

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, Aug. 24

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Soccer at St. Thomas More: Girls at 11 a.m., Boys at 1 p.m.

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



Sunday, Aug. 25

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 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.

Monday, Aug. 26

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, broccoli, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.

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

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Community Center, potluck at noon

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1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Taliban's Latest Crackdown

The Taliban-led Afghan government has officially published new laws banning women's voices and bare faces in public, according to reports. The rules are based in a 2022 decree by the country's spiritual leader and could potentially increase enforcement of the so-called "vice and virtue" morality laws.

The Taliban returned to power in the capital of Kabul in August 2021 following the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, which marked the end of the US' longest war (see timeline). Since then, the strict Islamist group has enacted a slew of restrictions on women and girls, including banning female passengers from boarding flights without a male chaperone. The latest laws ban women from speaking and singing in public, bar music in public places, and prevent men from shaving their beards. The Taliban's actions have been considered a reversal of its previous pledge to maintain increased freedoms gained over the past two decades.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. endorses Donald Trump for president.

The 70-year-old independent presidential candidate suspended his campaign Friday. Kennedy announced his support for the Republican presidential nominee in a speech in Arizona and said he would remove his name from the ballot in 10 battleground states. Kennedy had recently been polling in the single digits, with the latest figure hovering around 5%. See national polls here.

Federal Reserve chair signals "time has come" for rate cuts.

Fed chair Jerome Powell, in remarks Friday, said the central bank doesn't seek further cooling in labor market conditions, but stopped short of saying how large of an interest rate cut to expect next month. The Fed targets a 2% annual inflation rate; its preferred inflation measure—the personal consumption expenditures price index—showed inflation fell to a 2.5% annual rate in June. The Fed meets Sept. 17-18. Watch an overview of inflation here.

NASA update expected today on stuck Boeing Starliner astronauts.

NASA officials will announce their decision over the fate of two astronauts aboard the troubled Boeing Starliner spacecraft, which initially took off on an eight-day mission June 5. The agency will determine whether Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams can safely return to Earth on Starliner or if they will need to wait until February for a SpaceX Dragon ride home. Watch the announcement here (1 pm ET).

Canadian rail workers to strike Monday following stoppage.

Members of the union representing the Canadian National Railway—one of Canada's two major railroad operators (the second is Canadian Pacific Kansas City)—are poised to strike next week. The announcement follows the lockout of over 9,000 rail workers from Canada's two major railroads amid failed contract negotiations with the Teamsters union. See our previous write-up here.

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DOJ sues software company in rental price hike scheme.

The Justice Department and eight states filed an antitrust lawsuit against property management software company RealPage Inc., alleging it enabled landlords to collude and artificially inflate rental prices. The DOJ claims RealPage violated laws by using algorithmic pricing software that relied on private information shared by landlords to generate pricing suggestions for rental apartments.

Divers find final missing body from sunken superyacht.

The body of 18-year-old Hannah Lynch, daughter of British tech entrepreneur Mike Lynch, was recovered Friday. She was the last of six people who died after the 184-foot luxury yacht sank off the coast of Sicily Monday following severe weather conditions. Another 15 people on the yacht had been rescued that day, including Lynch's wife. Italian authorities are investigating whether possible crimes have been committed, including manslaughter and negligence.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Kay S. from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"A week or so ago, I had dermatology surgery for skin cancer at the top of my nose—fairly large, big purple bruises, black ends of sutures, gauze dressing over it but not completely covering the area. I'm used to it, had a lot of these, so I didn't think about how it looked. A couple of days later, I stopped at a Starbucks for coffee, and as I was about to drive away, the young man in the window touched his own nose and quietly asked, 'Are you all right? Do you need help? I can call for help.' I thanked him and explained, but I was moved to tears that a stranger would offer help."

