready to welcome anyone who wants to move to our state. We are connecting our businesses in need with folks who are really excited to join our South Dakota family."

South Dakota has received at least 100 applications from each of the following states: California (345 applications), Texas (168), Florida (158), and New York (100). We have also received applications from within South Dakota (76) and from other countries. The Freedom Works Here campaign is helping lifelong South Dakotans and new residents alike. A map showing where applicants are from can be found here.

The State of South Dakota is actively reaching out to these applicants to connect them with Job Services Specialists who can assist them with a one-on-one job search. Thousands of calls have already been made to these applicants to keep the enthusiasm going.

The ad campaign has been hugely successful. The initial increase in page views to FreedomWorksHere.com was 1,035%. The contact form for applicants had an 81% conversion rate. The ads have received 92,975,000 total nationwide views.

Moving and Rummage Sale

Moving and rummage sale, Saturday, July 15th and Sunday, July 16th 8AM to 4PM. Lots of items: Household items, Yard and Garden, Fishing equipment, Garage treasurers, and men's, ladies, and girls clothing.

Located: 3/4 east of US12 and BC12E, 40801 134th St.

The Life of Ryan Spencer



Ryan Taylor Spencer, 37, of Lind, WA, passed away on March 26, 2023. Ryan was born March 17, 1986, in Everett, Washington, to Larry Spencer and Robin Slattum.

Ryan was a hard worker and would give the shirt off his back if you needed it. He owned his own roofing business in Lind Washington, and many of the buildings around the area have benefited from his roofing skills and professionalism. He always has a smile on his face and a "live for the moment" attitude.

Ryan married the love of his life in 2013, and they have 2 boys together, Ryan (Bubba) and Carson.

Ryan loved nature, woodworking, camping, and rocking out. He was an avid hunter and fisherman. Ryan used his time productively to focus on his family, hobbies, and work projects. Ryan lived with his grandparents (Richard and Phyllis Spencer) in Houghton, SD, and attended Groton School until 2002 before moving back to Washington.

Ryan is survived by his wife Sierra; his sons Ryan and Carson; 3 brothers, Phillip Spencer(Rhonda), Nicholas Spencer(Sarah), and Willie Spencer(Riley) and his sister Makayla Louthain along with many cousins, nieces and a nephew.

A "Celebration of Life" will be held on Saturday, July 15th, 2023, at the Birdhouse located in Wylie Park at 6 pm.

If you would like to send a card to the family, please mail them to Kandi Wiseman at 405 E 8th Ave Groton, SD 57445

Zebra Mussels Discovered in Sand Lake National Refuge



Zebra mussels discovered in Sand Lake National Refuge

the peak of the summer boating season, and everyone needs to be doing their part to slow the spread of invasive species.”

GFP has significantly enhanced efforts to slow the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in recent years, both educating anglers and boaters to clean, drain, dry every time they are on the water as well as physically inspecting boats prior to and/or after loading.

“In addition to our messaging, watercraft inspection stations are set up across South Dakota,” concluded Harrington. “Individuals are reminded if you see an inspection station, you have to stop and do your part.”

Pierre, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in Sand Lake National Refuge in Brown County.

“We discovered the presence of zebra mussels through snorkel survey, which is utilized on high risk and suspect waters,” said Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Tanner Davis. “Due to the discovery, both Sand Lake National Refuge and the James River are now considered infested with zebra mussels.”

GFP has been enhancing surveillance and sampling efforts across the state to monitor for the presence of zebra mussels.

GFP has implemented their Zebra Mussel Rapid Response Team to respond to this infestation. Through this response team GFP will work to notify anglers, boaters, and other recreational users of the zebra mussel presence within the lake. They will place high-profile signs on access areas, actively engage boaters using the infested water, reiterate information on decontamination requirements, and identify groups of people and entities that will be potentially affected by the infestation.

“Boaters and anglers in this area can expect to see additional reminders to ‘clean, drain, dry’ on physical signs, in their email inboxes, and on social media,” said GFP Communications Manager, Nick Harrington. “We are in

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5 DAYS OF FUN!

FOR AGES 5-12!

WOOHOO!

BIBLE LESSONS
MEMORY VERSES
SONGS
WHAT HAPPENS AT A 5-DAY CLUB?
PRIZES
FUN ACTIVITIES
GREAT GAMES

NOTE TO PARENTS:

Your child is invited to attend a fun club for boys and girls ages 5 to 12! 5-Day Club® meets for 90 minutes every day for five days. Clubs are sponsored by Child Evangelism Fellowship®, a Bible-centered ministry serving in over 190 countries around the world. All teachers and helpers have been trained and screened to ensure your child's protection. Parents are welcome to attend.

FREE!

When: July 10th- 14th

From: 10am - 11:30

Where: Groton Park

For more information contact:
Sakura Eggena
Local Coordinator
(605)-824-0650 or email at sakura.eggena@cefsd.org

 **CEF**
CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®
Since 1937 Reaching children worldwide®

To see an actual 5-Day Club® visit 5dayclub.com!

5-DAY CLUB®

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**BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY**

July 11, 2023, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Dirk Rogers – Speed Zone Changes, Right of Way & Dept Update
5. Mike Scott – Payloader Purchase
6. Kelsi Vinger – Court Resource Home MOU
7. Resolution – authorizing the lease and sale of real property located at 2914 Industrial Avenue, Aberdeen, Brown County, SD for the purpose of industrial development
8. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes from July 6, 2023
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
 - e. Raffle Permit
 - f. Temporary Malt Beverage Permit
 - g. Fireworks Permit
 - h. Claim Assignment
 - i. Lease Agreement
 - j. Landfill Tonnage Report
9. Other Business
10. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
11. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission - Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board)

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

2024 Budget Work Session following the Commission Meeting



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23



Photo from KSFY featuring Charle Imrie who was deployed to help out after Hurricane Harvey hit in 2017.

Fruit of the Spirit

Ladies Luncheon & Program

Wednesday, July 12 at Noon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Silent Auction 10:30 - 11:30

Door Prizes

Charla Imrie from The American Red Cross

will be the guest speaker

Advance tickets required \$15.00

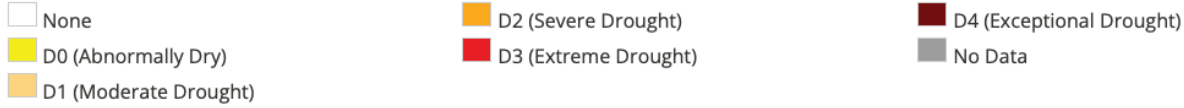
Call Kay Espeland 605-492-3507 or

Jane Goehring 605-290-1420

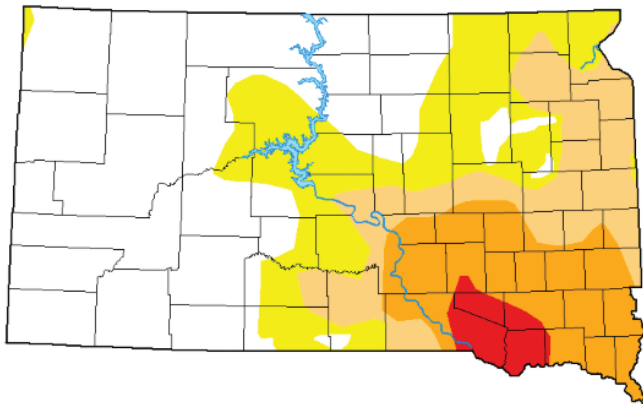
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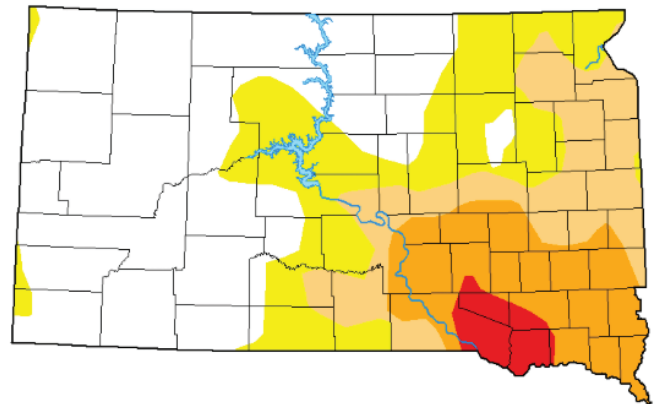
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



July 4



June 27

This week saw widespread improvements across the Great Plains. Much of the Great Plains portion of the region, with the exception of eastern Kansas, northern North Dakota and western Colorado, saw widespread precipitation, some of it heavy. Much of southeast and northwest Nebraska, northeast South Dakota and along the Wyoming-South Dakota border saw rainfall of at least 2 inches over the last week. In western Nebraska, eastern Wyoming and the Dakotas, this led to widespread improvements to the drought depiction in areas where the heaviest rains fell. Nebraska saw the most improvements in the High Plains with continued improvement in the Panhandle, the Sandhills up to the South Dakota border and the southeast near Nebraska City. Meanwhile, conditions continued to worsen in a majority of Kansas, particularly in the east and southeast where mostly dry weather continued. Given continued decreases in soil moisture and groundwater, and growing short- and long-term precipitation deficits, degradations were made from Manhattan to Fort Scott.

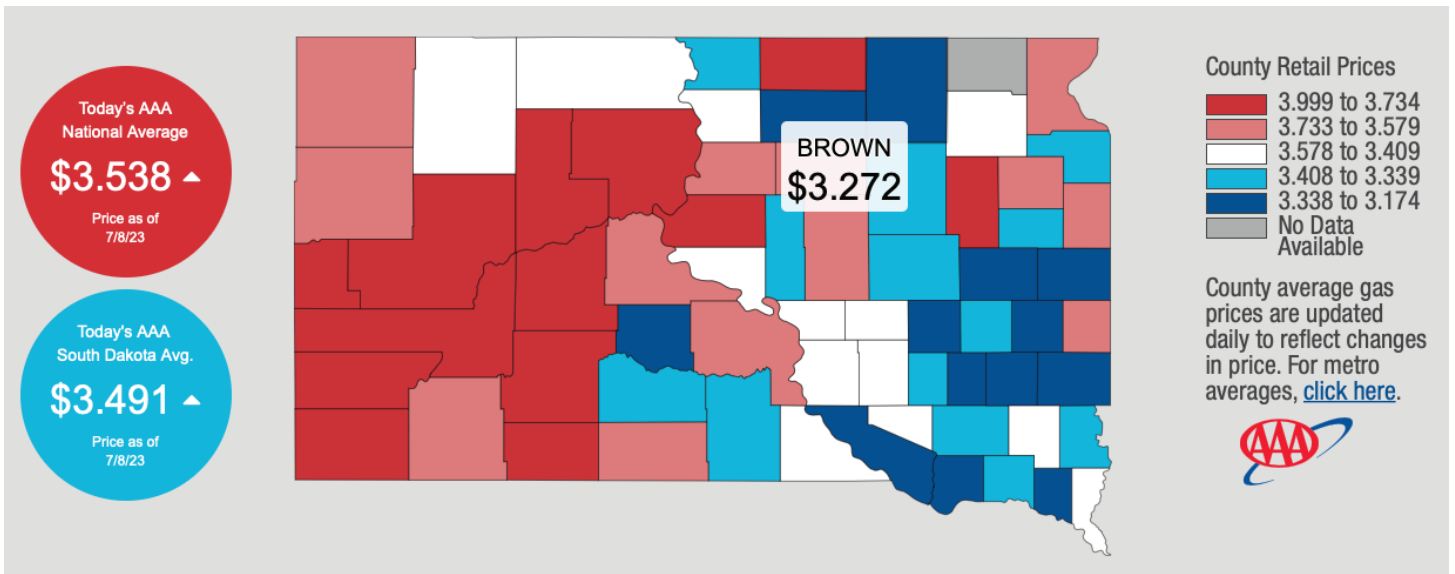
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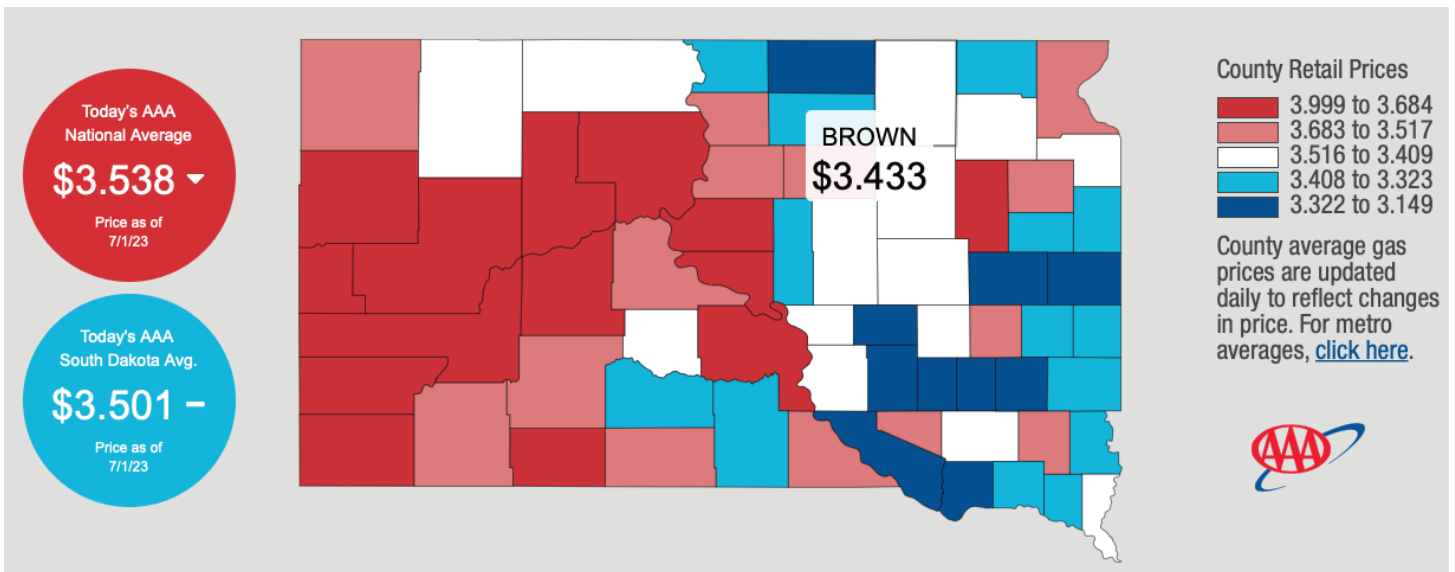
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.491	\$3.668	\$4.139	\$3.676
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.487	\$3.673	\$4.140	\$3.678
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.501	\$3.653	\$4.133	\$3.689
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.468	\$3.611	\$4.084	\$3.750
Year Ago Avg.	\$4.695	\$4.870	\$5.340	\$5.377

This Week



Two Weeks Ago



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Groton Legion Post 39 Beats Wood Post 19

Groton Legion Post 39 were victorious against Wood Post, 19 4-0 on Friday.

Groton Legion Post 39 got on the board in the bottom of the second inning after Braxton Imrie singled, Brevin Flihs singled, and Bradin Althoff was struck by a pitch, each scoring one run.

Ryan Groeblichhoff earned the win for Groton Legion Post 39. They allowed two hits and zero runs over seven innings, striking out four and walking none. Anthony Hanson stepped on the bump first for Post 19. They allowed five hits and four runs (three earned) over six innings, striking out nine and walking three.

Imrie, Flihs, Colby Dunker, Althoff, and Logan Ringgingberg each collected one hit for Groton Legion Post 39. Imrie, Flihs, and Althoff each drove in one run for Groton Legion Post 39.

Garrett Hebl went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Post 19 in hits.

Game Goes Down To The Wire As Groton Legion Post 39 Loses To Baltic Legion Post 175 On Final Play

Groton Legion Post 39 fell to Baltic Legion Post 175 10-9 on Friday on the final play of the game. The game was tied at nine in the bottom of the eighth when Beau Keith drew a walk, scoring one run.

Despite the loss, Groton Legion Post 39 did collect eight hits in the high-scoring affair. Unfortunately, Baltic Legion Post 175 had nine hits on the way to victory.

Groton Legion Post 39 got on the board in the top of the first inning after Bradin Althoff doubled, Tate Larson singled, and Logan Ringgingberg grounded out, each scoring one run.

Keith hit a solo home run to right field in the bottom of the first for the Baltic Legion Post 175.

Groton Legion Post 39 added one run in the third. Althoff grounded out, making the score 4-1.

Baltic Legion Post 175 scored five runs on three hits in the bottom of the fifth inning. An error scored one run, Gunner Schultz doubled, scoring two runs, and Keith homered to right field, scoring two runs.

Jose Valadez homered to left field, which helped Baltic Legion Post 175 tie the game at seven in the bottom of the sixth.

In the top of the eighth, Groton Legion Post 39 broke up the tie when Althoff doubled, scoring one run. Then a single by Colby Dunker followed to extend the lead to 9-7.

Baltic Legion Post 175 captured the lead, 10-9, in the bottom of the eighth after , Schultz walked, and Keith walked, each scoring one run.

Riley Schultz earned the win for Baltic Legion Post 175. The starting pitcher allowed six hits and eight runs (six earned) over seven and two-thirds innings, striking out 10 and walking one. Korbin Kucker took the loss for Groton Legion Post 39. The righty went three innings, surrendering three runs (one earned) on two hits, striking out one and walking three. Cole Simon stepped on the hill first for Groton Legion Post 39. The starting pitcher allowed six hits and six runs (one earned) over four and two-thirds innings, striking out four and walking one.

Brevin Flihs, Dunker, and Althoff each collected two hits for Groton Legion Post 39. Althoff provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Groton Legion Post 39 with four runs batted in. The 3-hole hitter went 2-for-4 on the day.

Baltic Legion Post 175 collected nine hits in the game. Keith, Valadez, and Riley Dobbins each collected two hits for Baltic Legion Post 175. Keith drove the middle of the lineup, leading Baltic Legion Post 175 with four runs batted in. The outfielder went 2-for-3 on the day. Keith led Baltic Legion Post 175 with two walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, accumulating six walks for the game. Rikker Rogers stole two bases.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Unusual alliances emerge amid opposition to eminent domain for carbon pipelines

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 7, 2023 4:48 PM

Opponents of eminent domain for carbon dioxide pipeline projects in South Dakota have forged a unique coalition. It includes Republicans, Democrats, climate change deniers who see the pipelines as a boondoggle, and environmentalists skeptical of the pipelines' benefits.

Many of them agree on one contention: that unlike water and natural gas pipelines, electrical transmission lines and other projects that have used a legal process called eminent domain to gain access to land, a liquified carbon dioxide pipeline would not deliver a product needed by the general public. Therefore, opponents say, carbon pipeline projects should not be allowed to use eminent domain to access land against a landowner's will.

"It hasn't mattered to me, in this fight, who is a Democrat, who is a Republican," said state Rep. Karla Lems, a Republican from rural Canton who owns land that would be crossed by pipelines. "I want to know if you are for the United States of America and the rights written in our Constitution."

Two pipelines that would pass through eastern South Dakota – which both have permit hearings scheduled later this summer – would create the largest carbon dioxide pipeline networks in the United States. They would gather carbon dioxide emitted from about 60 ethanol plants and biorefineries in the Midwest and transport it for underground storage in North Dakota and Illinois. The combined length of the pipelines would be around 4,000 miles.

The intention behind the projects is to combat climate change, and the projects are eligible for billions of dollars in federal incentives created for that purpose. Additional support stems from the pipelines' potential to help sustain and grow the ethanol industry.

Opponents of the projects staged a rally Thursday in the state Capitol in Pierre, where the political diversity of the coalition was on display.

'This is the Green New Deal'

Freddie Robinson, a veteran from Aberdeen, claimed the pipeline projects are part of a globalist agenda disguised as environmental action.

"We fought for this country to protect the right that what is yours is yours," Robinson said. "Not so that communists can come along and take it."

When asked what communists he was referencing, he replied, "Anybody for the pipeline, I guess."

Robinson perceives the broader carbon sequestration goal that's motivating the projects – and climate change science more generally – as a scam.

Scientists and other experts say carbon dioxide pipelines are vital to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

That's a goal of many nations because the earth's average surface temperature has risen over the past century, with the last few decades being the warmest on record – and it is projected to continue warming. Scientists attribute the trend to an increase in greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide) due to human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.