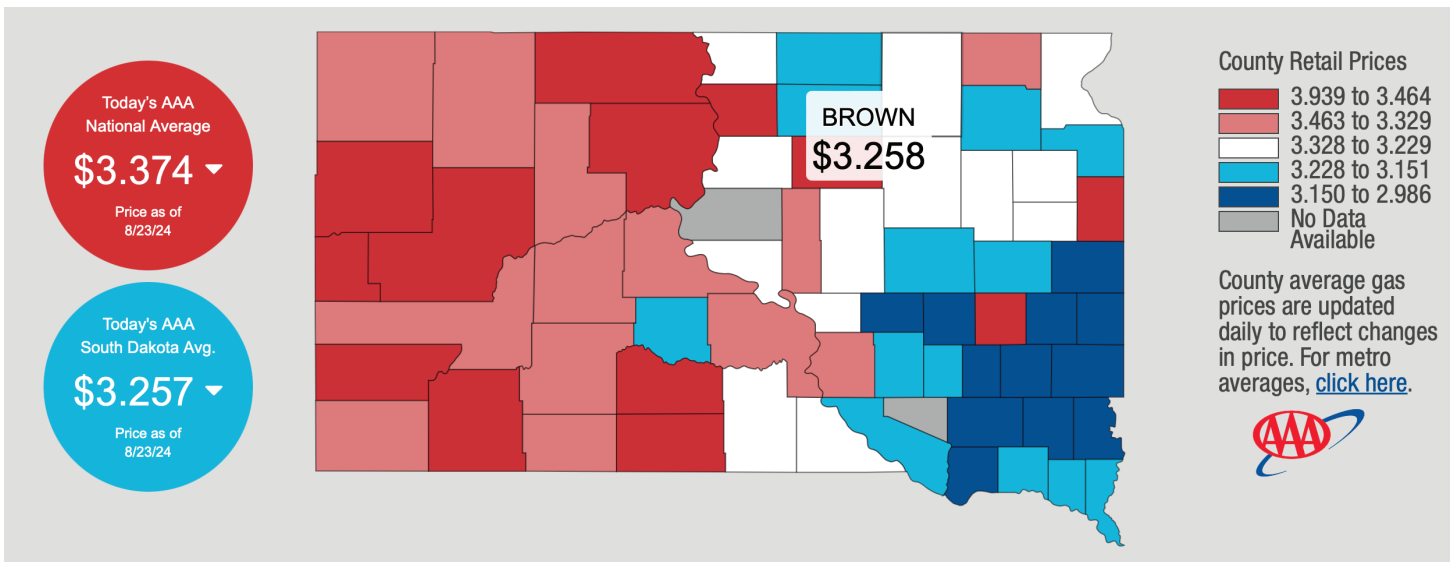
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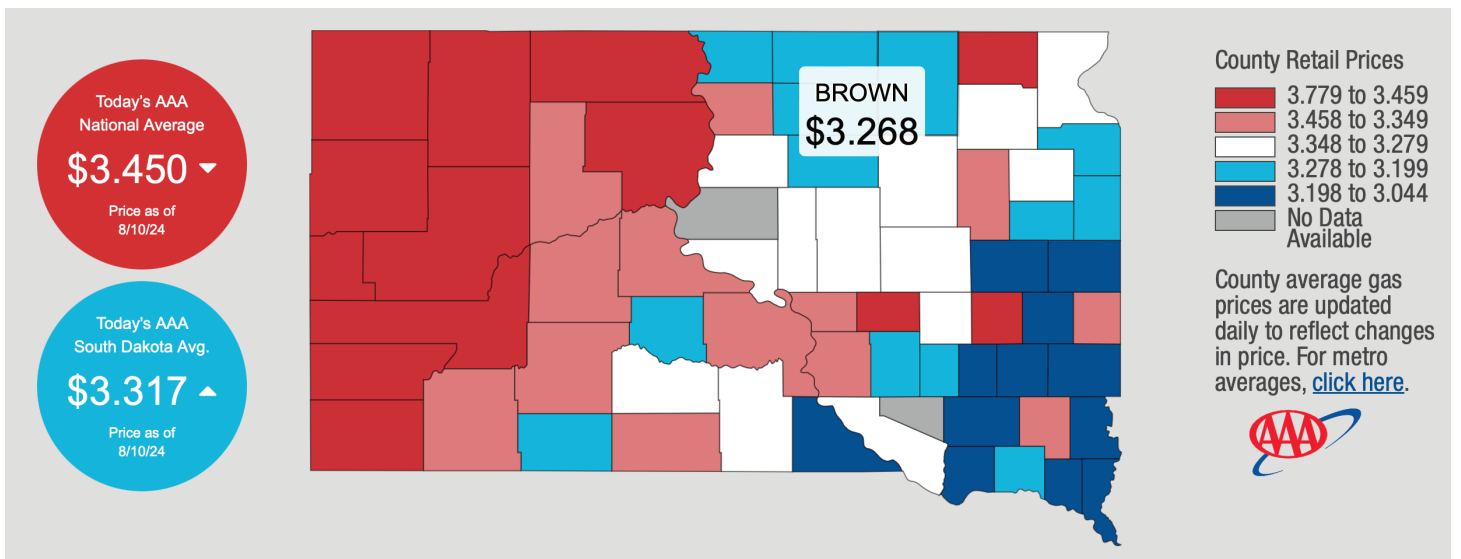
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