But while some laud carbon capture technology as a necessary step in combating climate change, for others, it's a government boondoggle.

"If we didn't have all these government tax credits involved in this project, this project would not be

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going anywhere," said Lems, who introduced unsuccessful legislation during the 2022 legislative session to bar carbon pipelines from using eminent domain.

The credits she referenced were increased by Congress last year. Carbon pipeline projects are now eligible for annual federal payments of up to \$85 per metric ton of carbon stored. The two projects that would pass through South Dakota – proposed by Summit Carbon Solutions and Navigator CO2 Ventures – could sequester enough carbon to qualify for more than \$1 billion apiece in annual incentives.

Lems said money was also involved in the failure of her anti-eminent domain legislation last winter.

"There were over 20 lobbyists on the side of the pipeline companies, and they were wining and dining legislators, and so were the ethanol companies," Lems said. "They were really pushing this project. On our side, we had maybe three lobbyists. By the time we were done, we maybe had four."

The two pipelines would traverse a combined 4 miles of Lems' own property. She first learned of the proposals in 2021.

"I was like, well, this is the Green New Deal," Lems said. "Immediately, that's the first thing that came into my mind."

The Green New Deal refers to a proposed set of policies and goals aimed at addressing climate change and promoting economic and social justice. As a broad framework, different versions and interpretations exist.

'This is not the solution'

Some carbon pipeline opponents are concerned about climate change. But they're also concerned about dangerous carbon dioxide plumes from potential pipeline leaks. They question the wisdom of incentivizing carbon capture instead of halting emissions. And they worry that carbon pipelines would aid the ethanol industry, which could lead to the conversion of more grassland for corn.

Some opponents argue the net result is a substantial public expenditure without delivering the intended environmental benefits.

They say the investments in carbon capture technology might be better allocated toward other carbon sequestration methods – such as paying farmers to naturally store more carbon in the ground via soil health practices and protecting grasslands.

"We already have the best carbon sequestration method with natural grasslands," said state Sen. Red Dawn Foster, a Democrat from Pine Ridge and a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Referencing people at Thursday's rally in Pierre, she added, "If we put that type of money and focus on our natural grasslands, these people wouldn't be here today. This is not the solution."

Foster said it's not hard to understand why property-rights issues cut through the partisan divide.

"It's about our connection to the land, and that transcends party," Foster said. "That's what it comes down to. We have a privately held company that's going against the will of our farmers and ranchers who have a connection to their land. Being with them is being with our people."

State Rep. Scott Odenbach, a Republican from Spearfish, used some of the same language, saying when foundational principles like property are threatened, "it transcends party."

Many of the lawmakers who oppose the pipeline projects are Democrats or Republicans who don't have official leadership positions in the Legislature.

However, House Majority Leader Rep. Will Mortenson, a Republican from Pierre, voted for a bill barring carbon pipeline companies from using eminent domain and continues to express opposition to the use of eminent domain by the pipeline companies.

The Democrats who attended Thursday's rally are from west of the Missouri River, where less corn is grown.

"It's property rights versus corporate America," said Rep. Oren Lesmeister, D-Parade. "Proponents will say everyone should turn off their faucets and lights because eminent domain made that happen. I challenge people to look into that. Very little, if any, eminent domain is used to put in a power line or a water line because 'we the people' wanted those."

Rep. Marty Overweg is a Republican from rural New Holland, which is east of the Missouri River, but he and Lesmeister agree on many issues. "You're going to find out that Oren and I vote together almost 100%

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when it comes to agricultural issues and property rights, because it's the worlds we live in," Overweg said. "This is about money," he added. "And sometimes we have to tell these corporations, no, you cannot have that."

What's next

With a coalition of property rights advocates, environmentalists and concerned citizens, opponents are determined to succeed. But so far, Gov. Kristi Noem has not agreed to call the special legislative session that the coalition is demanding, and the two-thirds support needed for the Legislature to call itself into a special session has not materialized.

Meanwhile, Summit Carbon Solutions says it has secured easements – agreements to allow a pipeline to cross land, in exchange for a payment – from 70% of the affected landowners in South Dakota.

"This level of support shows that landowners support Summit's mission to partner with ethanol plants to make them more profitable by opening new markets not available to them today," the company said in a written statement. "This will make farmers more profitable, driving economic growth and the ag economy in South Dakota."

Charlie Johnson, an organic farmer near Madison whose land would be crossed by one of the pipelines, said easements don't always translate to support.

"Most of the people I know that did sign, they did so because eminent domain was hanging over their heads," Johnson said.

The Summit and Navigator CO2 Ventures pipelines each have permit hearings scheduled this summer with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission.

Permit hearings

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission will conduct multi-day hearings this summer on the permit applications for two proposed carbon dioxide pipelines.

The hearing for Navigator CO2 Ventures will begin at 9 a.m. Central on July 25 at the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre.

Details are pending for the Summit Carbon Solutions hearing, which is scheduled to begin Sept. 11.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Statewide high school course certifies students to become child care workers

Program helps address industry workforce shortage

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 7, 2023 4:47 PM

There are 12,260 licensed child care slots in Sioux Falls, but 64% of child care centers can't enroll their licensed capacity because they don't have enough workers, according to the Sioux Falls Childcare Collaborative. That cuts actual available slots by hundreds — and it's a familiar situation across the state.

The collaborative presented the results of a six-month study in June, detailing affordability challenges — for parents and caregivers — and potential solutions to address the need.

One of those recommendations was "increase career pathways to the profession," such as creating a high school dual-credit program or developing internships and job training programs.

Beginning this fall, one of those solutions will kick off in schools across the state: a high school-level Child Development Associate (CDA) course. The course will allow high school students to earn the credential to work toward becoming an early childhood education professional at day cares and preschools while earning high school credits toward graduation.

"We can't keep talking about how there's a teacher and early childhood shortage and not do anything about it," said Summer Schultz, incoming superintendent of the Brookings School District and former Dell Rapids superintendent. "Our preschools and day cares need to keep staffed with quality people. This opens the door for more trained individuals at an earlier date."

The program allows any student in South Dakota interested in early childhood education to earn a CDA credential through a virtual course. Larger school districts, like Aberdeen and Harrisburg, will have their own in-person courses, said Travis Lape, innovative programs director at Harrisburg and Educators Rising SD state director.

The program was created through a partnership between Educators Rising SD, the state Department of Social Services, Sanford CHILD Services and the federal Department of Education Head Start Collaboration Office.

The course combines required class time with required on-site training at day cares. Students will work 480 hours at a day care before earning their credential. While those students will have to be supervised at all times and won't be left alone with children, it will be another set of hands to care for children, Lape said.

"Let's say that the Sioux Falls School District alone had 100 kids in this course. We'd need 100 placements for those kids to earn their 480 hours. That's 100 new employees," Lape said. "If Harrisburg has 60, that's 160 between the two school districts in the Sioux Falls metro. This attacks the early childhood education workforce in that we'll have 16- to 18-year-olds who are passionate about early childhood education wanting to get their feet wet and work."

Lape said the online virtual class will allow 30 students to attend in the first year and train at day cares in their community. About 10 spots are already filled, with student locations ranging from Madison to Yankton to Deuel County and Faulkton County. Lape expects more students will sign up throughout the summer.

Harrisburg and Aberdeen school districts will have about 100 students between the two school systems taking in-person classes this school year, Lape estimated.

Currently, day care workers seeking their CDA credential in South Dakota attend an online course run by a third-party agency funded by the state DSS. Sanford CHILD Services operates training in the Sioux Falls metro and Aberdeen areas, and it already had an online course and curriculum in place. It was relatively simple to turn the existing training into high school coursework with the partnership, Lape said.

The program "puts South Dakota well ahead of the curve" in addressing worker shortages in the field, said Deborah Bergeron, deputy director for community engagement and innovation at the Head Start Collaboration Office. While there are CDA programs in high schools in other states, those are in individual schools rather than being available statewide.

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Bergeron hopes to see students fill needed positions at Head Start locations across the state. Head Start is a federally funded program that delivers early learning, health, nutrition and family support services to impoverished children up to age 5. South Dakota has 154 Head Start centers.

Nationally, 20% of Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms were closed between May and September 2022, primarily due to staff vacancies. That meant sending children home, where some parents couldn't work or had to attempt to enroll them in programs that were too expensive.

"We serve the most vulnerable kids in the country," Bergeron said. "The impact is more than the kid not attending preschool. Head Start is where they generally get the best nutrition, where they're connected with well child visits at the doctor, where we catch early learning disabilities that might not get noticed otherwise."

The program will only address the "increased pathways" recommendation by the Sioux Falls Childcare Collaborative. Other factors, such as low employee salaries, are major factors in the workforce shortage.

The mean hourly wage for child care workers in Sioux Falls in May 2022 was \$12.34, about \$26,000 a year. The report recommends subsidizing child care by local businesses, the city or state government to help address that issue.

Students in the new CDA course will attend two classes a week for 90 minutes each. Outside of class, students will work in local child care centers to earn their 480 hours of on-the-job supervised experience.

"If a school has to fund a math teacher or an education training teacher, you know where they'll fund it. It's the math teacher, even though we know we need an education training teacher for teaching the next generation of teachers," Lape said. "We wanted to take that barrier away."

Typically, it would cost \$800 for a child care provider to earn the credential, but the program doesn't charge students. DSS awarded Sanford a contract to provide the instructor and coursework, Lape added.

If students decide not to enter into the workforce directly after high school, the program could count toward credit hours to earn an associate or bachelor's degree in the field. Lape said it's a launching point for students who might be interested in other teaching paths outside of early childhood education.

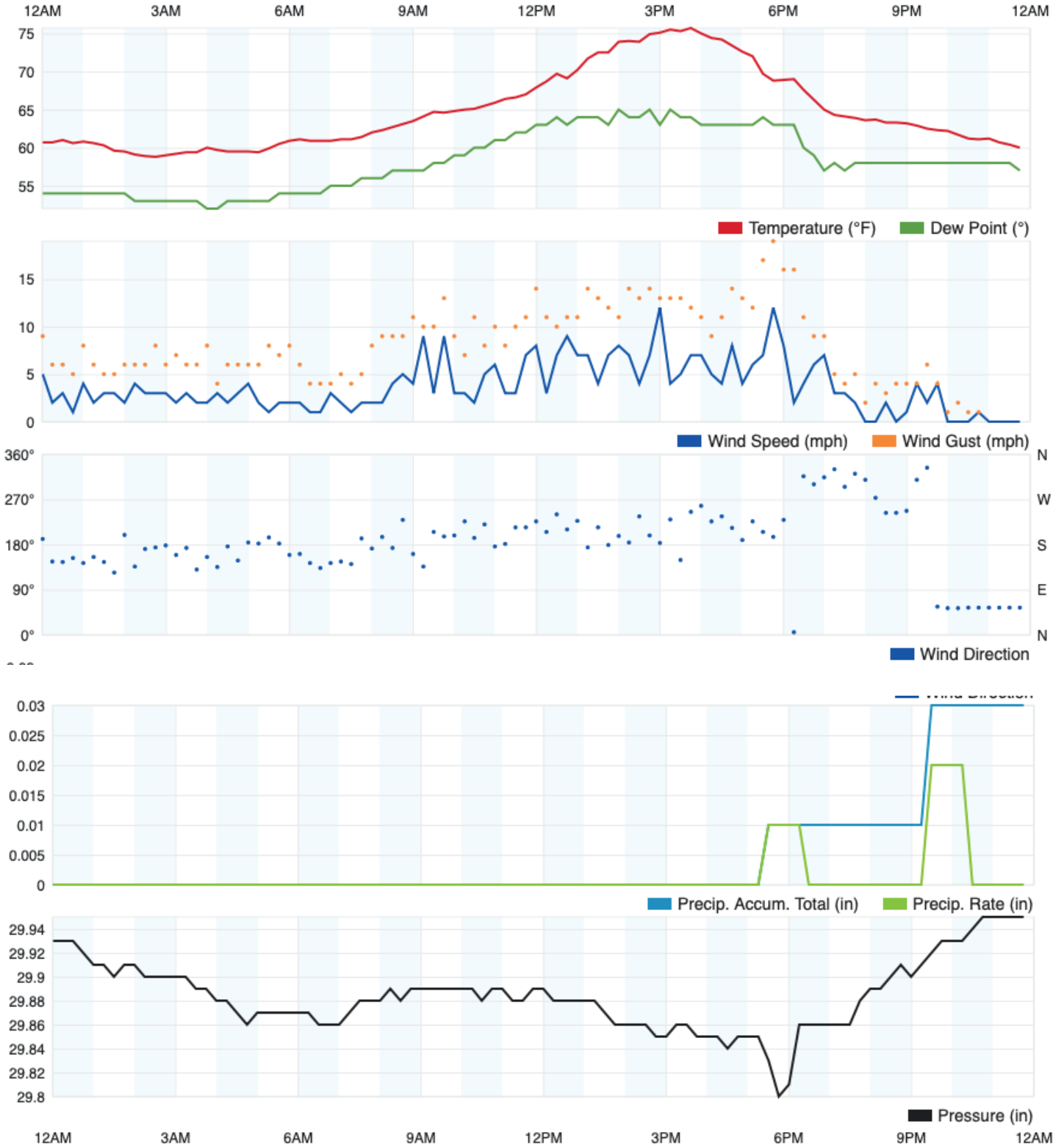
"This training is not going to make you a bad teacher," Lape said. "If anything, it'll help you understand the bigger picture — development, safety, health and wellness. It's a stepping stone."

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers
High: 77 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 87 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 85 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 76 °F

Today

July 8th, 2023



Highs 72 to 80°

Warmest along & west of the Missouri River, coolest across the Prairie Coteau. 5 to 10° below normal.

Sunday

Monday



82 to 88°

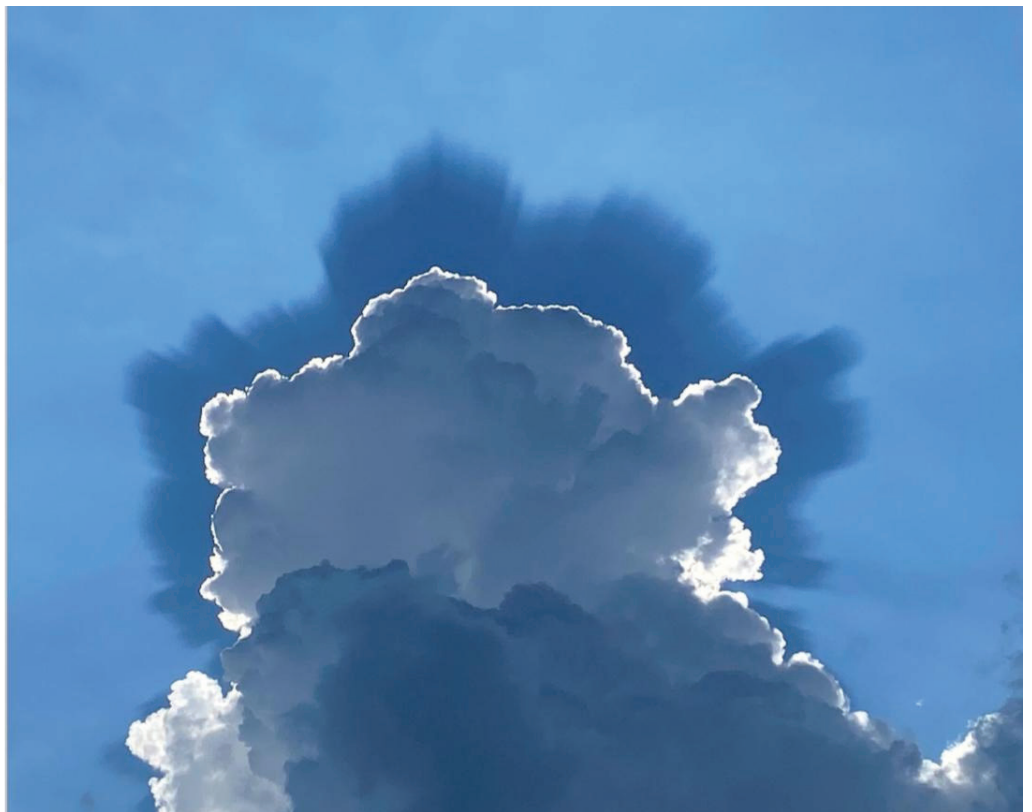
80 to 92°

Mostly sunny skies may be interrupted by isolated storms (<20% chance), which may become strong to severe Sun & Mon.



July 8, 2023

5:19 AM



Light winds, mostly sunny skies, and below normal temperatures will be replaced by warmer conditions and isolated strong to possibly severe storm chances Sunday and Monday afternoons (<20% chance). Cooler temperatures return Tuesday and Wednesday, along with a chance for more widespread showers and storms.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 76 °F at 3:39 PM

Low Temp: 59 °F at 2:41 AM

Wind: 21 mph at 6:02 PM

Precip: .04

Day length: 15 hours, 33 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1936

Record Low: 43 in 1905

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 0.94

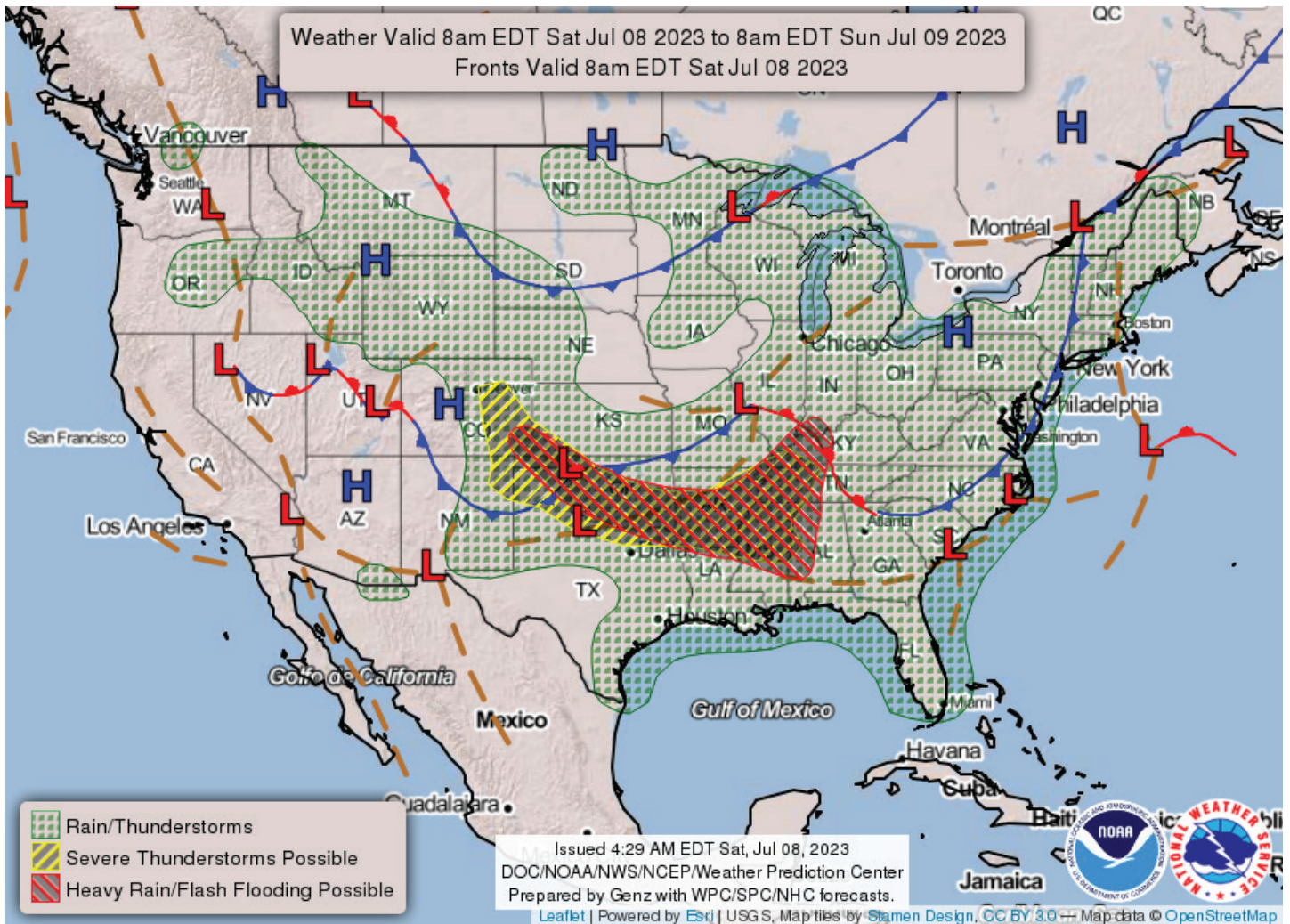
Precip to date in July.: 1.13

Average Precip to date: 11.95

Precip Year to Date: 12.48

Sunset Tonight: 9:24:11 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:51:37 AM



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Today in Weather History

July 8, 1922: Two tornadoes occurred near the southern border of South Dakota, with one at St. Charles in Gregory County, and the other on the south shore of Lake Andes, in Charles Mix County. The distance apart was about 30 miles. The tornado in Gregory County missed the town of Lake Andes. However, it destroyed about 29 cottages and five large barns. Fifteen people were injured, but no one was killed.