Current Avg.	\$3.257	\$3.450	\$3.886	\$3.420
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.269	\$3.465	\$3.876	\$3.415
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.294	\$3.481	\$3.916	\$3.438
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.246	\$3.472	\$3.882	\$3.469
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.766	\$3.933	\$4.387	\$4.143

This Week



2 weeks ago



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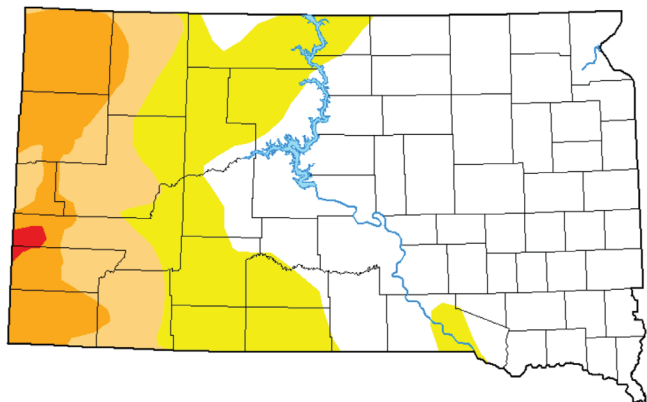
Drought Classification

None
D0 (Abnormally Dry)
D1 (Moderate Drought)

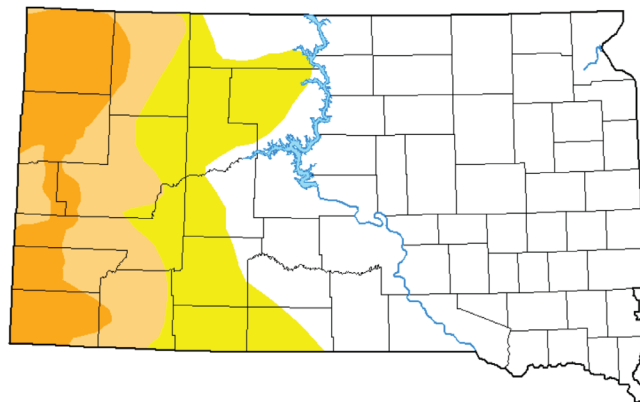
D2 (Severe Drought)
D3 (Extreme Drought)

D4 (Exceptional Drought)
No Data

Drought Monitor



August 20



August 13

Like other parts of the country, there were wet areas and dry areas this week in the High Plains region. Weekly rainfall totals ranged from zero in parts of Wyoming to locally over 2 inches in the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas. Eastern parts of the Dakotas and Nebraska averaged near to cooler than normal for the week, but areas to the west and south were warmer than normal, with some areas 2 to 4 degrees above normal. There was expansion of drought and abnormal dryness in most states in the region, more in the north, and contraction in mostly southern states. The more notable changes were expansion of moderate to severe drought in Kansas and Wyoming with extreme drought being introduced in Wyoming and adjacent South Dakota, and contraction of abnormal dryness and drought in Colorado and Kansas, especially southeast Kansas where locally up to 5 inches of rain fell. Reports of significant hay loss and early cattle sales in South Dakota may be due to a combination of drought and a June 19 freeze event; other drought impacts include surface water shortage and poor water quality for livestock. According to

Tietz does the hat trick to lead girls soccer to 5-1 win over Belle Fourche

And what is a hat trick? It's when someone scores three goals in a half. Tietz scored in the third, 10th and 32nd minute of the game to give Groton a 3-0 lead at half time. Ryelle Gilbert scored in the 53rd minute of the game and Jerica Locke scored the final goal in the 72nd minute of the game.

The boys lost to Belle Fourche, 7-0. Belle Fourche scored all seven goals in the first half.

Both teams will play St. Thomas More today with the girls playing at 11 a.m. and the boys at 1 p.m.

Emerald ash borer detected in LaMoure County

BISMARCK, N.D. – This week, adult emerald ash borers (EAB) were collected from a trap placed in LaMoure County, nine miles north of Edgeley, North Dakota. Upon follow-up from North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) staff, additional larvae were collected and have been officially confirmed as EAB. The detection is the first in North Dakota, and it becomes the 37th state to detect EAB.

“The North Dakota Department of Agriculture and our partners have been preparing for emerald ash borer’s eventual arrival for many years,” Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring said. “We have been placing and monitoring traps each summer and promoting awareness through outreach events, training and communication with the public. Now that it is unfortunately here, we urge North Dakota residents and travelers to be proactive to keep EAB from spreading.”

EAB is a wood boring insect originally from Asia, first found in the U.S. in 2002. It has since spread to 37 states and killed hundreds of millions of ash trees.

“North Dakota has more than 90 million ash trees that are at risk in native, rural and urban forests,” State Forester Tom Claeys said. “Ash trees make up between 20% - 80% of the trees along city streets and parks. Unless treated, infested ash trees can be killed in a few years.”

NDDA maintains a quarantine restricting movement of regulated commodities from infested areas. The quarantine will be extended to LaMoure County. Travelers should leave firewood at home and purchase or gather from local sources. Moving regulated materials from a quarantined to a non-quarantined area can result in civil penalties of up to \$5,000.

NDDA will collaborate with the North Dakota Forest Service, and North Dakota State University Extension to determine the extent of the infestation, continue monitoring ash trees and conduct outreach in the coming months. The ice storm that the area endured in December of 2023 will complicate efforts to find infested trees due to tree damage sustained in the storm.

Residents should check their ash trees for signs of an infestation, which include dieback, S-shaped tunnels, also known as serpentine galleries, under the bark, small D-shaped exit holes and woodpecker activity in the upper canopy of the trees.

One option to protect high-value trees are insecticide treatments. Treatments are not recommended until EAB is detected within 15 miles. Residents who choose to treat their ash trees are strongly urged to select a reputable tree service company with a certified applicator able to do these treatments. Most treatment options are restricted use and can only be done by a tree care professional.

For more information, or to report a tree you think may be infested, please visit www.ndda.nd.gov/eab.

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The South Dakota State Fair Presents First Dakota Football at the Fair

Huron, SD – The South Dakota State Fair and First Dakota National Bank are pleased to welcome back Football at the Fair, a Jackrabbit Watch Party in the Beer Garden.

“The State Fair has always been a place for South Dakotans to come together,” said Peggy Besch, State Fair Manager. “Hosting a watch party for SDSU’s opening game adds another level of fun at the Fair.”