July 8, 1951: An F2 touched down in open country and moved northeastward, passing three miles northwest of Corona in Roberts County. Thirteen buildings were destroyed on a farm with only the house left standing. Three cows and 20 pigs were killed.

July 8, 2009: A tornado passed through the city of Dickinson, ND, on the far south side, mainly just south of the Heart River. From their eyewitness accounts, and from video obtained from the Dickinson Police Department, it is likely that this was a rain-wrapped tornado, and very difficult if not impossible to see. The tornado occurred before sunset, yet it was described as being as dark as night during the event. Over 450 structures were damaged, of which nearly 100 were declared destroyed or beyond repair. Numerous vehicles were damaged or destroyed; some were on their roofs. From that, it was determined that peak wind speeds in the tornado were on the order of 150 mph.

July 8, 2011: Historical releases on the Oahe Dam of 160,000 CFS kept the Missouri River from Pierre to Chamberlain at record flood levels throughout July. Extensive sandbagging and levee building had been done earlier to hold back the river. Residents in the Pierre, Fort Pierre, and Oacoma areas continued to be the most affected by the river. Many homes, along with roads, crop, and pastureland remained flooded throughout the month. The Missouri River at Pierre continued from 5 to 6 foot above flood stage throughout July. The Missouri River at Chamberlain reached a record stage of 75.1 feet on July 8th. Flood stage at Chamberlain is 65 feet. The flooding on the river began in late May and continued into August.

July 8, 2013: A thunderstorm complex moving across central and north central South Dakota produced gusty winds up to 70 mph. These strong winds brought down several tree branches around the area with Dewey County the hardest hit location. In Timber Lake, downed tree branches fell on houses and vehicles causing damage.

1680: The first confirmed tornado death in the United States occurred in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The funnel was filled with stones, bushes, and other things. The tornado also unroofed a barn and snapped many large trees.

1816 - Frost was reported in low places throughout New England. (David Ludlum)

1950 - The town of York, NE, was deluged with 13.15 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1975 - Three people were killed and six others were injured when lightning struck a walnut tree near Mayo, FL. The nine people were stringing tobacco under a tin shed when the bolt hit the nearby tree. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in the central U.S. produced wind gusts to 90 mph at Waterloo, IA, 6.38 inches of rain at Tescott, KS, and twenty-five minutes of ping-pong ball size hail at Drummond, OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Beckley, WV, equalled their all-time record with a high of 93 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes in Adams and Logan counties of eastern Colorado, and hail caused 2.3 million dollars damage in Adams, Logan and Washington counties. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: What may be the world's highest dew point temperature was recorded at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in the Persian Gulf. A dew point of 95 degrees was recorded at 3 PM while the air temperature was 108 degrees. The apparent temperature at that time would have been 172 degrees.

2009: An intense cold front brings heavy snow, hail, high winds and unusually cold temperatures to southern Peru. The severe conditions were blamed for the deaths of more than 246 children due to cold-related illnesses.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

SALVATION AND CHANGE

"Never trust Tom. I did and he disappointed me. Not only once, but twice!" said his employer.

"But why should I not trust him?" his friend asked.

"People never change. Once a thief, always a thief! Once a liar, always a liar," he raged.

But that is not always true.

Few people were more despised than the tax collectors in Jesus' day. The Romans were attempting to establish a world empire, and it was a costly venture. They needed money!

To accomplish their goal, they levied heavy taxes on all of the nations that were under their control. Without the tax collectors, the Empire could not survive. So, it was no surprise that the people were shocked when Jesus went to the home of Zacchaeus. How could someone as honest as Jesus associate with such a dishonest thief and liar as Zacchaeus?

However, when confronted by Jesus, he realized his sins and shortcomings and that he needed to straighten out his life. And he did! "Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor. If I have cheated anyone of anything, I will pay him back four times." And he did.

The new birth brings new behaviors. When God changes the inside, people will see it by the way we act on the outside. No change on the outside? No change on the inside.

Prayer: Forgive us, Father, if we claim to be born again but continue to live sinful lives. May we repent now, give our hearts and lives to You, and become "new creations in Christ!" Amen.

Scripture For Today: May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands. Psalm 90:17



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.07.23

8 10 17 55 66 3

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$480,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.05.23

9 21 38 39 48 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$5,230,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 38 Mins 37
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.07.23

2 3 15 16 34 13

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 53 Mins 38
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.05.23

4 15 22 30 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$137,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 53 Mins 38
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.05.23

10 19 47 50 53 26

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 22 Mins 37
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.05.23

17 24 48 62 68 23

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$615,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 22 Mins 37
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Ukraine's president hails the country's soldiers from a Black Sea island to mark 500 days of war

By FELIPE DANA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy marked the 500th day of the war Saturday by hailing the country's soldiers in a video from a Black Sea island that became the symbol of Ukraine's resilience in the face of the Russian invasion.

Speaking from Snake Island, Zelenskyy honored the Ukrainian soldiers who fought for the island and all other defenders of the country, saying that reclaiming control of the island "is a great proof that Ukraine will regain every bit of its territory."

"I want to thank — from here, from this place of victory — each of our soldiers for these 500 days," Zelenskyy said. "Thank you to everyone who fights for Ukraine!"

It was unclear when the video was filmed. Zelenskyy was in Turkey on Saturday.

Russian forces took control of the tiny stone island on Feb. 24, 2022, the day Moscow launched its invasion, in the apparent hope of using it as a staging ground for an assault on Odesa, Ukraine's biggest port and the headquarters of its navy.

The island took on legendary significance for Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion, when Ukrainian troops there reportedly received a demand from a Russian warship to surrender or be bombed. The answer supposedly came back, "Go (expletive) yourself."

The island's Ukrainian defenders were captured by the Russians but later freed as part of a prisoner exchange. After the island was taken, the Ukrainian military heavily bombarded the small Russian garrison there, forcing the Russians to pull back on June 30, 2022. The Russian retreat reduced the threat of a seaborne Russian attack on Odesa and helped pave the way for a deal to resume Ukrainian grain exports.

"Let the freedom that all our heroes of different times wanted for Ukraine and that must be won right now be a tribute to all those who gave their lives for Ukraine," Zelenskyy said. "We will definitely win!"

Intense battles continued to rage Saturday in the country's east and south as Ukrainian forces pressed their attacks against multi-layered Russian defenses in the initial stages of their counteroffensive.

Ukraine's interior ministry said that a Russian rocket strike on the town of Lyman killed eight civilians and wounded 13 others early Saturday. Pavlo Kyrylenko, the governor of the eastern Donetsk region, posted images showing some of the dead, including a body lying under a bicycle and body fragments on the pavement next to a damaged vehicle, saying that "the Russian terrorists are continuing to strike civilians in Donetsk."

A private residence, a shop and a few cars were damaged in the attack on Lyman, which sits just a few kilometers (miles) from the front line, where Russian troops have recently intensified fighting in the forests of Kreminna.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense said in its latest intelligence update that the eastern town of Bakhmut that was captured by the Russians in May has seen some of the most intense fighting along the front during the last week.

It said that Ukrainian forces have made steady gains to both the north and south of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region, noting that "Russian defenders are highly likely struggling with poor morale, a mix of disparate units and a limited ability to find and strike Ukrainian artillery."

Amid the fighting, Russia and Ukraine accused each other of planning to sabotage the Russia-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is Europe's largest, fueling fears of a radiation catastrophe. Ukraine's military intelligence claimed Saturday that Russian troops have planted more mines around the plant, a claim that couldn't be independently verified.

The head of the United Nations nuclear agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, told The Associated Press Friday that the International Atomic Energy Agency experts had recently gained access to more of the site, in-

cluding the cooling pond and fuel storage areas, and found no mines there. Grossi said he was still pushing for access to the rooftops of reactors where Ukrainian officials accused Russia of planting explosives.

As the tensions swirled around the plant, the Russian military has insisted that it has successfully fended off Ukrainian attacks in various sections of the front.

On Saturday, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu was shown visiting firing ranges where volunteer soldiers are being trained, a trip that comes two weeks after an abortive mutiny launched by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, whose Wagner troops marched on Moscow in a bid to oust Shoigu.

Prigozhin agreed to end the mutiny, which represented the biggest threat to Russian President Vladimir Putin in his more than two decades in power, in exchange for an amnesty for himself and his troops and permission to move to Belarus. On Saturday, Russian messaging app channels ran comments by one of Wagner's commanders, Anton Yelizarov, who said that the mercenaries have taken leave but would eventually deploy to Belarus.

Pitched battles along the front line in Ukraine are raging as NATO leaders are set to meet in Vilnius for a two-day summit next week to offer more help in modernizing Ukraine's armed forces, create a new high-level forum for consultations and reaffirm that it will join their alliance one day.

Ahead of the NATO summit, the U.S. has announced that it will provide Ukraine with cluster munitions, a move that President Joe Biden described as a "difficult decision." Two-thirds of NATO members have banned the munitions which have a track record of causing many civilian casualties, but the U.S. sees their delivery as a way to help bolster Ukraine's offensive and push through Russian front lines.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov hailed the U.S. move, saying that the delivery of cluster munitions will help the country de-occupy its territories while saving the lives of the Ukrainian soldiers.

Reznikov vowed that Ukraine will use the munitions only for the de-occupation of its territory and will not fire them at Russia's proper territory. Reznikov also noted that the Ukrainian military will not use cluster munitions in urban areas to avoid hurting civilians, adding that they will be put to action in the field to "break through the enemy defense lines with minimum risk for the lives of our soldiers."

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine: <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

A German county elected a far-right candidate for the first time since the Nazi era, raising concern

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

SONNEBERG, Germany (AP) — Mike Knoth is more than thrilled that a far-right populist party's candidate recently won the county administration in his hometown in rural eastern Germany for the first time since the Nazi era.

The gardener despises the country's established parties, he doesn't trust the media and he feels there are too many migrants in the country. The far-right party Alternative for Germany, or AfD, he hopes, will improve everything that's not going well in his eyes in Sonneberg, which is in the southeastern state of Thuringia.

"I think the fact that so many people voted for Alternative for Germany has already given it legitimacy," Knoth, 50, said during an interview this week as he walked his dog down the town's deserted main shopping street.

But some in Sonneberg haven't been won over by AfD's nationalist and antidemocratic rhetoric.

Margret Sturm, an optometrist whose family has been selling glasses for almost 60 years in Sonneberg, voiced her concern over AfD's victory in an interview with a public television station.

"I told them that I don't think it's good to vote for the AfD. And whoever votes for the AfD must know that they have the Nazis in tow," Sturm told The Associated Press in an interview in her store.

Sturm can barely fathom what happened after the interview was aired last week.

"We got hate mail, threatening phone calls, every minute. We were insulted by people we don't even know, who don't know us, who don't know the business."

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The threats were so relentless that Sturm's husband installed surveillance cameras inside the store. But Sturm, 60, said she won't let anybody silence her.

"People here are afraid to take a stand against the AfD and that makes us even more worried than anything else."

She said that other residents who oppose the AfD no longer want to voice their criticism openly.

"That's exactly the kind of intimidation that basically results from the machinery of hatred and incitement and then sadly spreads. And that really worries me," said Stephan Kramer, the head of Thuringia's state domestic intelligence agency, told the AP at his office in the state capital, Erfurt.

Kramer has warned for years that AfD's Thuringia branch is particularly radical and put it under official surveillance more than two years ago as a "proven right-wing extremist" group.

It doesn't bother Knoth that the AfD is under surveillance by Thuringia's domestic state intelligence agency for its close ties to far-right extremists.

"It was elected democratically, and I don't find anything offensive about it," he said.

Knoth expects the AfD to take a law-and-order approach, curb immigration and make Germany safe.

Tackling migration or fighting crime are hardly topics that belong to the job description of a local county administrator, but the AfD's Robert Sesselmann campaign on these themes proved to be successful.

The runoff election in Sonneberg county last month pitted Sesselmann against center-right rival Jürgen Köpper. Official figures showed that Sesselmann won by 52.8% to 47.2%.

Sonneberg has a relatively small population of 56,800, but the win was a symbolic milestone for AfD.

The unemployed Radoslaw Schneider, 39, also expects things to improve now that Sesselmann is in charge. He said that AfD "believes that something needs to be done also for the Germans," and foreigners should no longer get preferential treatment — which will happen now with AfD in power, he thinks.

Alternative for Germany first entered the national parliament in 2017 following an anti-migrant campaign in response to a mass arrival of refugees to Europe.

The party, a decade old, has been polling at record levels nationally with between 18% and 20% of support.

Center-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz's governing coalition with the environmentalist Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats, meanwhile, faces strong headwind over high immigration, a plan to replace millions of home heating systems, and a reputation for infighting, while inflation remains high.

AFD's Thuringia leader, Björn Höcke, has espoused revisionist views of Germany's Nazi past. In 2018, he called the Holocaust memorial in Berlin a "monument of shame" and called for Germany to perform a "180-degree turn" when it comes to the way it remembers its past.

In the early 1930s, Thuringia was one of the first power bases of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Party.

Nowadays, the AfD appeals especially to people in the formerly communist and less prosperous eastern states, such as Thuringia.

The coronavirus pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine and the influx of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees to Germany have also contributed to AfD's success, Katharina König-Preuss, a state lawmaker with The Left party in Thuringia, said during an interview in the state parliament in Erfurt.

The party has been putting the blame for many problems squarely on immigrants or the national government, she said.

"I would say that a great deal of these racist narratives, which don't match reality at all, have now caught on with a larger part of the East German population," said König-Preuss, who is one of the most outspoken critics of the AfD and has received several death threats.

Scholz tried to play down the recent rise of the far-right populists.

"Germany has been a strong democracy for a long time now, since World War II," Scholz told reporters in Berlin last week after being asked what he's doing to prevent a resurgence of fascism 77 years since Hitler's demise.

It was Germany's Nazi rule, which led to the murder of 6 million European Jews and others, and more than 60 million dead in World War II, that gives Kramer sleepless nights.

"When I look at this development in Germany, the country where industrial mass murder was driven to perfection, then this is different from all other countries," he said.

In autumn 2024, there will be state elections in Thuringia. The AfD leads in the polls with more than 30%.

If the AfD, which is currently still shunned by all other mainstream parties in Germany, will become part of the state government, then Kramer, who is Jewish, will leave the country with his family.

"We've seen before in history where that can lead," he said. "And I must honestly confess, I have no desire to wait for it to occur again."

NATO summit host Lithuania is a small country with a loud voice, especially when it comes to Russia

By LIUDAS DAPKUS Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — A pair of colorful children's scooters rest against the yellow tracks of a battle tank, parked in the shade of skyscrapers in the Vilnius business district. The area, usually busy with cars, cyclists and pedestrians, is closed to traffic and packed with heavy armored vehicles.

"Never in its history was Lithuania this safe," says Jonas Braukyla, an IT engineer, who brought his family to see the U.S.-made Abrams tanks, German Leopards and Marders and other military hardware brought out to project NATO power ahead of an alliance summit next week. "They are even bringing Patriot missile defenses over here. Now we must help our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and I hope the summit will bring good news for them."

The two-day summit starting Tuesday with U.S. President Joe Biden and other NATO leaders will be the most high-profile international event that Lithuania has hosted since it joined the alliance in 2004, and some locals hope it will be of historic significance.

Others are less optimistic.

"The Vilnius summit will be important, but not historic. I doubt that the decision on Ukraine's future will be precise and affirmative," said Dalia Grybauskaitė, Lithuania's former president.

Her skepticism reflects a widely held belief in the Baltic countries that the West, even after Russia launched the biggest war in Europe since World War II, has never truly understood the threat that Moscow poses to the continent.

Grybauskaitė earned a reputation as the "Baltic Iron Lady" for her resolute leadership and bluntness, particularly regarding Russia. The European Union's budget commissioner for five years before serving as Lithuania's president from 2009 to 2019, she was one of few European leaders who warned of Russian interference in eastern Europe even before Moscow annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

Now, she says, many Western leaders are still grossly misled about the Kremlin's real intentions and lack the political will to respond accordingly.

"After the Crimea occupation, the reaction from the West was very slow, despite Russia demonstrating openly in broad daylight that it could occupy the territories of neighboring countries," Grybauskaitė told The Associated Press in an interview this week.

"We tried to explain to them what that means, but we were criticized, laughed at, and not believed. Today, most of them agree who was right but that is not important anymore. What is more concerning is that even now they hear us, but they don't listen."

She said many Europeans still fail to understand the chasm in values between Russia and the West. She dismissed as "delusions" the idea that the two sides could find common ground through negotiations.

"It's not just the war against Ukraine, it's the quest against our entire civilization," said the 67-year-old, who last week received the Manfred Wörner Medal, a prestigious German award for services toward peace and freedom in Europe. "If Ukraine does not achieve a definitive victory on the battlefield, the West will end up in limbo. The aggressive actions against it will last for decades to come."

Resentment toward Moscow runs deep in Lithuania and in its Baltic neighbors, Latvia and Estonia, all of which toiled under Soviet occupation for five decades. Unlike many Western countries, they remained skeptical of peaceful co-existence with Moscow after the Iron Curtain fell.

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Lithuania, which borders Russian ally Belarus to the east and Russia's Kaliningrad exclave to the west, is investing heavily in its military, with plans to spend 3% of GDP on defense in the near future — well above the NATO target. Its skies are patrolled by NATO jets and Germany has pledged to deploy around 4,000 troops in Lithuania permanently. But critics worry that wouldn't be enough to protect the country if the war spreads beyond Ukraine.

Vytautas Landsbergis, Lithuania's first leader after it regained independence in the early 1990s, has mocked suggestions that an agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin might be reached over Ukraine.

"As long as there is Russia, there will never be such a thing as 'after the war.' You should say it frankly: 'after Russia.' Maybe then the world would have a chance," he told reporters this week.

That mindset makes some NATO partners uneasy. French President Emmanuel Macron earlier this year said the war in Ukraine must not turn into a campaign to "crush" the Russian Federation.

"I want Russia to be defeated in Ukraine, and I want Ukraine to be able to defend itself. But I'm certain that in the end this will not be resolved militarily," Macron told French media at the annual Munich Security Conference in February. "I don't think, as some do, that Russia must be totally taken apart, attacked on its territory. ... That was never France's position, and it never will be."

The small Baltic countries are among the top contributors of military aid to Ukraine on a per-capita basis. They're also among the staunchest advocates of inviting Ukraine to join NATO, another sensitive issue in the alliance. Offering Ukraine a roadmap toward NATO membership will be on the agenda in Vilnius, where streets and squares have been decorated with blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flags for the summit.

"The accession process must start, because waiting for a post-war situation allows Putin to never ever finish this war," Grybauskaite said. "If we really care about the security of NATO territory, Ukraine inevitably needs to be part of it."

Associated Press writer Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed to this report.

Leslie Van Houten, follower of cult leader Charles Manson, is one big step closer to freedom

By ROBERT JABLON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California's governor announced Friday that he won't ask the state Supreme Court to block parole for Charles Manson follower Leslie Van Houten, paving the way for her release after serving 53 years in prison for two infamous murders.

In a brief statement, the governor's office said it was unlikely that the state's high court would consider an appeal of a lower court ruling that Van Houten should be released.

Gov. Gavin Newsom is disappointed, the statement said.

"More than 50 years after the Manson cult committed these brutal killings, the victims' families still feel the impact," the statement said.

Van Houten, now in her 70s, is serving a life sentence for helping Manson and other followers in the 1969 killings of Leno LaBianca, a grocer in Los Angeles, and his wife, Rosemary.

Van Houten could be freed in about two weeks after the parole board reviews her record and processes paperwork for her release from the California Institution for Women in Corona, her attorney Nancy Tetreault said.

She was recommended for parole five times since 2016 but Newsom and former Gov. Jerry Brown rejected all those recommendations.

However, a state appeals court ruled in May that Van Houten should be released, noting what it called her "extraordinary rehabilitative efforts, insight, remorse, realistic parole plans, support from family and friends" and favorable behavior reports while in prison.

"She's thrilled and she's overwhelmed," Tetreault said.

"She's just grateful that people are recognizing that she's not the same person that she was when she

committed the murders," she said.

After she's released, Van Houten will spend about a year in a halfway house, learning basic life skills such as how to go to the grocery and get a debit card, Tetreault said.

"She's been in prison for 53 years. ... She just needs to learn how to use an ATM machine, let alone a cell phone, let alone a computer," her attorney said.

Van Houten and other Manson followers killed the LaBiancas in their home in August 1969, smearing their blood on the walls after. Van Houten later described holding Rosemary LaBianca down with a pillowcase over her head as others stabbed her, before herself stabbing the woman more than a dozen times.

"My family and I are heartbroken because we're once again reminded of all the years that we have not had my father and my stepmother with us," Cory LaBianca, Leno LaBianca's daughter, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Friday.

"My children and my grandchildren never got an opportunity to get to know either of them, which has been a huge void for my family," said Cory La Bianca, who is 75.

The LaBianca murders happened the day after Manson followers killed actress Sharon Tate and four others. Van Houten did not participate in the Tate killings.

Manson died in prison in 2017 of natural causes at age 83 after nearly half a century behind bars.

Harassment of TV meteorologists reflects broader anti-science, anti-media trends

By HANNAH FINGERHUT, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press
DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The harassment started to intensify as TV meteorologist Chris Gloninger did more reporting on climate change during local newscasts — outraged emails and even a threat to show up at his house.

Gloninger said he had been recruited, in part, to "shake things up" at the Iowa station where he worked, but backlash was building. The man who sent him a series of threatening emails was charged with third-degree harassment. The Des Moines station asked him to dial back his coverage, facing what he called an understandable pressure to maintain ratings.

"I started just connecting the dots between extreme weather and climate change, and then the volume of pushback started to increase quite dramatically," he said in an interview with The Associated Press.

So, on June 21, he announced that he was leaving KCCI-TV — and his 18-year career in broadcast journalism altogether.

Gloninger's experience is all too common among meteorologists across the country who are encountering reactions from viewers as they tie climate change to extreme temperatures, blizzards, tornadoes and floods in their local weather reports. For on-air meteorologists, the anti-science trend that has emerged in recent years compounds a deepening skepticism of the news media.

Many meteorologists say it's a reflection of a more hostile political landscape that has also affected workers in a variety of jobs previously seen as nonpartisan, including librarians, school board officials and election workers.

For several years now, Gloninger said, "beliefs are amplified more than truth and evidence-based science. And that is not a good situation to be in as a nation."

Gloninger's announcement sent reverberations through a national conference of broadcast meteorologists in Phoenix, where many shared their own horror stories, recalled Brad Colman, president of the American Meteorological Society.

"They say, 'You should have seen this note.' And they try to take it with a smile, a lighthearted laugh," Colman said. "But some of them are really scary."

Meteorologists have long been subjected to abuse, but that has intensified in recent years, said Sean Sublette, a former TV meteorologist and now the chief meteorologist for the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

"More than once, I've had people call me names or tell me I'm stupid or these kinds of harassing type things simply for sharing information that they didn't want to hear," he said.

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A decade ago, far fewer TV meteorologists were talking about climate change on air, although they wanted to do so, said Edward Maibach, the director of the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University.

The Weather Channel gave its first climate reporter, scientist Heidi Cullen, a dedicated show in 2006. She faced bitter and sexist resistance from some viewers, including conservative leaders, as she challenged other TV forecasters to address global warming in their reporting.

Climate Matters, a National Science Foundation-funded project, piloted in 2010 and fully launched in 2012 to support reporting on climate change by providing data analysis, graphics and other reporting materials.

Now TV meteorologists across the country report on climate change, though Maibach said they don't always use those words. It is increasingly common to at least show its effects, he said, like highlighting the trend of more days in a year hitting temperatures above 90 degrees (32 degrees Celsius).

Even if that kind of reporting resonates with most people, the criticism can be the loudest.

"If you stop reporting on relevant and important facts about what's going on in your community because you're hearing from the one out of 10, it means you are not serving the other nine out of 10," Maibach said.

Some meteorologists have seen public interest in climate change grow even in largely red states as flooding, drought and other severe weather has ravaged farmland and homes. Jessica Hafner, chief meteorologist at Columbia, Missouri's KMIZ-TV, said that with the exception of a few hecklers, she's seen people respond well to data-based reporting because they want to know what's going on around them.

Meteorologist Matt Serwe, who used to work in Nebraska, said the livelihoods of farmers who live there depend on the weather, so they take climate change seriously.

"You want to know how you can best succeed with these conditions," he said. "Because at that point, it's survival."

It's not just a problem in the United States. Meteorologists in Spain, France, Australia and the U.K. also have been subjected to complaints and harassment, said Jennie King, the London-based head of climate research and policy at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

Some meteorologists don't see harassment as a direct result of their reporting on climate change; it's a pervasive issue in the industry and targets some more than others. TV reporters are more likely than reporters in other mediums to say they have been harassed or threatened, according to Pew Research Center polling in 2022.

The gaps between Republicans' and Democrats' confidence in both the scientific community and the news media have been the widest in nearly five decades of polling by the General Society Survey, a long-standing trends survey conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. But confidence in both declined across the aisle last year.

"Science is under attack in this country," said Chitra Kumar, managing director of Climate and Energy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "It's this larger trend. It's really unacceptable from our perspective that anyone should have to fear for their lives for merely stating the facts."

Gloninger is moving back to Boston to care for aging parents, but he says he's leaving Des Moines having realized that a small percentage of people who reject climate change make up an overwhelming percentage of the negative comments he has gotten.

"I know that now with the feedback that I've received after the fact, with hundreds of emails, dozens of handwritten letters," he said of messages that have come from all over the state. KCCI-TV didn't respond to request for comment.

"This incident is not representative of what Iowans are and what they believe," Gloninger added. "At the end of the day, the people have been incredibly supportive — not just of me, but of the efforts that my station has made in covering climate."

Hollingsworth reported from Mission, Kansas, and Ballentine from Columbia, Missouri.

Climate change ratchets up the stress on farmworkers on the front lines of a warming Earth

By MELINA WALLING Associated Press

Mily Trevino-Sauceda was 9 when her mother fell as she worked to move irrigation pipes along rows of potato and alfalfa on an Idaho farm. Mily's 10-year-old brother splashed water over their mother's face and body while her children looked on, scared and crying. Their mother had fainted from the heat, and could never again work as fast or as long in the sun.

Decades later, the memory remains sharp for Trevino-Sauceda, who says few systemic changes have been made to safeguard farmworkers from extreme heat.

"Knowing all this still happens, it angers," said Trevino-Sauceda, now the executive director of Alianza de Campesinas, a women farmworkers' organization based in Oxnard, California. "It angers because we know what it is to do this kind of work. And even though we want to be loyal to doing a good job, we don't even think at the time that if we're treated as human beings or not. We just want to survive it."

As Earth this week set and then repeatedly broke unofficial records for average global heat, it served as a reminder of a danger that climate change is making steadily worse for farmworkers and others who labor outside. Heat advisories and excessive heat warnings rolled out across much of the U.S., and farms in Oregon, Texas and much of the southern and central regions of the country were expected to see highs pushing 100 next week.

Farm workers are 35 times more likely to die of heat exposure than workers in other industries, according to the National Institutes of Health, but there is no federal heat standard that ensures their health and safety.

California is one of the few states that has adopted its own standards. Those include keeping fresh and cool water nearby; providing access to shade; and monitoring workers for health issues when the temperature goes above 95 degrees, according to the United Farm Workers Foundation.

Edgar Franks describes working on farms in the heat as "a matter of life and death." Like Trevino-Sauceda, he has lifelong memories of being hot and uncomfortable in the fields where he and his family worked, first growing up in Texas while working on citrus and watermelon, and later in Washington state in fields of cauliflower, cucumbers, raspberries and blueberries.

"There's no escaping it," he said of the exposure to the elements over the 20 years he's been in the industry. "No matter if you're, you know, covered from head to toe in like the best ventilated clothing or wearing the hats and all that, or in a T-shirt or anything, it's going to be hot no matter what."

Franks still works in berry fields in Washington but is also political director for farmworker union Familias Unidas por la Justicia. He's been tracking climate change for a long time, and recalls being summoned to a 2017 strike by dozens of farmworkers in northwest Washington state. They were protesting poor working conditions, including laboring under oppressive heat and smoky conditions from Canadian wildfires.

"It's not normal to go through these heat waves and, you know, act as if nothing is happening," he said. "And we just continue to normalize this, then, and nothing is going to be done to protect workers."

Climate change makes extreme heat more likely and more intense. Farm work is particularly dangerous because workers raise their internal body temperature by moving, lifting and walking at the same time they're exposed to high heat and humidity, said Dr. Jonathan Patz, chair of health and the environment at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Pedro Murrieta Baltazar, a worker in sweet corn and vegetable fields at Way Farms in Waverly, Ohio, said this week that this year's heat hasn't felt as bad to him as some prior years. But the farm where he works takes precautions nonetheless.

During the summer, they work at one side of the field in the early morning when it's cooler, and then "afterward, they put us on the other side, where there is more shade," Murrieta Baltazar said, speaking in Spanish.

If workers don't take breaks to get out of the sun, drink water and rest, they can experience nausea, vomiting, dehydration, muscle cramps and more — all the symptoms of a fever without any infection, said

Roxana Chicas, an assistant professor in the nursing school at Emory University in Atlanta.

Chicas, who researches the health effects on farmworkers of environmental and occupational exposures, described what it was like to work with fern cutters coming in from the fields to have their blood drawn for samples, even after their bodies had had some time to cool.

"I can feel how hot they are," Chicas said. "It's just like dissipating their body and just see how their face is flushed red, and their clothing is, you know, soaking wet from sweating."

Even as the heat makes life more challenging for agricultural workers, unsustainable farming practices are also contributing to the emissions that fuel climate extremes. Patz, of the University of Wisconsin, noted the need to reduce the demand for meat in Western diets. He and Franks both called for changes in farming that could use less water and fertilizer and store more of the carbon that contributes to climate change.

"I think looking at ways to do agriculture in more sustainable, regenerative ways that actually are better for the climate and for the workers, I think it's possible," Franks said.

Follow Melina Walling on Twitter @MelinaWalling.

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

As whiskey and bourbon business booms, beloved distillers face pushback over taxes and emissions

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

MULBERRY, Tenn. (AP) — For decades, the whiskey and bourbon makers of Tennessee and Kentucky have been beloved in their communities. The distilleries where the liquor is manufactured and barrelhouses where it is aged have complemented the rural character of their neighborhoods, while providing jobs and the pride of a successful homegrown industry.

Now, the growing popularity of the industry around the world is fueling conflicts at home.

In Kentucky, where 95% of the world's bourbon is manufactured, counties are revolting after the legislature voted to phase out a barrel tax they have depended on to fund schools, roads and utilities. Local officials who donated land and spent millions on infrastructure to help bourbon makers now say those investments may never be recouped.

Neighbors in both states have been fighting industry expansion, even suing distillers. Complaints include a destructive black "whiskey fungus," the loss of prime farmland and liquor-themed tourist developments that are more Disneyland than distillery tour.

The love affair, it seems, is over.

"We've been their biggest advocates and they threw us under the bus," said Jerry Summers, a former executive with Jim Beam and the judge-executive for Bullitt County, essentially the county mayor.

Bullitt County has long depended on an annual barrel tax on aging whiskey, which brought in \$3.8 million in 2021, Summers said. The majority goes to schools but the money also is used for services that support the county's Jim Beam and Four Roses plants, including a full-time fire department.

Many of the new barrelhouses are being built with industrial revenue bonds exempting them from property taxes for years or decades. The counties supported the property tax breaks because they expected to continue collecting the barrel tax. When the state legislature voted to phase it out earlier this year, after intense lobbying by the Kentucky Distillers' Association, county officials felt betrayed.

"Our industry was always a handshake agreement," Summers said. Now, those agreements are being broken.

Once the barrel tax sunsets in 2043, the distillers will pay no taxes at all to Bullitt on some warehouses. The county will still have to provide them with services, protect them and protect the surrounding community from them if anything goes wrong, Summers said.

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"Where you have an alcohol-based plant that produces a hazardous material, you need emergency management, EMS, a sheriff's department," he said.

Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear, who signed the bill after passage by Kentucky's Republican-controlled legislature, said several industry compromises were vital to his support, while the bill will encourage investment.

"I know it was tough. You had an industry that supports so many jobs and calls Kentucky home. At the same time, you've got communities that have helped build that industry. I know there are, right now, probably some difficult feelings," Beshear said in a news conference.

Kentucky Distillers' Association President Eric Gregory noted the compromise bill creates a new excise tax to help fund school districts. Another tax helps fire and emergency management services, though it does not apply in all counties.

"Even with this relief, distilling remains Kentucky's highest taxed industry, paying \$286 million in taxes each year," Gregory said in an email.

While the tax changes take place, whiskey is booming.

As a former Beam executive, Summers remembers a time when whiskey was a cheap, "bottom shelf" drink. With small batch products, the liquor slowly became cool. American whiskey revenues since 2003 have nearly quadrupled, reaching \$5.1 billion last year, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States. During the same period, the super premium segment rose more than 20-fold to \$1.3 billion.

Now many of the most recognized brands are part of international beverage conglomerates. Jim Beam is owned by Japan-based Beam Suntory. Britain's Diageo owns Bulleit. Italy's Campari Group owns Wild Turkey.

In lobbying for the end of the tax, the distillers' group suggested the industry could leave Kentucky. Officials like Summers are calling that a bluff. He said Bullitt County does not want any new barrelhouses unless things change, and he is not alone.

Nelson County, home to Heaven Hill, Log Still and other Kentucky communities involved with the industry, recently approved a moratorium on new bourbon warehouse construction while the county updates zoning and permitting rules. Soon, any new projects will be required to seek citizen input and zoning board approval, Judge Executive Timothy Hutchins said.

"That got their attention, let's put it that way," Hutchins said. "Now, we're trying to kiss and make up."

The county gets about \$8.6 million a year from the barrel tax, he said.

In Tennessee's Lincoln County, Jack Daniel's recently was slapped with a stop-work order after neighbors sued over a huge unpermitted expansion. Since 2018, the company has built six 86,000-square-foot (7,989-square-meter) warehouses holding 66,000 barrels each on a 120-acre (48-hectare) property, according to the lawsuit.

Jack Daniel's has since retroactively received the proper approvals, but neighbors say their biggest complaint has not been addressed: A black fungus that feeds on the ethanol emitted as whiskey ages.

The "whiskey fungus" has been a nuisance around liquor facilities for centuries, but the size and scope of the new barrelhouse complexes means much more ethanol is being released in a concentrated area. The fungus covers nearby homes and cars in a sooty black film, choking trees and shrubs.

When Pam Butler moved to Lincoln County 30 years ago, there were only two barrelhouses nearby, and she had "no issues."

"I had a white car and it stayed white. I had a white horse trailer and it stayed white. Then about five years ago, everything started looking grungy," Butler said.

Butler owns a small farm where she keeps horses adjacent to the Jack Daniel's property. She said her pasture land is not thriving as it should, many of her trees are dying and she has developed asthma. She doesn't know whether her illness is related to the fungus, but said she only started having symptoms in the past few years.

Butler and several other neighbors want Jack Daniel's to capture its ethanol emissions instead of releasing them into the neighborhood. The company would not comment on the fungus but spokesman Svend Jansen provided a statement saying it "will continue to work hard to be a good partner to all members

of our community.”

“We recognize that there have been, at times, a small number of people who do not appreciate or value the growth of Tennessee Whiskey production in the areas where we operate,” the statement said.

Back in Kentucky, famed author and agriculturalist Wendell Berry has another concern: local food security and the destruction of prime agricultural land.

“I’ve been working, going on 30 years, to develop a regional food economy for Louisville,” Berry said.

“Cities like Louisville and Nashville are surrounded by fertile land that is well watered,” but they are importing much of their food from California’s Central Valley, he said. “I’ve spent my life arguing that this land is going to be needed by people who want something to eat.”

Berry recently lost a fight with distiller Angel’s Envy in Louisville over the development of a 1,200-acre (485-hectare) property adjacent to the farm where he grew up. Henry County approved the company’s plans for a bourbon tourism complex there, complete with cabins, an amphitheater and a helipad.

Angel’s Envy declined to comment.

Fred Minnick, who has written books on bourbon and judges world whiskey competitions, said it is an interesting time for the industry because bourbon has never been this popular.

“Bourbon was the good guy. Bourbon was loved by the state,” he said of Kentucky. “It will be fascinating to see if bourbon remains a hero.”

Analysis: The Wemby Show is underway, and opening night was a circus

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The final numbers for Victor Wembanyama in his Summer League debut: nine points on 2-for-13 shooting, eight rebounds, five blocked shots, three assists.

Not on the stat sheet: countless pictures and videos captured on phones, the couple dozen times he applauded teammates, and all the autographs that a very friendly San Antonio Spurs coach named Gregg Popovich signed at halftime for kids and other fans.

The Wemby Show is underway. The outcome on Friday night doesn’t matter much and will be forgotten in the next couple days — for the record, the Spurs beat the Charlotte Hornets 76-68. But for the 17,500 people who bought tickets, most of them just to say they saw Wembanyama’s first time sweating in a Spurs game uniform, it was a night to remember.

A night to remember for the No. 1 pick, too.

“Special moment,” Wembanyama said. “Really special to wear that jersey for a first time. It’s really an honor.”

Wembanyama did a lot of things well, which can’t be a surprise. He screened well. Passed well; he even had a left-handed shovel pass for an assist. Defended well at times; Charlotte’s Brandon Miller, the No. 2 pick in the draft, tried a 3-pointer from about five or six feet beyond the arc in the first half, and Wembanyama threw his left arm skyward and blocked it with ease. And his four-point play with 2:50 left put the Spurs up by 14, just about sealing the win.

“He’s a legit 7-6,” Miller said afterward, only slightly exaggerating Wembanyama’s official height of 7 feet, 3-1/2 inches. “Victor is a great guy, great off the court. He’s going to have a great career, and just to see him step up to the challenge, I think that shows a lot of heart.”

Wembanyama struggled shooting and airballed a pair of 3-point tries in the fourth quarter, got moved out of the way on a few rebound opportunities, was sort of dunked on when he was trying to defend a lob to Charlotte’s Kai Jones — Wembanyama couldn’t reach it, and fouled Jones as he threw the ball down — and had tons of moments that he’ll learn from on film.

“All in all, I think he did a good job. ... You can see his basketball IQ is elite,” Spurs summer coach Matt Nielsen said.

Again, none of it mattered much, good or bad. Wembanyama’s body of work in France over the last

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nounced last month that he will plead guilty to the misdemeanor tax offenses as part of an agreement with the Justice Department.

Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, James Comer of Kentucky and Jason Smith of Missouri have since issued a series of requests for voluntary testimony from senior officials at the Justice Department, FBI and Internal Revenue Service as they investigate what they claim is improper interference. Republicans have also requested a special counsel review of supposed retaliation against the whistleblowers who came forward with the claims.

The congressional inquiry was launched after the House Ways and Means Committee, led by Smith, voted last month to publicly disclose hundreds of pages of testimony from the IRS employees who worked on the Hunter Biden case.