This year’s First Dakota Football at the Fair features South Dakota State University Jackrabbit’s 2024 football season opener versus the Oklahoma State Cowboys. The game kicks off at 1 pm on Saturday, August 31. The watch party takes place at the Beer Garden on the South Dakota State Fairgrounds. This event is open to all ages and is included with fairgoers paid daily gate admission. The game stream is presented by Karl’s TV and Appliance.

“First Dakota is proud to sponsor Football at the Fair,” said Nate Franzén, President of First Dakota’s Ag Banking Division. “It’s a great opportunity for friends and families to get together at the Fair and root for the Jacks! GO BIG, GO BLUE, GO JACKS!”

First Dakota National Bank began in 1872 when it became the first fully chartered bank in the Dakota Territory. Located in Yankton, First Dakota grew steadily as it served the needs of settlers, the river traffic, and the flourishing businesses. Today, First Dakota has grown to a network of 17 full-service locations in South Dakota and five loan production offices in South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska. First Dakota delivers a complete array of banking, investment, and trust services to individuals, businesses, and ag customers.

The Beer Garden on the State Fairgrounds is located east of the grandstand and is open 11 am – 2 am daily during the fair. Each night of the fair, the Beer Garden hosts entertainment that begins immediately following that evening’s grandstand entertainment.

The 2024 South Dakota State Fair will run from Wednesday, August 28, through Monday, September 2. Channel Seeds Opening day will be Wednesday, August 28. For more information on State Fair events, contact the Fair office at 800-529-0900, visit www.sdstatefair.com, or find them on Facebook, Instagram, and X.

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

August 27, 2024 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 of Public Comment
4. Judy Dosch, Building Superintendent & Randy Zens, Building Asst. Superintendent:
 - a. Quotes for A/C Units at 124 Bldg.
5. Second Reading & Possible Adoption of Ordinance #275 - Rezone
6. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. Resolution for Speed Limit Changes
7. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2024
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Claim Assignment
 - e. Lease Agreement
 - f. Auditor's Report of Accounts
 - g. Zoning Ordinances – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Advertising
 - h. Plats
 - i. Preliminary Plat
 1. Larkota Acres First Addition
 - ii. Final Plats
 1. Aberdeen Township 20W Outlots
 2. Bergman Second Addition
 3. Houghton Cemetery First Addition
8. Other Business
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. 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](tel:+18722403311)

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 but 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/departments/commission>

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SD HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCOREBOARD

Hamlin 52, Britton-Hecla 0
Great Plains Lutheran 16, W-S-S 9
Herreid-Selby 46, Faith 8
Sully Buttes 46, Northwestern 6
Lyman 24, Dupree 12
Kimball/White Lake 20, De Smet 0
Scotland/Menno 36, Gregory 18
Clark/Willow Lake 2, Roncalli 0
Flandreau 21, Deuel 0
Bennett County 32, Jones County 12
Arlington 14, S-B-A 0
Corsica-Stickney 36, Hitchcock-Tulare 0
Warner 25, Castlewood 6
Winner 36, Hot Springs 0
Sioux Valley 35, St. Thomas More 0
Elk-Point Jefferson 54, Parker 0
Howard 45, Alcester-Hudson 8
Wolsey-Wessington 38, Estelle-Hendricks 22
Harding County 50, Potter County 8
Mobridge-Pollock 32, Lead/Deadwood 0
Irene/Wakonda 40, SF Lutheran 20
Wagner 34, Chamberlain 8
Lemmon/McIntosh 52, North Central 0
Ipswich 42, Timber Lake 0
Leola-Frederick 60, Redfield 7
Mt. Vernon-Plankinton 42, M-C-M 16
Gayville-Volin 38, Platte-Geddes 36
Webster 36, Sisseton 0
Burke 61, Colome 12
Iroquois/Lake Preston 36, Wilmot 26
Sioux Valley 35, St. Thomas More 0
Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/ Sanborn Central 28, Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 13
Beresford 40, Baltic 8
Viborg-Hurley 40, Canistota 20
Parkston 42, Freeman/Marion/Freeman Academy 14
Hanson 50, Garretson 0
Wall 37, Philip 0
Centerville 37, Deubrook Area 26
Avon 60, Colman-Egan 38
Dell Rapids St. Mary 38, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 0
Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian
Thunderhawks 26, Bon Homme 12
Elkton-Lake Benton 42, Waubay/Summit 0