The transcripts of Greg Shapley and an unidentified agent detail what they called a pattern of "slow-walking investigative steps" and delaying enforcement actions in the months before the 2020 election won by Joe Biden.

The Justice Department has denied the whistleblower claims and said repeatedly that U.S. Attorney David Weiss in Delaware, the federal prosecutor who led the investigation, had "full authority" of the case.

Here's what to know about the emerging investigation.

INVESTIGATING IRS WHISTLEBLOWER CLAIMS

In April, the first IRS whistleblower, Shapley, came forward when his attorney reached out to GOP Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa to say that his client had information about a "failure to mitigate clear conflicts of interest in the ultimate disposition" of what was then an ongoing criminal investigation related to Hunter Biden.

Smith, chair of the Ways and Means Committee, who has jurisdiction over the IRS, brought in Shapley in late May for an hourslong interview, where he described several roadblocks that he and several other IRS agents on the case encountered when trying to interview individuals relevant to the investigation or issue search warrants.

The whistleblowers insist their testimony reflects a pattern of inference and preferential treatment in the Hunter Biden case and not just disagreement with their superiors about what investigative steps to take. Justice Department policy has long warned prosecutors to take care in charging cases with potential political overtones around the time of an election, to avoid any possible influence on the outcome.

The most disputed claim from the whistleblowers is that Weiss — first appointed by former President Donald Trump and kept on by the Biden administration — asked the Justice Department in March 2022 to be provided special counsel status in order to bring the tax cases against Hunter Biden in jurisdictions outside Delaware, including Washington, D.C., and California, but was denied.

A second IRS whistleblower, who asked the committee to keep his identity secret, described his persistent frustrations with the way the Hunter Biden case was handled, dating back to the Trump administration under Attorney General William Barr. He said he started the investigation into Hunter Biden in 2015 and delved deeply into his personal life and finances.

INVESTIGATING CLAIMS OF RETALIATION

Both men have testified that they faced retaliation at the IRS after coming forward with concerns about the handling of the Hunter Biden case. Shapley, who was a career supervisory agent, told the committee that Weiss helped block his job promotion after the tax agency employee reached out to congressional investigators about the Biden case.

The second unidentified whistleblower said he was taken off the Hunter Biden investigation around the same time as Shapley, who was his supervisor. Though he was informed of the decision by officials at the IRS, the second whistleblower believes his removal was actually ordered by officials in the Justice Department. Neither of the men provided lawmakers evidence that was the case, instead citing what they had witnessed internally as they pushed for various investigative steps.

The three Republican chairmen, along with Sens. Grassley and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, sent a letter to the Justice Department asking for an immediate review of the retaliation claims.

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"The importance of protecting whistleblowers from unlawful retaliation and informing whistleblowers about their rights under the law cannot be understated. After all, it is the law," the lawmakers wrote.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT PUSHBACK

The Justice Department has denied the allegations from the whistleblowers, saying that Weiss has had "full authority over this matter, including responsibility for deciding where, when, and whether to file charges as he deems appropriate. He needs no further approval to do so."

Attorney General Merrick Garland also rebuffed the idea that Weiss, a veteran prosecutor, asked to be designated as a special counsel.

"The only person who has the authority to make someone a special counsel, or refuse to make them a special counsel, is the attorney general," Garland told reporters last month. He added, "Mr. Weiss never made that request."

In a June 30 letter, Weiss also further denied the claims by telling House Republicans that the Justice Department "did not retaliate" against Shapley. He also said he was assured by the department that if he sought to bring charges against Hunter Biden in a venue other than Delaware, he would be granted special status to do so. Generally, U.S. attorneys are limited to their own jurisdictions when bringing criminal charges.

NEXT STEPS

The three Republican chairmen have provided a deadline of Thursday for the department to begin scheduling nearly a dozen individuals for transcribed interviews. They have said that if the deadline is not met, they will resort to issuing congressional subpoenas to force cooperation.

Weiss said in his recent letter that he would be willing to discuss such topics with congressional officials, but reiterated that he cannot divulge information about the Hunter Biden case because it is an active criminal investigation.

Garland has said publicly that he would not stop Weiss from testifying before Congress. "I would support Mr. Weiss explaining or testifying on these matters when he deems it appropriate," the attorney general said.

Extremely overdue book returned to Massachusetts library 119 years later

By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — On Feb. 14, 1904, someone curious about the emerging possibilities of a key force of nature checked out James Clerk Maxwell's "An Elementary Treatise on Electricity" from the New Bedford Free Public Library.

It would take 119 years and the sharp eyes of a librarian in West Virginia before the scientific text finally found its way back to the Massachusetts library.

The discovery occurred when Stewart Plein, the curator of rare books at West Virginia University Libraries, was sorting through a recent donation of books.

Plein found the treatise and noticed it had been part of the collection at the New Bedford library and, critically, had not been stamped "Withdrawn," indicating that while extremely overdue, the book had not been discarded.

Plein contacted Jodi Goodman, the special collections librarian in New Bedford, to alert her to the find.

"This came back in extremely good condition," New Bedford Public Library Director Olivia Melo said Friday. "Someone obviously kept this on a nice bookshelf because it was in such good shape and probably got passed down in the family."

The treatise was first published in 1881, two years after Maxwell's death in 1879, although the cranberry-colored copy now back at the New Bedford library is not considered a rare edition of the work, Melo said.

The library occasionally receives books as much as 10 or 15 years overdue, but nothing anywhere close to a century or more, she said.

The treatise was published at a time when the world was still growing to understand the possibilities of

electricity. In 1880, Thomas Edison received a historic patent embodying the principles of his incandescent lamp.

When the book was last in New Bedford, the nation was preparing for its second modern World Series, incumbent Republican President Theodore Roosevelt was on track to win another term, Wilbur and Orville Wright had conducted their first airplane flight just a year before and New York City was celebrating its first subway line.

The discovery and return of the book is a testament to the durability of the printed word, especially in a time of computerization and instant access to unfathomable amounts of information, Melo said.

"The value of the printed book is it's not digital, it's not going to disappear. Just holding it, you get the sense of someone having this book 120 years ago and reading it, and here it is in my hands," she said. "It is still going to be here a hundred years from now. The printed book is always going to be valuable."

The New Bedford library has a 5-cent-per-day late fee. At that rate, someone returning a book overdue by 119 years would face a hefty fee of more than \$2,100. The good news is the library's late fee limit maxes out at \$2.

Another lesson of the find, according to Melo? It's never too late to return a library book.

Sailors rejoice after snowy winter raises Great Salt Lake — for now

By SAM METZ Associated Press

ON THE GREAT SALT LAKE (AP) — A brisk wind caught a Kevlar-fiber sail, sending it snapping as Bob Derby and Randy Atkin pulled lines to turn Red Stripe, their 25-foot boat, through the briny waters of the imperiled Great Salt Lake.

Little could be heard beyond the low hum of trucks wheeling past a copper smelter on the lake's shoreline — a respite from the bustle of Salt Lake City and its booming suburbs that push farther into Utah's deserts and farmland each year.

"Everything that happened today drifts off behind you and there's nothing like it," said Derby, a 61-year-old veteran sailor battling cancer. "There's no better therapy than being on the lake."

It's a feeling old friends Derby and Atkin weren't sure they'd experience again.

The Red Stripe's return comes after it and hundreds of other sailboats were hoisted out of the shrinking Great Salt Lake as water levels plummeted in recent years, leaving docks along the lake's parched southern shore caked with dried mud. The harbormaster at Great Salt Lake State Park's marina, Dave Shearer, wondered whether he'd see their return before he retires.

But a record winter of snow has melted and run down through the creeks, streams and rivers that feed the lake, raising its peak level this season about 6 feet (1.8 meters) from last year's record low — enough to let sailors crane their boats back into the water and convene their beloved Wednesday races where cold beer and banter are as important as who wins.

With their return, they've joined many others — farmers, skiers and nearby homeowners — in rejoicing over the surprise rise of the Great Salt Lake amid long-term megadrought.

"There's finally some life back in the marina," said Tyler Oborn, who guides pontoon tours on the lake and enjoys fire-dancing on its shoreline.

But it's not clear it will last.

The Great Salt Lake faces a supply-demand imbalance: As climate change-fueled drought decreases the amount of water that cascades down through the region's mountains and rivers, appetite for water is increasing from booming towns along the Wasatch Front as well as the farmers whose livelihoods hinge on their fields of alfalfa and onions.

"Everybody talks about the lake being up, but it's coming from a historic low. That was an unbelievable catastrophe," said Derby, who works for a medical device manufacturer. "Now it's just like a moderate disaster. I worry that everybody declares victory, says the Great Salt Lake has been saved and that we can stop worrying about conserving water."

The diminished Great Salt Lake isn't the boating mecca or vacation destination it was decades ago, when

its footprint was about twice the size it is now. But it remains a lifeblood for Utah's economy, sustaining a \$1.5 billion-a-year mining industry that extracts minerals including magnesium and table salt, an \$80 million brine shrimp industry for fish feed and a \$1.4 billion ski industry that markets itself with the fluffy "lake effect" snow that the geography supplies.

Brigham Young University ecologist Ben Abbott, who authored a January study that warned the lake could dry up within five years, said every foot of lake level rise helps — especially in suppressing hazardous dust from the exposed lake bed. But 6 feet — and images of boats going back in the water — shouldn't calm the sense of urgency for Utah to take action that could guarantee the lake's survival, he said.

"Back on a crashing plane is not where we want to be," Abbott said. "We should be viewing this big winter as a lease on life and an opportunity to get our long-term conservation measures in place."

Before the bump from this winter's record snow, dire warnings like Abbott's made saving the Great Salt Lake a top priority for Utah politicians. State and local officials offered millions in incentives to encourage farmers to conserve and pushed education for homeowners and municipalities. But they've avoided considering draconian policies being implemented elsewhere in the drought-stricken West: water rationing, zoning requirements or fines for overuse.

"Mother Nature really helped us out," Republican Sen. Scott Sandall said earlier this year, during Utah's legislative session. "We didn't have to pull that lever for emergency use."

If the great lake resumes its decline, it could mean collapse of the ecosystem. Without enough water flowing to the lake, the reefs that nurture species such as brine fly and shrimp will be decimated, in turn affecting the larger species that feed on them, including pelicans and other migratory birds. And every bit of exposed lakebed means more arsenic-laced dust available for wind to pick up and carry to nearby homes, schools and office parks.

For now, Derby and other sailors are relishing the opportunity to unfurl their sails and reconnect with friends over crisp breezes and corny jokes.

"It's so nice, it's beautiful," said Atkin, looking up at the sails. "You feel the power of the wind a little bit, how bad can it be?"

Follow Sam Metz on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/metzsam>

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Weeklong dock strike on Canada's west coast is starting to pinch small businesses, experts say

By JIM MORRIS Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Canadian consumers aren't yet feeling the impact of the weeklong port strike in British Columbia, but businesses are beginning to be pinched by the shutdown of docks that handle 25% of the country's foreign trade, experts said Friday.

The strike by 7,400 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada began July 1 and shut down more than 30 west coast ports.

Robin Guy, vice president and deputy leader of government relations at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, said the affected ports handle cargo worth over 800 million Canadian dollars (\$600 million) every day.

"It affects us, it affects people internationally who are relying on Canadian goods to be delivered," Guy said.

Greg Wilson, director of government relations for the Retail Council of Canada, said he didn't expect Canadian consumers to "really see significant impacts for weeks."

It's a different story, he said, for small businesses that operate on slim margins and are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"If you're a small retailer, if your goods are stuck, wow are you annoyed," Wilson said. Large retailers have more flexibility, he added: "They have supply chain professionals (who) can work to divert containers" to other ports

Robert Kavcic, a senior economist with the Bank of Montreal, said businesses that export products like potash, fertilizer or forest goods are being squeezed.

"The longer those outbound shipments get backed up, the more issues they have here domestically with inventories at their own location and possibly having to cut back production because of that," he said.

The British Columbia Council of Forest Industries issued a statement Friday urging the parties to resolve the walkout. It said the shutdown ports handle forest products exports worth about 15 billion Canadian dollars (\$11 billion) annually.

Business groups and the provincial governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan have called on the national government to force an end to the strike. Some are frustrated the government used legislation in 2021 to end a walkout by Port of Montreal dock workers after only one day.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said at a news conference Friday that he believes the best deals are reached at the bargaining table.

Earlier this week, the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association, which represents employers in the strike, said it didn't think more bargaining would produce an agreement.

The US will provide cluster bombs to Ukraine and defends the delivery of the controversial weapon

By ZEKE MILLER, TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday defended what he said was a "difficult decision" to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine, a move the administration said was key to the fight and buttressed by Ukraine's promise to use the controversial bombs carefully.

The decision comes on the eve of the NATO summit in Lithuania, where Biden is likely to face questions from allies on why the U.S. would send a weapon into Ukraine that more than two-thirds of alliance members have banned because it has a track record for causing many civilian casualties.

"It took me a while to be convinced to do it," said Biden in a CNN interview. He added that he ultimately took the Defense Department's recommendation to provide the munitions and discussed the matter with allies and with lawmakers on the Hill. He said "the Ukrainians are running out of ammunition" and the cluster bombs will provide a temporary fix to help stop Russian tanks.

The move was met with divided reactions from Congress, as some Democrats criticized the plan while some Republicans backed it. It was hailed on Twitter by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who thanked Biden for "a timely, broad and much-needed defense aid package" that will "bring Ukraine closer to victory over the enemy, and democracy to victory over dictatorship."

The munitions — which are bombs that open in the air and release scores of smaller bomblets — are seen by the U.S. as a way to get Kyiv critically needed ammunition to help bolster its offensive and push through Russian front lines. U.S. leaders debated the thorny issue for months, before Biden made the final decision this week.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the U.S. will send a version of the munition that has a reduced "dud rate," meaning fewer of the smaller bomblets fail to explode. The unexploded rounds, which often litter battlefields and populated civilian areas, cause unintended deaths. U.S. officials have said Washington will provide thousands of the rounds, but provided no specific numbers.

"We recognize the cluster munitions create a risk of civilian harm from unexploded ordnance," Sullivan told a White House briefing. "This is why we've deferred the decision for as long as we could. But there is also a massive risk of civilian harm if Russian troops and tanks roll over Ukrainian positions and take more Ukrainian territory and subjugate more Ukrainian civilians, because Ukraine does not have enough artillery. That is intolerable to us."

But Marta Hurtado, speaking for the U.N. human rights office, said Friday "the use of such munitions

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three years more than proved his enormous potential. A 30-point game or an 0-for-30 game on Friday night wouldn't have changed anything.

There were hundreds of phones pointed at the tunnel where he emerged for a six-minute warmup before the game. Some tickets went for more than \$200 on the resale market; that's pretty much unheard of for Summer League. Fans in Spurs jerseys — they were obviously new jerseys, since they had Wembanyama's name on them — started showing up inside the arena two games before the Spurs-Hornets matchup just to make sure they had a good seat. No. 3 draft pick Scoot Henderson played in the previous game for Portland; he came out and stood courtside for some of the second half of the Spurs game.

"I'm glad a lot of people could get to see us play," Wembanyama said.

Jerry West was courtside, as was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who'll join Wembanyama on stage at NBA Con on Saturday for a conversation between a legend and someone who is expected to become a legend.

The numbers didn't matter. Wembanyama overshadowed everyone. And everything.

Like Jabari Smith Jr. and Tari Eason, for example. They combined for a miracle finish to give Houston a 100-99 win over Portland in the game that immediately preceded Spurs-Hornets. Down by two with 0.6 seconds left, Eason just sort of sidearm-heaved a pass about 40 feet to Smith, who turned and beat the clock with a 3-pointer at the buzzer. Everybody celebrated, some because of Smith's shot, some because the game was over and it was Wemby time. It would have been the talk of Summer League, under normal circumstances.

These are not normal circumstances.

And in the adjacent court — UNLV has two separate gyms under one roof — Cleveland and Brooklyn were playing simultaneous to Wembanyama's debut. Let's just say there were more than a few empty seats in the gym for that game; only the most ardent Cavaliers fans, Nets fans or friends and family of players on those rosters seemed to be there for that one. Meanwhile, a few feet away in the big gym, fans were seated all the way up to the rafters.

The debut was a circus. Everyone expected it would be, and that was even before he went to dinner Wednesday night and was approached by Britney Spears — the pop star who grabbed or poked at Wembanyama and set off a two-day story that generated tons of headlines worldwide. He handled all that with ease, not even knowing until hours later Spears was the person involved, and handled all the attention Friday night with ease as well.

"He's pretty cool," Spurs teammate Julian Champagne said, later adding, "he deserves to have this moment."

He is a rookie. A very tall, super talented one. He will have great games in San Antonio. He will have bad games. And he's now had his first game. His NBA story is underway. The Spurs are betting that it only gets better from here.

"I just want to get better every time," Wembanyama said, "and learn as much as I can."

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AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/nba> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Top Republicans are gearing up to investigate the Hunter Biden case. Here's what to know.

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Republican chairmen of three key House committees are joining forces to probe the Justice Department's handling of charges against Hunter Biden after making sweeping claims about misconduct at the agency.

Leaders of the House Judiciary, Oversight and Accountability, and Ways and Means committees opened a joint investigation into the federal case into President Joe Biden's youngest son days after it was an-

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should stop immediately and not be used in any place.”

U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres “wants countries to abide by the terms of that convention and so as a result, of course, he does not want there to be continued use of cluster munitions on the battlefield.”

Colin Kahl, the under secretary of defense for policy, said the U.S. will give Ukraine the most modern cluster munitions that have far lower dud rates. He said the bombs have been tested five times between 1998 and 2020, and the U.S. is confident the rate of unexploded duds is below 2.35 percent. While he declined to say how many the U.S. will send now, he said the U.S. has “hundreds of thousands” of cluster munitions available for Ukraine at the low dud rate.

He said the key reason to provide the bombs is to keep Ukraine in the fight.

“Things are going a little slower than some had hoped,” Kahl said in a Pentagon briefing. “So this is to make sure that the Ukrainians have the confidence that they have what they need. But frankly, also that the Russians know that the Ukrainians are going to stay in the game.”

Kahl said the Ukrainians have provided written assurances that they will not use the munitions in urban areas that are populated by civilians and that there will be a careful accounting of where they are employed.

Questioned at length about the decision, Sullivan said the U.S. consulted closely with allies before making the final decision, noting that even allies who have signed on to a ban of the bombs “have indicated, both privately and many of them publicly over the course of today, that they understand our decision.”

Allies “recognize the difference between Russia using its cluster munitions to attack Ukraine and Ukraine using cluster munitions to defend itself its citizens and its sovereign territory,” he said. The U.S. “will not leave Ukraine defenseless at any point in this conflict, period.”

Still, U.S. reaction was mixed. Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., called the decision “unnecessary and a terrible mistake.” And Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., said the civilian risk lingers “often long after a conflict is over.” Meanwhile, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Arkansas, backed the move, saying Ukraine needs access to weapons Russia already is using.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, some cluster munitions leave behind bomblets that have a high rate of failure to explode — up to 40% in some cases. With a claimed rate under 3% for the supply to Ukraine, U.S. officials said there would be fewer unexploded bombs left behind to harm civilians.

A convention banning the use of cluster bombs has been joined by more than 120 countries that agreed not to use, produce, transfer or stockpile the weapons and to clear them after they’ve been used. The United States, Russia and Ukraine are among those who have not signed on.

The cluster munitions are included in a new \$800 million package of military aid the U.S. will send to Ukraine. Friday’s package, drawn from Pentagon stocks, will also include Bradley and Stryker armored vehicles and an array of ammunition, such as rounds for howitzers and the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, officials said.

Providing the cluster bombs will also ease the pressure on limited U.S. ammunition stockpiles. The U.S. has been taking massive amounts of 155 mm rounds from Pentagon stocks and sending them to Ukraine, creating concerns about eating into American stores. The cluster munitions, which are fired by the same artillery as the conventional 155 mm, will give Ukraine a highly lethal capability and also allow them to strike more Russian targets using fewer rounds.

Kahl said the cluster bombs are not a permanent solution, but more of “a bridge” as the U.S. and allies work to increase the production of the 155 mm rounds.