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Noem rejects more than \$70 million in federal funds for energy and environmental programs

One opportunity would have made efficiency rebates available to South Dakotans

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 23, 2024 5:56 PM

Governor Kristi Noem's administration recently turned down more than \$70 million of federal funds from energy efficiency and environmental programs, according to her top budget official.

The Home Energy Rebates program would have provided the state with \$69 million to give South Dakotans rebates for energy-efficient home retrofits and high-efficiency electric appliances. The deadline for indicating intent to participate was last week. Earlier this year, the state passed up \$1.8 million to help administer and set up the program.

Kelly Moore is a consumer advocate from Piedmont who planned to use the rebate to offset the bill for a new heat pump.

"South Dakotans will see no direct return on their federal taxes," Moore said. "Other states will benefit from our contributions."

During a July 30 legislative budget committee meeting, Noem's Bureau of Finance and Management Commissioner Jim Terwilliger explained the decisions, citing administrative burdens, limited staff capacity and policy disagreements as factors for turning down the funding.

"These are federal taxpayer dollars. We know the situation of the federal budget right now. I don't think I need to go down that path," Terwilliger said. "And so, with good faith, we did look into this. We just don't believe that it's the right thing for South Dakota."

The funding comes from the 2022 federal Inflation Reduction Act, which the Biden administration described as the most significant action ever taken by Congress to address climate change. The legislation includes provisions to raise revenue through increased taxes on corporations and high-income individuals.

Some lawmakers on the legislative budget committee disagreed with the decision to pass up the money.

"We're missing out on some funds that could help our people," said Sen. Larry Zikmund, R-Sioux Falls.

Other programs declined

Terwilliger said the administration also turned down money from the federal Fenceline Monitoring program. He said it would have provided \$406,000 to monitor air quality around industrial areas.

And the state passed up its potential share of \$1 billion allocated for states to adopt the latest optional building energy codes.

Over the course of 30 years, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, that program could have reduced South Dakota's carbon dioxide emissions by about 42 million metric tons and resulted in estimated consumer cost savings of \$9,027 per South Dakota home.

The federal government would have provided funding to cover administrative costs. There was no requirement for the state to contribute.

"This is something that we did not apply for," Terwilliger said. "I think the application period may have come and gone for that already."

Additionally, Terwilliger mentioned how the administration passed up on the Climate Pollution Reduction grants program. The program allocated a total of \$5 billion for states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Sioux Falls also passed up the funding. Rapid City applied and received a \$1 million planning grant but was not awarded an implementation grant.

Policy differences

Terwilliger said the one-time dollars associated with the programs would create long-term funding commitments for the state after the federal dollars run out. The state's Energy Management Office currently has one full-time employee.

"Secondly, what's the underlying policy that is kind of being encouraged, or pushed through with some of these programs?" Terwilliger said. "And I think, generally, we just kind of disagree with some of those policies as well."

Some Republican state lawmakers on the budget committee support the state's decision.

"It's not manna from heaven," said Rep. Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls. "These are taxpayer dollars that somebody paid in."

Some lawmakers expressed concerns that declining the federal dollars would negatively impact South Dakota residents, particularly those struggling with rising energy costs and the impacts of recent severe weather events. They said if staffing is the issue, the state should use some of the funds for contractors to help run the programs. Terwilliger told lawmakers about 20% of the funds could be used to run the programs.

One of the lawmakers making those criticisms was Rep. Linda Duba, D-Sioux Falls.

"I think it's extremely unfortunate that we made the decision for the people of South Dakota not to apply for this opportunity," Duba said, referring to the \$69 million in energy efficiency rebates.