So far the reactions from allies have been muted. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stressed on Friday that the military alliance takes no position on cluster munitions and it is a decision that allies will make. And Germany, which has signed the ban treaty, said it won’t provide the bombs to Ukraine, but expressed understanding for the American position.

“We’re certain that our U.S. friends didn’t take the decision about supplying such ammunition lightly,” German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit told reporters in Berlin. “We need to remember once again that Russia has already used cluster ammunition at a large scale in its illegal war of aggression

against Ukraine.”

Oleksandra Ustinova, a member of Ukraine’s parliament who has been advocating that Washington send more weapons, noted that Ukrainian forces have had to disable mines from much of the territory they are winning back from Russia. As part of that process, Ukrainians will also be able to catch any unexploded ordnance from cluster munitions.

The last large-scale American use of cluster bombs was during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, according to the Pentagon. But U.S. forces considered them a key weapon during the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, according to Human Rights Watch. In the first three years of that conflict, it is estimated the U.S.-led coalition dropped more than 1,500 cluster bombs in Afghanistan.

AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee and Associated Press writers Geir Moulson, Ellen Knickmeyer, Lorne Cook, Nomaan Merchant, Frank Jordans and Edith M. Lederer contributed to this report.

Video shows Britney Spears inadvertently hit herself in the face in encounter with Victor Wembanyama

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — No charges will be filed following a brief investigation of the altercation involving pop star Britney Spears, San Antonio Spurs rookie Victor Wembanyama and a member of the player’s security team, Las Vegas police said Friday after determining she inadvertently “hit herself in the face.”

Spears said she was struck by a security guard as she tried to approach Wembanyama near a restaurant in a Las Vegas casino complex on Wednesday night. Wembanyama said a person, who he later found out was Spears, grabbed him from behind.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department said Spears had actually struck herself when someone pushed her hand off Wembanyama as she reached up to tap the No. 1 overall pick.

In its investigation, which is now over, police determined that the security guard did not willfully or unlawfully use force or violence against Spears. No arrests were made and no one was cited, the report said.

In the report, police said surveillance footage of the event “showed Britney going to tap the Spurs player on the shoulder. When she touched the player (redacted) pushes her hand off of the player without looking which causes Britney’s hand to hit herself in the face.”

Spears filed a police report after the incident outside the restaurant, alleging battery. On Friday, she posted a reaction to Instagram with a caption that said “Either way I’m still a huge fan of the NBA player ... it’s not his fault his security hit me.”

Wembanyama was making his NBA Summer League debut for the Spurs in Las Vegas on Friday night. The 7-foot-3 French teen was the No. 1 pick in last month’s NBA draft and is entering the league with as much acclaim as anyone since LeBron James in 2003.

The altercation happened Wednesday night; Spears said she recognized Wembanyama at another hotel earlier in the evening and when seeing him again entering a restaurant at the Aria Resort & Casino she “decided to approach him and congratulate him on his success.”

Spears said Thursday, “His security then back handed me in the face without looking back, in front of a crowd. Nearly knocking me down and causing my glasses off my face.”

Police interviewed security guards for the Spurs and Spears, both of whom said pushing a hand off someone’s shoulder is a standard response, according to the report. The security guard for the Spurs said he spoke with Spears afterward, identified himself and apologized. Spears’ security team said she also apologized, the police report said.

Spears’ attorney in Los Angeles, Mathew Rosengart, did not immediately respond to telephone and email messages Friday about the police report.

Spears said Thursday in posts on Twitter and Instagram that the run-in was “super embarrassing,” and denied grabbing Wembanyama, saying she only “tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention.” She

also said that she was hopeful of getting an apology from the team or the security guard who she said was involved.

Wembanyama had a different account of the events. He said security advised him to not stop for anyone as he walked into the restaurant, mindful that pausing could cause a stir and allow a crowd to build. He said one person was shouting "sir, sir" to him, "and that person grabbed me from behind," he said.

He was told hours later that person was Spears. He never saw her, he said, because he never turned around.

Associated Press journalists Ken Ritter and Rio Yamat in Las Vegas contributed to this report.

AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/nba> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Cooler hiring in June could help the Fed achieve an elusive 'soft landing' for US economy

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Another month, another solid gain for America's job market.

The pace of hiring by businesses and government agencies in June — 209,000 added jobs — was the smallest monthly gain in 2 1/2 years. Yet it was still a healthy increase, enough to reduce the unemployment rate from 3.7% to 3.6%, barely above a half-century low. And it amounted to further evidence of an economy that has defied persistent forecasts of a recession.

The latest sign of economic strength makes it all but certain that the Federal Reserve will resume its interest rate hikes later this month after having ended a streak of 10 rate increases that were intended to curb high inflation.

Yet there were also signals in Friday's government report that the job market is cooling to a more sustainable pace of growth — a trend that, if it continues, could reassure the Fed that its rate hikes are reducing inflation pressures without derailing the economy.

"This is kind of a Goldilocks report," said Julia Coronado, president of MacroPolicy Perspectives, an economic research firm. "It's a resilient labor market — not too hot, not too cool."

WHY IS HIRING SO CONSISTENT?

The economy has been beset by high interest rates, elevated inflation and nagging worries about a possible recession resulting from the Fed's aggressive efforts to quell price increases.

Several factors, though, are countering those headwinds and helping perpetuate hiring, which typically boosts consumer spending and propels the economy.

Industries that are particularly sensitive to higher borrowing costs — such as housing and car sales — appear to have adjusted to the Fed's higher rates. To take one example: Mortgage rates have nearly doubled since the Fed began raising borrowing costs 15 months ago. But most of that increase had occurred by last fall. In recent months, housing has shown signs of rebounding, with sales and construction of new homes picking up.

And higher interest rates normally would be expected to spur job losses in construction and manufacturing. This time, the opposite has happened: Construction firms added 23,000 jobs last month, automakers 4,300. There are so few homes available that even reduced demand for housing is spurring more construction — and more jobs.

Likewise, despite sharply higher loan rates, auto sales have risen this year largely because of pent-up demand after years of reduced supply.

Construction companies are also benefiting from ongoing infrastructure spending by the Biden administration, and so are other industries.

Mick Gronewald is CEO of one such company, Fehr Graham, an environmental engineering firm based in Rockford, Illinois. Gronewald says his company is looking to add at least 40 workers to its 230-person

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staff. The company, which designs water and wastewater projects and roads and industrial parks, mostly for cities and towns, is seeing healthy demand for its services. It is seeking to hire engineers, environmental scientists, accountants and surveyors.

Another trend stoking its hiring: Many of Fehr Graham's employees retired during the pandemic and its aftermath, and the company needs more younger workers.

"We have an unbelievable amount of open opportunities," Gronewold said. "We're looking to hire people and can't find them. We're struggling to fill our positions."

He estimates that his company has raised salaries 10%-15% just from a year ago to try to attract more job seekers.

Beyond all that, most of the U.S. economy is made up of services — from banking to restaurants to shipping and warehousing — that are much less affected by the Fed's rate hikes.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT THINGS ARE COOLING?

The most visible sign that hiring is slowing is that fewer industries are actually adding jobs. Most of last month's job growth came in three broad categories that are largely insulated from economic trends: State and local governments, health care providers and private education. Together, they added 133,000 jobs.

Because those sectors don't depend on robust consumer spending as much as the rest of the economy does, their hiring gains don't really reflect rising consumer demand — the main fuel for inflation.

By contrast, retailers, transportation and warehousing firms as well as temporary staffing agencies all cut workers. A loss of temp jobs can be an early signal that companies need less labor.

Dean Baker, senior economist at the Center for Economic Policy Research, noted that excluding government hiring, private-sector job gains totaled 149,000 in June, a pace that does not necessarily point to an overheating economy that would alarm the Fed.

"It's hard to say that's too fast," Baker said. "That's pretty much sustainable."

The government's report Friday also showed that the economy gained 110,000 fewer jobs in April and May than it had previously estimated. Over the past three months, job growth excluding government has averaged 196,000 a month, down from 317,000 a month a year ago.

And the unemployment rate for Black Americans rose for a second straight month, to 6%, after having reached a record low of 4.7% in April. Some economists see Black workers as often the first to be laid off when the economy slows.

HOW WILL THE FEDERAL RESERVE RESPOND?

A rate hike at the Fed's meeting later this month is considered all but assured. Whether the Fed will hike again when it next meets in September is harder to foresee.

The central bank's policymakers may take solace from the slowdown in hiring, particularly once they exclude government jobs, which don't reflect the state of demand in the economy. Fed officials signaled last month that they envision as many as two additional quarter-point rate hikes before the year ends.

But Chair Jerome Powell has also said he hopes to engineer a so-called "soft landing," in which the economy would slow enough to tame inflation but not enough to succumb to a recession.

Friday's jobs report suggests that the Fed may achieve that often-elusive goal, economists said.

"The Fed is on track for a soft landing," said Betsey Stevenson, an economics professor at the University of Michigan. "What they have to do is steer us the rest of the way down. We didn't crash, but that doesn't mean that we won't crash."

WHERE ARE BUSINESSES FINDING WORKERS TO HIRE?

One factor that has supported the job market has been a rebound in the number of people looking for work. Many businesses say they're seeing increased applications and are having an easier time filling jobs.

Higher inflation and an uncertain economic outlook appear to be drawing more people into the workforce. The proportion of Americans ages 25 through 54 — a category that filters out most students and retirees — who are working rose to 80.9% in June, above the pre-pandemic peak and the highest level in 22 years.

And legal immigration has rebounded after being restricted during the pandemic. Coronado estimates that immigrants are adding about 50,000 workers to the labor supply each month.

At the same time, the number of job openings dropped in May, a sign that demand for workers is gradually cooling.

Those trends suggest that supply and demand in the job market are becoming more balanced, a key goal of the Fed's. Since the economy began recovering after the pandemic, demand for workers has far exceeded the supply. Such a trend can accelerate wage growth and heighten inflationary pressures.

Despite all the cross-currents, steady hiring is boosting the career prospects for many people across the country.

Consider the experience of Juan Bravo. This past spring, when Bravo, 24, decided to look for a new job, he was astonished at how fast he found one: With the help of the job platform UpSmith, it took just three days.

Bravo now works as an HVAC technician in Arlington, Texas, having left a job at a food processing plant after many of his co-workers also quit. The pay is about the same, but the schedule is much better: He used to have to work as late as 2 a.m. at his old job.

Bravo also sees much more opportunity for advancement in his new job. He intends to work his way up to a general manager spot.

"I am pursuing the career I wanted to do years ago," when he graduated from high school, Bravo said. "The sky is the limit at this point."

Texas gunman in Walmart shooting gets 90 consecutive life sentences and may still face death penalty

By MORGAN LEE and PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A white gunman who killed 23 people in a racist attack on Hispanic shoppers at a Walmart in a Texas border city was sentenced Friday to 90 consecutive life sentences but could still face more punishment, including the death penalty.

Patrick Crusius, 24, pleaded guilty earlier this year to nearly 50 federal hate crime charges in the 2019 mass shooting in El Paso, making it one of the U.S. government's largest hate crime cases.

Crusius, wearing a jumpsuit and shackles, did not speak during the hearing and showed no reaction as the sentence was read. U.S. District Judge David Guaderrama recommended that Crusius serve his sentence at a maximum security prison in Colorado and receive treatment and counseling for a severe mental health condition.

Crusius still faces a separate trial in a Texas court that could end with him getting the death penalty for carrying out one of the deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history.

As Crusius was led from the courtroom, the son of one of the victims shouted from the gallery.

"We'll be seeing you again, coward," yelled Dean Reckard, whose mother, Margie Reckard, was slain in the attack. "No apologies, no nothing."

Police say Crusius drove more than 700 miles from his home near Dallas to target Hispanics with an AK-style rifle inside and outside the store. Moments before the attack began, Crusius posted a racist screed online that warned of a Hispanic "invasion" of Texas.

In the years since the shooting, Republicans have described migrants crossing the southern U.S. border as an "invasion," waving off critics who say the rhetoric fuels anti-immigrant views and violence.

Crusius pleaded guilty in February after federal prosecutors took the death penalty off the table. But Texas prosecutors have said they will try to put Crusius on death row when he stands trial in state court. That trial date has not yet been set.

In the U.S. government's case, Crusius received a life sentence for each of the 90 charges against him, half of which were classified as hate crimes. Attorney General Merrick Garland said after the sentencing that "no one in this country should have to live in fear of hate-fueled violence."

Joe Spencer, Crusius' attorney, told the judge before the sentencing that his client has a "broken brain." He said Crusius had arrived in El Paso without a specific target in mind before winding up at the Walmart.

"Patrick's thinking is at odds with reality ... resulting in delusional thinking," Spencer said.

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Crusius became alarmed by his own violent thoughts, Spencer said, and he once left a job at a movie theater because of them. He said Crusius also searched online to look for ways to address his mental health, and he dropped out of a community college near Dallas because of his struggles.

The sentencing in El Paso followed two days of impact statements from relatives of the victims, including citizens of Mexico and a German national. In addition to the dead, more than two dozen people were injured and numerous others were severely traumatized as they hid or fled.

One by one, family members used their first opportunity since the shooting to directly address Crusius, describing how their lives have been upended by grief and pain. Some forgave him. One man displayed photographs of his slain father and insisted that the gunman look at them.

Crusius' family did not appear in the courtroom during the sentencing phase.

The attack was the deadliest of a dozen mass shootings in the U.S. linked to hate crimes since 2006, according to a database compiled by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

Before the shooting, Crusius had appeared consumed by the nation's immigration debate, tweeting #BuildtheWall and posts that praised then-President Donald Trump's hard-line border policies. He went further in his rant posted before the attack, sounding warnings that Hispanics were going to take over the government and economy.

Ian Hanna, an assistant U.S. attorney who prosecuted the government's case, said Crusius had embraced the "insidious lie" that America only belonged to white people. "He wanted to eliminate a class of people," Hanna said.

Tito Anchondo, whose brother Andre Anchondo was killed in the attack, called the sentence "the best it's going to get" because it ensures that Crusius will be left to think about his actions in prison for the rest of his life.

"In a sense justice was served today, and in another sense I don't think anything is ever going to be the same," he said.

The people who were killed ranged in age from a 15-year-old high school athlete to several grandparents. They included immigrants, a retired city bus driver, teachers, tradesmen including a former iron worker, and several Mexican nationals who had crossed the U.S. border on routine shopping trips.

Two teenage girls recounted their narrow escape from Crusius' rampage as they participated in a fundraiser for their youth soccer team outside the store, and said they are still fearful in public.

Margaret Juarez, whose 90-year-old father was slain and whose mother was wounded but survived, said she found it ironic that Crusius would spend his life in prison among inmates from racial and ethnic minorities. Others in the courtroom applauded Thursday as she celebrated their liberty.

"Swim in the waters of prison," she told Crusius. "Now we're going to enjoy the sunshine. ... We still have our freedom, in our country."

Weber reported from Austin. Associated Press photographer Andrés Leighton contributed.

Trump blasts DeSantis in Iowa, says GOP rival 'despises' the state's ethanol

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa (AP) — Campaigning in Iowa, former President Donald Trump attacked Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis as an enemy of corn-based ethanol in his largest campaign event in the leadoff caucus state in nearly four months.

Trump, appearing Friday in Council Bluffs in the western part of the state, criticized his top 2024 Republican presidential rival for voting as a member of Congress to oppose the federal mandate for the fuel additive that Iowa leads the nation in producing.

Trump declared himself "the most pro-farmer president that you've ever had" at the event, which was aimed at promoting his administration's agricultural record and touting his oversight of clawbacks of regulations on farmers. "I fought for Iowa ethanol like no president in history," he said.

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On a rainy Friday, Trump spoke to more than 1,000 Iowans and Nebraskans packed into the event hall inside Mid-America Center, with hundreds more huddled under umbrellas in line outside the arena.

As a congressman from Florida, DeSantis co-sponsored a bill in 2017 that would have immediately ended the renewable fuel standard, a position consistent with fiscal conservatives who see such mandates as government overreach.

"Iowa also needs to know that Ron DeSanctus totally despises Iowa ethanol and ethanol generally," Trump said, intentionally mispronouncing his rival's name as he routinely does. "He's been fighting it for years. Don't forget, as a congressman he was voting against it, and fighting for years to kill every single job."

DeSantis' campaign described the attack as a distortion. "As president, Governor Ron DeSantis will be a champion for farmers and use every tool available to open new markets," campaign press secretary Bryan Griffin said in an emailed statement

Trump spoke for 80 minutes, starting with the agriculture theme but blending his attacks on DeSantis and President Joe Biden with asides on such subjects as Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine — "I told him: Don't do it." — an impression of French President Emmanuel Macron and a dismissal of climate change science, saying during the hottest week in history that global warming is just going to give more people beachfront property.

He touted his three picks for the Supreme Court, who helped make up the majority that voted to overturn Roe v. Wade on abortion last year and to end affirmative action in college admissions last week. He urged caution in the way that Republicans talk about life after Roe and cast the decision as an opportunity for bargaining at the state and federal levels.

Noting his own preference for exceptions to abortion bans for victims of rape or incest and to protect the life of the pregnant woman, Trump said the court ruling gave "pro-lifers a tremendous power to negotiate" abortion restrictions.

"That issue has to be spoken about properly because Republicans, many of them don't speak about it properly," he said, a nod to his criticism of hardline opponents he blamed for holding Republicans to a narrow House win last year. He added: "It's really a great victory to get something done. You now have tremendous power to negotiate something."

Trump took three audience questions and then headed to a local Dairy Queen. He teased the onlooking news media as he entered and wondered aloud what DQ's signature "Blizzard" was before handing them out to adoring fans. "Anyone want one back there?" he asked the crowd, which chanted, "USA! USA! USA!"

Although Iowa's caucus campaigns have become more focused on national party priorities over the past two decades, some candidates have continued to portray support for ethanol — specifically the federal requirement that the nation's fuel supply contain a minimum volume of renewable fuels — as a litmus test in the state.

Ethanol is a fuel additive blended with gasoline and sold across the country that is usually produced by fermenting corn. The ethanol industry consumes about half of Iowa's corn crop, and the state leads the nation in corn and ethanol production.

As a candidate, Trump has promoted the executive order he signed as president increasing the retail sale of fuel containing 15% ethanol.

Recent history, however, suggests a lack of support for ethanol may not be disqualifying. In 2016, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who opposes the mandate, won Iowa's Republican caucuses, handing Trump an early defeat in his ultimately successful White House campaign. Trump carried Iowa by more than 9 percentage points in 2016 and 8.2 points in 2020.

As he arrived in Iowa, Trump also rolled out his Farmers for Trump Coalition, a group co-chaired by officials including Reps. Mike Sexton and Derek Wulf, the top two Republicans on the House Agriculture Committee.

Before Friday, Trump's last large event in Iowa was in March, when he spoke to more than 1,500 people at a theater in Davenport and also went after DeSantis on ethanol. He was due to hold an outdoor event in May in Des Moines with about 5,000 expected, but his campaign called it off because of a tornado warning.

The large Republican presidential field has spent a lot of time over the past few months in Iowa, the

leadoff GOP caucus state. In June, more than a half dozen candidates, including DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley and U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, attended Sen. Joni Ernst's annual "Roast and Ride" fundraiser that kicked off a busy summer campaign season.

Trump campaigned in the Des Moines area last month, meeting with GOP state lawmakers, conservative pastors, campaign volunteers and a suburban Republican breakfast club. That visit came about a week before he was indicted on federal charges.

Part of the stop's purpose was also to put supporters in touch with campaign organizers to ensure their participation in the Iowa caucuses, which he predicted Friday he would win.

But noting the robust delegation that had crossed the Missouri River from Nebraska to attend, Trump said, "I hope Nebraska's represented here."

The gesture prompted an eruption of applause from the many Nebraskans in the hall, none of whom would be allowed to participate in the caucuses.

Associated Press writer Meg Kinnard contributed to this report from Columbia, S.C.

Andy Murray exits Wimbledon with uncertainty after a 5-set, 2-day loss to Stefanos Tsitsipas

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Andy Murray didn't know.

As he was asked to dissect his loss to Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second round of Wimbledon — a rollicking five-setter that lasted more than 4 1/2 hours spread over two days before a packed Centre Court filled with thousands of his closest and loudest friends — Murray started answers to question after question at his news conference Friday with some variation of that theme.