Not all Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunities were dismissed. Terwilliger said the state has participated in the Forest Legacy Program, securing \$1.5 million in funding to purchase a 250-acre parcel in collaboration with the Game, Fish and Parks Department. The land preserves some forested areas along the Big Sioux River near Newton Hills State Park.

Plus, Sioux Falls successfully applied for \$3 million in funding under the Urban and Community Forestry Program, with another \$600,000 allocated to other communities across the state, according to Terwilliger. The \$3 million will help mitigate damage caused by emerald ash borer in an area spanning 25 square miles.

Noem has often said 'no'

There are several prior examples of the Noem administration declining federal funding.

Duba was a vocal critic of the administration passing up \$7.5 million to feed low-income kids while school is out for the summer.

Noem is one of six governors who did not apply for a federal grant program to support solar energy projects around the nation. She also passed on a share of \$1 billion in nationwide cybersecurity grants for county and city governments.

In 2020, the administration rejected extra unemployment benefits, provided by then-President Trump during the pandemic. The measure provided an additional \$300 in unemployment benefits per week, but required states to kick in another \$100.

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.

Congressman tells new citizens that America should thank them

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 23, 2024 5:18 PM

SIOUX FALLS – U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, told a gathering of grateful new American citizens Friday that Americans should be grateful to them.

"I'm not just here to say congratulations and welcome, I'm also here to say thank you," he said.

During Johnson's short speech at a naturalization ceremony for about 200 new citizens in the Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion, he compared the impact of immigration to the impact of salt.

Johnson said one of his sons loves to salt his green beans.

"He says, 'Oh, dad, salt is magic. It turns quality green beans into something even better.'"

Salt is essential for life, Johnson added, and has been prized by civilizations throughout history. It's been the inspiration for trade routes, considered sacred by some religions, and caused wars. "People have viewed it as valuable, powerful and sacred," he said.

Johnson told the new citizens, "Your hard work, your ingenuity, your decency is taking a quality American dish, and you are making it even better."

The new Americans came from nations including China, Russia, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Mexico, Canada and others.

Johnson's words of gratitude were meaningful for Belinda Ponce, who was born in Honduras and came to the United States in 2009 as a 12-year-old.

"It means a lot because it shows that we are being seen," she said. "They are grateful for immigrants and the work that we have done."

Ponce said the privilege of citizenship she's most looking forward to is voting in November.

"It means I get to have a voice in the United States," she said. "Participate in something big."

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.

Rosebud Sioux Tribe elects its first female president

Tribe also chooses woman to serve as vice president

BY: JOHN HULT - AUGUST 23, 2024 3:50 PM

The voters of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe elected their first female president on Thursday.

According to unofficial results posted late Thursday night, tribal council member Kathleen Wooden Knife prevailed by a vote of 1,192-870 in the presidential election over Steve DeNoyer Jr.

The tribe also elected a woman to serve as vice president, choosing council member Lisa White Pipe for that role.

Shakira Rattling Leaf, administrator for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Election Office, confirmed for South Dakota Searchlight that Wooden Knife is the first woman in the tribe's history to be elected president. The tribe is located in south-central South Dakota and headquartered in the town of Rosebud.

Wooden Knife had served two consecutive terms and took a two-election-cycle break from council service before being elected to the council again last year. She joins Janet Alkire of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe as the second woman leading one of the nine tribes in South Dakota. At the time of her election, The Associated Press reported that Alkire was the first woman to lead that tribe since 1946.

Wooden Knife has served on the tribe's health board and worked for the Indian Health Service, a federal government agency Rosebud successfully sued for its failure to provide adequate health care at its Rosebud emergency room. Wooden Knife has also testified before Congress on health care issues.

Beyond health care, Wooden Knife helped organize the tribe's pet clinic and played "a major part in founding the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Homeless Shelter," according to a biography posted in advance of her testimony to a U.S. House committee in 2018.