It was, likely, a verbal crutch, something used to gather his thoughts before offering a more complete response. It also embodied the uncertainty that seems to surround a former No. 1 player who owns three Grand Slam titles, two at the All England Club, but also is now 36 and with an artificial hip after two operations.

Was it harder to accept this 7-6 (3), 6-7 (2), 4-6, 7-6 (3), 6-4 defeat, given both how close it was and all he's been through? "I don't know, to be honest," Murray's reply began.

Did the match change because it was suspended Thursday at 10:40 p.m., right after he'd taken a two-sets-to-one lead, because rules prevent play after 11 p.m.? "I don't know, to be honest."

How frustrating was it that the contest was put on hold for nearly 18 hours? "Well, you never know what would have happened."

Does the player ahead in that circumstance want to keep playing, while the player trailing prefers to stop? "I don't know."

Will he return to Wimbledon next year? "I don't know."

"I'm obviously very disappointed just now. You never know how many opportunities you're going to get to play here," Murray said. "The defeats, maybe feel a bit tougher. But, to be honest, every year that Wimbledon's not gone how I would like, it's been hard."

This was his second consecutive exit in the second round at the site of three of his greatest triumphs: the 2012 Olympic gold medal and the 2013 and 2016 Wimbledon championships. His trophy a decade ago was the first for a British man at the All England Club in singles in 77 years.

Murray has not been past the third round at any major since getting to the 2017 quarterfinals at Wimbledon.

"I mean, ultimately this was an opportunity for me. I had a good chance of having a proper run for the first time in a long time at a Slam. I didn't take it," he said, and bit on the collar of his white T-shirt.

On the point before action was halted Thursday, Murray slipped and fell at the baseline. He called it "jarring" and said he felt some "initial pain and discomfort," but would not characterize it as an injury and

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said he was OK when action resumed Friday.

"It's never easy against Andy. I know everyone loves him here," said the No. 5-seeded Tsitsipas, a two-time runner-up at majors, including at the Australian Open in January.

All in all, Friday was rough for the local fans: The other two British men left in the bracket, No. 12 Cam Norrie and wild-card entry Liam Broady, were sent home, too. Norrie was defeated by Chris Eubanks of the United States 6-3, 3-6, 6-2, 7-6 (3), and Broady lost to No. 26 Denis Shapovalov of Canada 4-6, 6-2, 7-5, 7-5.

At night, Novak Djokovic moved into the fourth round as he pursues some more significant numbers — a fifth consecutive title at Wimbledon; an eighth overall there; a 24th from all majors — by making quick work of Stan Wawrinka 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 (5). Djokovic trailed 5-3 in the closing tiebreaker before reeling off the last four points.

No. 7 Andrey Rublev and No. 8 Jannik Sinner also both got to the fourth round, while No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz and No. 3 Daniil Medvedev reached the third. The No. 1 woman, Iga Swiatek, made her way into the fourth round — she's never been further at the All England Club — as did No. 4 Jessica Pegula; No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka, two-time champion Petra Kvitova and 2022 runner-up Ons Jabeur moved into the third round. But No. 5 Caroline Garcia was a 7-6 (0), 4-6, 7-5 loser against No. 32 Marie Bouzkova.

Because it was so late by the time Murray and Tsitsipas took the court Thursday, the retractable roof was closed. It was open Friday afternoon: After so much rain earlier in the week, the pale blue sky was unencumbered by clouds, and some folks sitting on the side of the stadium blanketed by sun flapped fans with the temperature at 85 degrees Fahrenheit (30 degrees Celsius).

Tsitsipas drew hearty boos when he disputed a ruling in Friday's second game, but he never seemed rattled during points. He took the last four points of the fourth-set tiebreaker Friday — just as he did in the first-set tiebreaker Thursday — then broke early in the fifth to lead 2-1 and was on his way.

"He's someone who will make it a marathon, regardless of whether you want it or not," said Tsitsipas, whose girlfriend and mixed doubles partner, Paula Badosa, watched from his guest box after she stopped playing during her match earlier Friday because of a bad back. "I had to work extra hard today to get that victory. My legs are sore right now. He made me run left and right, up and down."

Each player only broke the other once. Murray's ability to return is one of his many elite skills, and he was upset at himself for not managing to do more damage to the serves coming off the racket of Tsitsipas.

One pivotal moment came with Tsitsipas serving at 4-all, 15-30 in the fourth set. Murray hit a short, sharply angled backhand return that was called out by a line judge and chair umpire Aurélie Tourte; a TV graphic replay showed the ball actually clipped the chalk and should have counted.

"It was right underneath the umpire's nose," Murray said.

He'll probably think about that one some more. He's also likely to think about what else went wrong against Tsitsipas.

Murray spoke before the tournament about having an idea how much longer he will stay on tour.

"I don't plan to stop right now. But this one will take a little while to get over," he said Friday. "Hopefully find the motivation again to keep training, keep pushing, try and keep getting better."

In other words, he doesn't know precisely what the future holds.

AP tennis: <https://apnews.com/hub/tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Dutch premier resigns because of deadlock on thorny issue of migration, paving way for new elections

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The Dutch government collapsed Friday because of irreconcilable differences within the four-party coalition about how to rein in migration, a divisive issue that has split nations across Europe.

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The resignation of Prime Minister Mark Rutte, the longest-serving premier of the nation, means the country will face a general election later this year. Rutte and his government will remain in office in a caretaker capacity until a new ruling coalition is chosen.

"It is no secret that the coalition partners have very different views on migration policy," Rutte told reporters in The Hague. "And today, unfortunately, we have to draw the conclusion that those differences are irreconcilable. That is why I will immediately ... offer the resignation of the entire Cabinet to the king in writing"

Opposition lawmakers wasted no time in calling for fresh elections even before Rutte formally confirmed his resignation.

Geert Wilders, leader of the anti-immigration Party for Freedom, tweeted, "Quick elections now." Across the political spectrum, Green Left leader Jesse Klaver also called for elections and told Dutch broadcaster NOS: "This country needs a change of direction."

Rutte had presided over late-night meetings Wednesday and Thursday that failed to result in a deal on migration policy. At one final round of talks Friday evening, the parties decided unanimously that they could not agree and, as a result, could not remain together in the coalition.

The decision underscored ideological divisions that existed from the day the coalition was sworn in just over 18 months ago between parties that do not support a strict crackdown on migration — D66 and fellow centrist party ChristenUnie, or Christian Union — and the two that favor tougher measures — Rutte's conservative People's Party for Freedom and Democracy and the Christian Democrats.

Similar discussions are going on across political divides elsewhere in Europe as migrants fleeing conflict or seeking a better life make perilous sea crossings from northern Africa to reach the continent. Hundreds of thousands of people also have fled the grinding war in Ukraine.

Migration is set to be an essential theme of European Union parliamentary elections next year, but the issue hit early in the Netherlands, a nation that has long been torn between a welcoming international outreach and increasing resistance to foreign influences.

Rutte's coalition tried for months to hash out a deal to reduce the flow of new migrants arriving in the country of nearly 18 million people. Proposals reportedly included creating two classes of asylum — a temporary one for people fleeing conflicts and a permanent one for people trying to escape persecution — and reducing the number of family members who are allowed to join asylum-seekers in the Netherlands.

Last year, hundreds of asylum-seekers were forced to sleep outdoors in squalid conditions near an overcrowded reception center as the number of people arriving in the Netherlands outstripped the available beds. Dutch aid agencies provided assistance.

Just over 21,500 people from outside Europe sought asylum in the Netherlands in 2022, according to the country's statistics office. Tens of thousands more moved to the Netherlands to work and study.

The numbers have put a strain on housing that already was in short supply in the densely populated country.

Rutte's government worked for a law that could compel municipalities to provide accommodations for newly arrived asylum-seekers, but the legislation has yet to pass through both houses of parliament.

The prime minister also promoted European Union efforts to slow migration to the 27-nation bloc. Rutte visited Tunisia last month with his Italian counterpart and the president of the EU's executive commission to offer more than 1 billion euros in financial aid to rescue the North African nation's teetering economy and to stem migration from its shores to Europe.

Rutte's coalition government, the fourth he has led, took office in January 2022 following the longest coalition negotiations in Dutch political history.

The election for the lower house of the Dutch parliament later this year will take place in a polarized and splintered political landscape — there are 20 parties in the 150-seat lower house.

During provincial elections earlier this year, a populist pro-farmer party put Rutte's party into second place. The defeat was seen as a possible incentive for Rutte to do his utmost to hold together his coalition until its term ends in 2025.

Follow AP's coverage of migration issues at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>

Fire that killed 2 aboard a cargo ship in New Jersey is expected to burn for days

By DEEPTI HAJELA and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A cargo ship docked at the East Coast's biggest port smoldered for a third day and will likely burn for several more after the fire claimed the lives of two New Jersey firefighters, officials said Friday, acknowledging that they'll be discussing how first responders are trained.

What caused the fire aboard the Grande Costa d'Avorio, an Italian-flagged vessel carrying cars and other goods, at port in Newark won't be known until an investigation after the fire is out, according to Coast Guard Capt. Zeita Merchant, the captain of the Port of New York and New Jersey.

A crew of 20 firefighters, salvage workers and a New York fire boat blasted jets of water onto the ship to contain the intense heat, which officials have said burned on the 10th through 12th levels at the rear of the ship. Flames occasionally flared from top level.

Crews described the difficulty controlling the blaze.

"Access is tough. The heat is extreme. It's a steel box. So it's a very complex situation," said Gordon Lorensen of Donjon Marine, a salvage company assisting with the fire.

Fire crews have to pour enough water onto the vessel to douse the flames but too much could cause the ship to tilt, he said, so they then pump it off the ship. The vessel listed slightly to its right but was stable, according to Tom Wiker, president of Gallagher Marine Systems, which was representing the ship's owner, the Grimaldi Group.

The Port Authority relies on local fire departments, like Newark's, to assist with fires since it doesn't have its own firefighting agency.

Authorities declined to answer whether firefighters should have gone into harm's way to put the blaze out when no lives appeared to be at risk on the ship with 28 crew members.

Newark Public Safety Director Fritz Frage said the city has an agreement with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey covering their response to fires and they continue to have conversations "today and going forward in terms of training." He didn't offer specifics about training.

Lorensen said shipboard fires are unique from one event to the next and can change.

"You can do all the training in the world and you're going to find something you've never seen before," he said.

Newark Fire Chief Rufus Jackson said Thursday that the department had trained on passenger-carrying ships before, but not the specific kind of cargo vessel they're confronting now.

Killed in the blaze that started Wednesday night were Newark firefighters Augusto "Augie" Acabou and Wayne "Bear" Brooks Jr., whom officials praised for their bravery. President Joe Biden called the families of the fallen firefighters to offer condolences, according to Michael Giunta, head of the firefighters union.

At a memorial Friday, the men were remembered by friends and family, speaking through tears.

Roger Terry, Brooks' uncle, called his nephew "a real-life Superman" who had always wanted to be a firefighter. Brooks' wife and two daughters sobbed as he was remembered.

Firefighter Michael Johnson of Ladder 4 said Brooks "loved his life, loved his kids. He loved the job more than anything."

Acabou's cousin, Newark fire Capt. Carlos Henriques, read a letter from his family about Acabou, calling their loss "unfathomable."

Acabou's "sense of honor was unparalleled. And he consistently exemplified this through his actions. Everything he did was about helping others, going above and beyond for those in need."

Marine traffic trackers show the ship, which was built in 2011, had arrived from the Port of Baltimore several days earlier. It was carrying more than 1,200 new and used cars, vans and trucks.

The fire broke out about 9:30 p.m. Wednesday. About an hour later, there was a mayday call when two

firefighters became trapped inside the ship. Rescue workers rescued Acabou from the ship before midnight and he was later taken to a hospital, where he died Thursday morning. Brooks died early Thursday morning after he was recovered. Five other firefighters were injured.

Grimaldi Deep Sea said in a statement that the crew immediately activated on-board fire suppression procedures and the local firefighting service was alerted, triggering a prompt response that was crucial to containing and controlling the blaze. It also said that no electric cars nor hazardous cargo is on board, no fuel spills have been detected, and the stability of the ship was not been compromised.

The Grimaldi Group statement said the cause of the fire isn't known, but it will investigate in cooperation with authorities.

A 2020 inferno aboard a U.S. Navy ship in San Diego reflects the challenge of containing fires aboard vessels. In that case, the USS Bonhomme Richard, a \$1.2 billion amphibious assault ship, burned for nearly five days and eventually had to be scuttled.

This story has been corrected to show that Acabou's cousin is Carlos Henriques, not Henriquez.

Capitol rioter linked to Proud Boys gets 5 years in prison for pepper-spraying police

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

A Florida man prosecutors say is affiliated with the Proud Boys extremist group was sentenced on Friday to five years in prison for attacking police officers with pepper spray as they tried to defend the U.S. Capitol against supporters of President Donald Trump on Jan. 6, 2021.

Barry Ramey, an aircraft mechanic who was convicted of assault and other crimes in federal court in Washington, D.C., also tried to intimidate an FBI agent investigating him before his arrest. Ramey anonymously called the agent and recited the agent's home address over the phone, prosecutors say.

Ramey has been locked up since his April 2022 arrest. His attorney wrote in court documents that Ramey "has understood the gravity of his actions and is ready for a change with support standing by to help him through it."

There was no immediate response Friday to an email sent to his attorney seeking comment.

Prosecutors say Ramey joined a large group of Proud Boys on the morning of Jan. 6 before heading toward the Capitol, where lawmakers were meeting to certify President Joe Biden's election victory over Trump. As another rioter charged a police line, Ramey lifted his arm and began spraying, hitting two officers, according to prosecutors.

After the officers were sprayed, rioters managed to push past the police line and up the stairs toward the Capitol, authorities say.

"Like an attacker who holds a pillow over a victim's head while the victim is assaulted, Ramey's spray was capable of making officers just as vulnerable to attack," prosecutors wrote in court papers.

Ramey's lawyer noted in court documents that her client didn't enter the Capitol, steal anything or "remain defiant following January 6th—as many have done." His attorney disputed prosecutors' characterization of Ramey as a member of the Proud Boys on Jan. 6. She said there's no evidence he was part of any chats that "planned a coup on democratic government" or came to Washington prepared to stop the certification of the vote.

"There is a marked difference between those who came prepared that day for violence, planned for it, advocated for it, and enlisted others to carry it out versus those who came to support their candidate, and were egged on by more nefarious forces and conducted themselves in a criminal manner," defense attorney Farheena Siddiqui wrote.

A slew of Proud Boys leaders, members and associates have been charged with federal crimes in the riot. Former Proud Boys national chairman Enrique Tarrío and three other leaders were convicted in May of seditious conspiracy for what authorities said was a plot to halt the transfer of power from Trump to Biden.

Also on Friday, another Florida man — who authorities say came to Washington with a militia group

called Guardians of Freedom — was sentenced in a separate case to five months behind bars for his role in the riot, according to court documents.

Authorities say Jonathan Rockholt came to the Capitol with a tactical vest and helmet, joined other rioters in pushing against police in a tunnel and stole an officer's riot shield. Rockholt pleaded guilty to civil disorder and theft of government property.

Rockholt's lawyer said in court papers that during the riot, the man was "caught up in the moment cheering for Trump" and "didn't intentionally" contribute to the heave-ho pushing of officers but was being pushed himself by the crowd around him.

"As for the shield, Mr. Rockholt offers no excuse for that lapse of judgment," attorney Vincent Citro wrote.

In an email on Friday, Citro said the judge imposed "an appropriate sentence based on the facts and circumstances."

More than 1,000 people have been charged in that Capitol attack. Over 600 of them have pleaded guilty, while approximately 100 others have been convicted after trials decided by judges or juries. More than 550 riot defendants have been sentenced, with over half receiving terms of imprisonment ranging from six days to 18 years.

Associated Press reporter Michael Kunzelman in Silver Spring, Maryland contributed.

Kansas attorney general sues to prevent transgender people from changing driver's licenses

By JOHN HANNA AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — The Republican attorney general of Kansas sued Friday to force the state to be among a few that prohibit transgender people from changing their sex on their driver's licenses and to repudiate the Democratic governor, who continues to allow such changes despite a new anti-trans law.

Attorney General Kris Kobach filed his lawsuit in state court, seeking an order to stop Gov. Laura Kelly, and agencies under her control, from letting transgender people change their licenses. Kobach contends a law that took effect Saturday prevents such changes and requires the state to reverse any previous changes in its records.

Kobach has argued that the law applies in the same way to birth certificates, but the lawsuit filed Friday doesn't address those documents. The settlement of a 2018 federal lawsuit requires Kansas to allow transgender people to change their birth certificates.

"The Governor cannot pick and choose which laws she will enforce and which laws she will ignore," reads the lawsuit, filed in state district court in Shawnee County, home to the state capital, Topeka. It seeks to force the governor to enforce the law as he sees it and names as defendants two officials who oversee driver's licenses.

While Kelly isn't named as a defendant, the lawsuit holds her responsible for the policy on driver's licenses.

"Governor Kelly is faithfully executing the laws of the state and has directed her administration to as well," spokesperson Brianna Johnson said in a statement.

Even with a raft of measures targeting transgender people in statehouses across the U.S. this year, Kansas would be atypical for not allowing them to change sex or gender markers on birth certificates, driver's licenses or either. Montana and Tennessee also have policies against changing either document, and Oklahoma has a policy against changing birth certificates.

"The state has been doing just fine," said Adam Kellogg, a 20-year-old transgender University of Kansas student. "The fact that this is an issue now for some reason is confusing, to say the least, when there hasn't really been a problem."

The dispute between Kobach and Kelly highlights an odd feature of their generally conservative state's modern politics. In the past 50 years, Republicans have won every U.S. Senate race, but Democrats have won half of the governor's races with support from GOP moderates. The Legislature has anti-abortion Republican supermajorities, but a statewide vote in August 2022 decisively affirmed abortion rights.

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Kelly won her first term as governor in 2018 by defeating Kobach, who was then the Kansas secretary of state. He staged a political comeback last year by winning the attorney general's race as she captured a second term, both of them by slim margins.

More than 900 people in Kansas have changed the listing for sex on their birth certificates in the past four years. About 400 have changed their driver's licenses in that period, about four times as many a month this year as previously. The number of driver's licenses changes accelerated in May and June as LGBTQ+ rights advocates encouraged people to do it ahead of the new law.

That new law defines a person's sex as male or female, based on the "biological reproductive system" identified at birth, applying that definition to any state law or regulation. It also says that "important governmental objectives" of protecting people's privacy, health and safety justify single-sex spaces such as bathrooms and locker rooms.

The governor's office said last week that the state health department, which handles birth certificates, and the motor vehicle division, which issues driver's licenses, would continue allowing transgender people to change the markers for sex on those documents. Her office said lawyers in her administration had concluded that doing so doesn't violate the new law. Kelly is a strong supporter of LGBTQ+ rights and vetoed the measure, but the Legislature overrode her.

But the governor's statements about the new law are at odds with descriptions from LGBTQ+ rights advocates before the Republican-controlled Legislature enacted it over Kelly's veto. The advocates predicted that it would prevent transgender people from changing their driver's licenses and amounted to a legal "erasure" of their identities, something Kobach confirmed as the intent when he issued his legal opinion.

Kansas is also among at least 10 states with a law against transgender people using facilities in line with their gender identities, though it includes no enforcement mechanism.

"For me to go into a bathroom and not have a marker that represents who I am, I was terrified. I was afraid I was going to get accosted or harassed," said Ty Goeke, a 37-year-old transgender Topeka resident who changed both his birth certificate and driver's license last month. "Now that I have the correct marker, I feel much better, feel more confident."

Follow John Hanna on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/apjdhanna>

Wisconsin judge: Lawsuit to repeal abortion ban can continue

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin's 173-year-old abortion ban outlaws killing fetuses but doesn't apply to consensual medical abortions, a judge ruled Friday in allowing a lawsuit challenging the ban to continue in the perennial battleground state.

Dane County Circuit Judge Diane Schlipper said the legal language in the ban doesn't use the term "abortion" so the law only prohibits attacking a woman in an attempt to kill her unborn child.

"There is no such thing as an `1849 Abortion Ban` in Wisconsin," the judge wrote.

Wisconsin lawmakers enacted statutes in 1849 that have until now been widely interpreted as outlawing abortion in all cases except to save the mother's life. The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling legalizing abortion nullified the ban, but legislators never repealed it. Then, the high court's decision last June to overturn *Roe v. Wade* reactivated the statutes.

Republicans and their conservative allies across the country praised the reversal, but the decision energized Democratic voters. Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers parlayed anger over the ruling into a re-election victory in November. The issue figures to be front and center again in the state as the 2024 presidential campaign ramps up.

The state's Democratic attorney general, Josh Kaul, has vowed to restore abortion access. He filed a lawsuit in Dane County days after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, seeking to repeal the ban.

Kaul argues that the ban is too old to enforce and that a 1985 law that permits abortions before a fetus can survive outside the womb supersedes the ban. Three doctors later joined the lawsuit as plaintiffs,

saying they fear being prosecuted for performing abortions.

Kaul has named district attorneys in the three counties where abortion clinics operated until the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* as defendants. One of them, Sheboygan County's Republican district attorney, Joel Urmanski, filed a motion seeking to dismiss the case in December.

Urmanski maintained that it's a stretch to argue that the ban is so old it can no longer be enforced and that the 1985 law and the ban complement each other. Since the newer law outlaws abortions post-viability, it simply gives prosecutors another charging option, he contends.

Kaul's attorneys have countered that the two laws are in conflict and doctors need to know where they stand.

Schlipper explained in a written ruling denying Urmanski's dismissal motion that she interprets the 1849 law as prohibiting people from killing fetuses by assaulting or battering the mother. The law doesn't apply to consensual medical abortions because it doesn't use the word "abortion." Therefore, a doctor who performs an abortion is criminally liable only if the fetus was viable under the 1985 law, she wrote.

That means the doctor plaintiffs could ultimately win a declaration that they can't be prosecuted for performing abortions and hence the case should continue, Schlipper wrote.

Andrew Phillips and Jacob Curtis, two of Urmanski's attorneys, didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment on the decision. Heather Weininger, executive director of Wisconsin Right to Life, a group that advocates against abortion, called the ruling "a devastating setback in our ongoing fight to protect Wisconsin's preborn children."

The ruling means that the lawsuit will continue in Schlipper's courtroom. Regardless of how the judge ultimately rules, the case carries so much weight for the future of the state that it almost certainly will rise to the state Supreme Court, which is exactly where Democrats want it.

Liberal justices will control the court with a 4-3 majority after progressive Janet Protasiewicz is sworn in on Aug. 1. She stopped short on the campaign trail of saying how she would rule on a challenge to the 1849 ban but said repeatedly she supports abortion rights.

Evers tweeted Friday that Schlipper's decision to allow the case to continue is "good news and a critical step" toward restoring reproductive rights.

Biden adviser says US is pressing for the release of reporter who has spent 100 days in Russian jail

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Friday said the U.S. has been in contact with Russian officials to press for the release of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich as Friday marked the 100th day of the journalist being detained by the Russian government.

Sullivan said he also spoke with Gershkovich's family representatives and Wall Street Journal officials on Friday about the status of the case and the administration's efforts to win the reporter's release.

The Kremlin earlier this week suggested that it was open to a possible prisoner exchange that could involve Gershkovich, but it underscored that such talks must be held out of the public eye.

"I do not want to give false hope," Sullivan told reporters. "What the Kremlin said earlier this week is correct. There have been discussions. But those discussions have not produced a clear pathway to a resolution, and so I cannot stand here today and tell you that we have a clear answer to how we are going to get Evan home."

The U.S. ambassador to Moscow, Lynne Tracy, on Monday was allowed to visit Gershkovich for the first time since April.

Gershkovich was arrested on espionage charges in the city of Yekaterinburg while on a reporting trip. He is being held at Moscow's Lefortovo prison, notorious for its harsh conditions. A Moscow court last week upheld a ruling to keep him in custody until Aug. 30.

Gershkovich and his employer deny the allegations, and the U.S. government has declared him to be wrongfully detained. His arrest rattled journalists in Russia. Authorities there have not provided any evi-

dence to support the espionage charges.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre reiterated the U.S. stance that the detention of Gershkovich was baseless. She reiterated the administration's call for the immediate release of Gershkovich and Paul Whelan, a Marine Corps veteran who has been detained in Russia on espionage charges for four years.

"Our message to Evan and Paul is this: Keep the faith. We won't stop until you are home," Jean-Pierre said.

For the third time this week, Earth sets an unofficial heat record. What's behind those big numbers?

By SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

Earth's average temperature set a new unofficial record high on Thursday, the third such milestone in a week that already rated as the hottest on record and what one prominent scientist says could be the hottest in 120,000 years.

But it's also a record with some legitimate scientific questions and caveats, so much so that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has distanced itself from it. It's grabbed global attention, even as the number — 63 degrees Fahrenheit (17.23 degrees Celsius) — doesn't look that hot because it averages temperatures from around the globe.

Still, scientists say the daily drumbeat of records — official or not — is a symptom of a larger problem where the precise digits aren't as important as what's causing them.

"Records grab attention, but we need to make sure to connect them with the things that actually matter," climate scientist Friederike Otto of the Imperial College of London said in an email. "So I don't think it's crucial how 'official' the numbers are, what matters is that they are huge and dangerous and wouldn't have happened without climate change."

Thursday's planetary average surpassed the 62.9-degree mark (17.18-degree mark) set Tuesday and equaled Wednesday, according to data from the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, a tool that uses satellite data and computer simulations to measure the world's condition. Until Monday, no day had passed the 17-degree Celsius mark (62.6 degrees Fahrenheit) in the tool's 44 years of records.

Now, the entire week that ended Thursday averaged that much.

Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, called the 63-degree mark "an exceptional outlier" that is nearly 6 degrees warmer than the average of the last 12,000 years. Rockstrom said it will "with high likelihood translate to even more severe extremes in the form of floods, droughts, heat waves and storms."

"It is certainly plausible that the past couple days and past week were the warmest days globally in 120,000 years," University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann said. He cited a 2021 study that says Earth is the warmest since the last age ended, and said Earth likely hasn't been as warm dating all the way to the ice age before that some 120,000 years ago.

Climate scientist Zeke Hausfather of the tech company Stripe and Berkeley Earth temperature monitoring group said he wouldn't be surprised if it is the warmest in 120,000 years. But he said long-term proxy measurements like tree rings aren't precise.

This week's average includes places that are sweltering under dangerous heat — like Jingxing, China, which checked in almost 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 degrees Celsius) — and the merely unusually warm, like Antarctica, where temperatures across much of the continent were as much as 8 degrees Fahrenheit (4.5 degrees Celsius) above normal this week.

Temperatures were so brutally hot Thursday in Adrar, Algeria, that the temperature never got below 103.3 degrees (39.6 degrees Celsius) even at night when it is supposed to cool. That was the hottest ever nighttime low for Africa, according to weather historian and climatologist Maximiliano Herrera.

The temperature is ramping up across Europe this week, too. Germany's weather agency, DWD, has predicted highs of 37 degrees C (99 degrees F) on Sunday and the Health Ministry has issued a warning to vulnerable people.

While there are small spots of cooler-than-normal temperatures across the globe, the University of Maine

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measurement is an average. That means some places — including both polar regions — will be extraordinarily warmer than normal and others will be cooler. On average it's about 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius) warmer than the 1979-2000 average, which is warmer than the 20th and 19th century averages.

And 70% of the world is covered by oceans, which have been spiking record heat for months.

Scientists say the heat is driven by two factors: Long-term warming from greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and a natural El Nino warming of part of the Pacific that changes weather globally and makes an already warming world a bit hotter.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Thursday issued a note of caution about the Maine tool's findings, saying it could not confirm data that results in part from computer modeling, saying it wasn't a good substitute for observations.

Scientists don't understand and haven't delved much into daily fluctuations, said Princeton University climate scientist Gabriel Vecchi. Much more meaningful to them are global data over months, years and especially decades.

"The fact that we haven't had a year colder than the 20th century average since the Ford administration (1976) is much more relevant," Vecchi said.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, said immediacy of daily records is important.

"Tell me that yesterday was the hottest day on record and I can relate the claim to ways in which yesterday's heat constrained my behavior," she said. "I can't do the same with monthly or yearly data. ... We experience the world hour-by-hour, day-by-day, not in monthly or yearly averages."

Discussions about how official the records are aren't as important as the public getting the message "that Earth is warming and humans are responsible," said Max Boykoff, a University of Colorado environmental studies professor who tracks media coverage of climate change.

"The issue of climate change doesn't often get its 15 minutes of fame. When it does, it's usually tied to something abstract like a scientific report or a meeting of politicians that most people can't relate to," said George Mason University climate communications professor Ed Maibach.

"Feeling the heat — and breathing the wildfire smoke, as so many of us in the Eastern U.S. and Canada have been doing for the past month — is a tangible shared public experience that can be used to focus the public conversation," he said.

Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed.

Follow AP's climate and environment coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate-and-environment>

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France's small towns are reeling from the spread of rioting. 'Now it's affecting the countryside'

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — After a pleasant evening of wine-tasting — joyfully billed "Grapes and Friends!" — with a hundred or so people and oysters, charcuteries and cheeses, the mayor of the picturesque French town of Quissac was on his way home.

Then his phone rang: Urban unrest that was engulfing France after the deadly police shooting of a teenager on Paris' outskirts, hundreds of kilometers (miles) and a world away to the north, had careened into Quissac's tranquility, too.

In a quick hit-and-run, a small group of people — seemingly no more than four, the mayor says — bom-

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barded the local gendarmes' barracks on Quai de la Gare road with powerful fireworks, denting its metal shutters and setting fire to a cypress tree. In the grander scheme of things, it wasn't much compared to orgies of destruction, arson, looting and rioting unleashed on multitudes of other communities across France in six nights of mayhem. Still, for the town of 3,300 people in the Gard region of southern France, it was a first.

Quissac's unsettling experience last Friday night — and those of other out-of-the-way towns and villages also hit by unrest to varying degrees — set France's latest nationwide spasm of rioting apart from previous cycles of violence that have flared periodically in every decade since the 1980s.

Although typically referred to in France as "les violences urbaines" — urban violence — the unrest this time was no longer contained to blue-collar towns and cities' disadvantaged housing projects, places where anger at social and racial inequalities has festered.

Carried in part on the winds of social networks that have narrowed gaps between France's urban centers and its vast rural spaces, unrest also reached outward to touch places that escaped a similar nationwide wave of rioting in 2005.

IN SMALL TOWNS, A NAGGING QUESTION

Mayors of small towns where vehicles were torched, fires lit and police attacked are scratching their heads, trying to figure out: Why them? Why now? Why are France's big-city problems, which previously seemed far away, sinking roots into their peace and quiet, too?

"Why these incidents in a little town like ours?" asks the mayor of L'Aigle in Normandy, where fires were lit, cars torched and police chased around after small groups of suspects.

"In the press and even on the TV news, it was mainly Paris and its suburbs, Lyon and Marseille that were talked about. But when you look, there were also incidents in a certain number of small communities," the mayor, Philippe Van-Hoorne, says. "Unfortunately, the increase of uncivil behavior, of violence, is developing even in modest towns like ours ... It's very hard to solve."

By the government's count, more than 500 cities, towns and villages were affected this time after the police shooting of Nahel Merzouk in the Paris suburb of Nanterre on June 27. The French-born 17-year-old of north African descent was stopped by two officers on motorbikes who subsequently told investigators that he'd been driving dangerously in a bright yellow Mercedes. He died from a single shot through his left arm and chest. One officer is being held on a preliminary charge of voluntary homicide.

From Nanterre, violent protests spread with astounding speed and intensity. They quickly morphed into generalized mayhem that was relayed and celebrated on social networks. Much of the violence was concentrated in cities, large towns and their disadvantaged housing projects, leaving France once again grappling with its decades-old failure to better integrate generations of immigrants and their France-born children who complain of systemic discrimination.

But the staggering nationwide tallies of destruction — more than 6,000 vehicles and 12,400 trash bins set ablaze, more than 1,100 buildings attacked — weren't limited to previously recognized hotspots. This time, smaller communities were impacted, too.

In Quissac, investigators are searching for 4 people who scattered on foot after the firework attack, says the mayor, Serge Cathala. That incident aside, the only minor troubles Cathala can remember from his 28 years as an elected official are a few "very rare" trash fires and occasional daubs of graffiti. Quissac was spared by the longer nationwide rioting in 2005 that also started in Paris' outskirts.

"There's never really been acts of violence like this," the mayor says. "Now it's affecting the countryside."

Like other officials, including French President Emmanuel Macron, he suspects that videos of unrest on social networks encouraged copycat violence.

"It's one-upmanship," Cathala says. "A way of showing off."

AN AP TALLY SHOWS TOWNS IMPACTED NATIONWIDE

The Associated Press compiled a list of cities, towns and villages where officials reported unrest. It ended up with 297 names. Every letter of the alphabet was represented with the exceptions of U, X and Z.

They ranged from the commuter town of Achères — on a bend of the River Seine west of Paris that

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reported fires and destruction that forced the closure its town hall — to Yutz, near France's eastern borders with Germany and Luxembourg. There, a McDonald's was torched. Videos of the blaze were shared on social networks, hash-tagged Yutz and riots.

In Rugles, a Normandy village of 2,200, rockets were fired outside the Intermarché supermarket and fires lit. In Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône in the south, where the River Rhône empties into the Mediterranean, a school minibus and about 30 trash bins were set ablaze, the town hall was graffitied and a gas bottle was used to batter the window of a clothing store on Avenue du Port, the mayor's office says.

Metz, in the east, lost a library to flames. Part of a sports complex earmarked for use as a training venue for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games was set ablaze in Macon, in Burgundy. A social center under construction in Sens, also in Burgundy, was burnt down.

Not all larger towns were hit hard. Colmar in the wine-making Alsace region, known for its pretty timber-framed houses and canals, saw car fires and a bank was "a little bit touched," says Mayor Eric Straumann. Still, even that limited unrest was "quite paradoxical," given Colmar's low unemployment rate of about 5%, he says.

In L'Aigle, three cars were torched, 18 fires lit and five store windows attacked, says its mayor, Van-Hoorne. He says police made seven arrests — five of them minors — and that some filmed their exploits on their mobile phones. Just another French town touched by seismic events of a national scale, and another indication that in the world of the 21st century, geography isn't always the insulating force it once was.

"When you analyze it all on a nationwide scale," Van-Hoorne says, "it's true that it raises questions."

AP journalist Sylvie Corbet contributed to this report.

Ocasio-Cortez endorses Biden's reelection campaign, sending a strong signal of Democratic unity

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has endorsed President Joe Biden's reelection campaign, sending a strong sign of Democratic unity from one of the party's most liberal members.

"I think he's done quite well, given the limitations that we have," Ocasio-Cortez said on the "Pod Save America" podcast Thursday. "I do think that there are ebbs and flows."

Ocasio-Cortez, a self-described democratic socialist from New York, has sometimes bucked Biden and the party's leaders, including voting against the deal the president negotiated with Republicans in May to raise the nation's debt ceiling and casting the lone Democratic vote against a spending bill to keep the government operating and avoid a partial government shutdown.

She endorsed Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary and demurred in an interview last year when asked if she would support the incumbent president in 2024.

Biden is facing nominal primary challenges for next year's election in self-help author Marianne Williamson and anti-vaccine activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Ocasio, when asked about whether she'd support Biden, said: "I believe, given that field, yes."

The congresswoman said she felt Biden had a strong start in his presidency with the passage of the American Rescue Plan, aimed at relief from the impact of the pandemic, and the Inflation Reduction Act, a major climate and health care law.

"But," Ocasio-Cortez said, "there are also areas that I think could have gone better."

Today in History: July 8, The 'Great Grain Robbery'

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, July 8, the 189th day of 2023. There are 176 days left in the year.

On July 8, 1972, the Nixon administration announced a deal to sell \$750 million in grain to the Soviet Union. (However, the Soviets were also engaged in secretly buying subsidized American grain, resulting

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in what critics dubbed "The Great Grain Robbery.")

In 1776, Col. John Nixon gave the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, outside the State House (now Independence Hall) in Philadelphia.

In 1853, an expedition led by Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Yedo Bay, Japan, on a mission to seek diplomatic and trade relations with the Japanese.

In 1907, Florenz Ziegfeld staged his first "Follies," on the roof of the New York Theater.

In 1947, a New Mexico newspaper, the Roswell Daily Record, quoted officials at Roswell Army Air Field as saying they had recovered a "flying saucer" that crashed onto a ranch; officials then said it was actually a weather balloon.

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman named Gen. Douglas MacArthur commander-in-chief of United Nations forces in Korea. (Truman would fire MacArthur for insubordination nine months later.)

In 1967, Academy Award-winning "Gone With the Wind" and "A Streetcar Named Desire" actor Vivien Leigh died in London at age 53.

In 1989, Carlos Saul Menem was inaugurated as president of Argentina in the country's first transfer of power from one democratically elected civilian leader to another in six decades.

In 1994, Kim Il Sung, North Korea's communist leader since 1948, died at age 82.

In 2000, Venus Williams beat Lindsay Davenport for her first Grand Slam title, becoming the first Black female champion at Wimbledon since Althea Gibson in 1958.

In 2010, the largest spy swap between the U.S. and Russia since the Cold War unfolded as 10 people accused of spying in suburban America pleaded guilty to conspiracy and were ordered deported to Russia in exchange for the release of four prisoners accused of spying for the West.

In 2011, former first lady Betty Ford died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 93.

In 2016, on the first day of a two-day summit in Warsaw, NATO leaders geared up for a long-term standoff with Russia, ordering multinational troops to Poland and the three Baltic states as Moscow moved forward with its own plans to station two new divisions along its western borders.

Ten years ago: Breaking their public silence, three women who'd been held captive in a Cleveland home for a decade issued a YouTube video; in it, Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight thanked the public for the encouragement and financial support allowing them to restart their lives.

Five years ago: A woman who was poisoned in southwest England died, eight days after she may have touched a contaminated item containing the same type of military-grade nerve agent used to poison a former Russian spy and his daughter in the area in March. Divers rescued four of the 12 boys who'd been trapped in a flooded cave in northern Thailand with their soccer coach for more than two weeks. (The remaining eight boys and their coach were rescued over the next two days.) Actor and singer Tab Hunter died at the age of 86.

One year ago: Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated on a street in western Japan by a gunman who opened fire on him from behind as he delivered a campaign speech — an attack that stunned a nation with some of the strictest gun control laws anywhere. The 67-year-old Abe was Japan's longest-serving leader when he resigned in 2020. President Joe Biden signed an executive order to protect access to abortion, delivering impassioned remarks condemning the Supreme Court decision that ended that constitutional right. Larry Storch, the rubber-faced comic whose long career in theater, movies and television was capped by his "F Troop" role as zany Cpl. Agarn, died at age 99.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Steve Lawrence is 88. Actor Jeffrey Tambor is 79. Rock musician Jaimoe Johanson is 78. Ballerina Cynthia Gregory is 76. Actor Kim Darby is 76. Actor Jonelle Allen is 75. Children's performer Raffi is 75. Celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck is 74. Actor Anjelica Huston is 72. Writer Anna Quindlen is 71. Actor Kevin Bacon is 65. Actor Robert Knepper is 64. Country singer Toby Keith is 62. Rock singer Joan Osborne is 61. Writer-producer Rob Burnett is 61. Actor Rocky Carroll is 60. Actor Corey Parker is 58. Actor Lee Tergesen is 58. Actor Michael B. Silver is 56. Actor Billy Crudup is 55. Actor Michael Weatherly is 55. Singer Beck is 53. Comedian Sebastian Maniscalco is 50. Actor Kathleen Robertson is 50. Christian rock musician Stephen Mason (Jars of Clay) is 48. Actor Milo Ventimiglia (MEE'-loh vehn-tih-MEEL'-yuh) is 46. Singer Ben Jelen (YEL'-in) is 44. Actor Lance Gross is 42. Actor Sophia Bush is 41. Rock musician Jamie Cook (Arctic Monkeys) is 38. Actor Jake McDorman is 37. Actor Maya Hawke is 25. Actor Jaden Smith is 25.