Wooden Knife did not return requests for comment on Friday. On her Facebook page, Wooden Knife thanked the people for electing her and sent "well wishes to all the candidates who ran for office." She wrote that she hopes to "move forward together, day by day, step by step as an Oyate," referencing the Lakota word for "people."

Election results must be posted by the first Monday following an election, according to the tribe's election ordinance. If no one succeeds in challenging the results of the election, the results are certified on the first Friday after Monday's public notice, which in this case would be Aug. 30.

Results will be final after that point, and the new president, vice president and council will be sworn in on Sept. 3, said Rattling Leaf, the elections administrator.

The tribe will hold a special election to select a candidate to fill out the remainder of Wooden Knife's three-year council term.

There was no incumbent in the race for president. Former president Scott Herman stepped down this summer to take a position with Sinte Gleska University in Mission.

Acting president Willie Kindle was elected to a position on the tribal council. He'd served as vice president prior to Herman's departure.

In the race for vice president, council member Elizabeth "Lisa" White Pipe bested Russell Eagle Bear by a vote of 1,131-919.

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

GOP states aim to halt Biden program protecting undocumented spouses from deportation

South Dakota among 15 states joining Texas lawsuit

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - AUGUST 23, 2024 6:34 PM

WASHINGTON — Texas and 15 states Friday filed a suit in federal court to block the Biden administration's program that protects long-term undocumented people married to U.S. citizens from deportation and grants them a pathway to citizenship.

States in the suit, which was filed in United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, argue that the Department of Homeland Security unlawfully created the program and that those 16 states will be financially harmed by its implementation.

"Longstanding federal law prohibits aliens who entered the United States unlawfully from obtaining most immigration benefits," according to the suit. "This includes obtaining lawful permanent resident status — without first leaving the United States and waiting outside the United States for the requisite time — based on an approved family-based or employment-based visa petition."

The other states in the suit include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee and Wyoming.

The Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to States Newsroom's request for comment.

Applications for the program, known as a parole in place, opened this week.

The Biden administration created the program because under current U.S. immigration law, if a noncitizen enters the country without authorization, they are ineligible for permanent legal status and would need to leave the U.S. and then reenter through a green card application by their U.S. spouse, which is a lengthy process that can take years.

American First Legal is representing the states. The organization was established by former Trump adviser Stephen Miller, the architect of the former president's hard-line immigration policies.

The program is a one-time action and it applies to long-term undocumented people married to a U.S. citizens.

It's estimated that roughly 500,000 noncitizen spouses and their children will be eligible to apply for a lawful permanent residence — a green card — under certain requirements. It's expected to roughly include 50,000 children who are noncitizens and have an immigrant parent married to a U.S. citizen.

Those qualifications include that a noncitizen must have resided in the U.S. for 10 years as of Monday, June 17, 2024, and be married to a U.S. citizen since that date as well. That spouse who is a noncitizen also cannot be deemed a security threat.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suspends his presidential bid, backs Trump

South Dakota election official says state's deadline to withdraw has already passed

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - AUGUST 23, 2024 5:43 PM

Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said Friday he is suspending his campaign and threw his support behind former President Donald Trump — the GOP presidential nominee.

Meanwhile, a South Dakota election official said the state's deadline to withdraw passed earlier this month. Kennedy's name was on the certified candidate list that the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office sent to county auditors earlier this week, the office said by email.

The announcement from the environmental lawyer and anti-vaccine activist, who has held on to a long-shot presidential bid, comes just a day after Vice President Kamala Harris formally accepted her party's nomination at the Democratic National Convention.

"It's with a sense of victory and not defeat that I'm suspending my campaign activities," Kennedy said in Phoenix, Arizona, during a lengthy news conference.

"Not only did we do the impossible by collecting a million signatures, but we changed the national political conversation forever," he said, adding that "I can say to all who have worked so hard the last year-and-a-half — thank you for a job well done."

Kennedy acknowledged that he "cannot, in good conscience, ask my staff and volunteers to keep working their long hours, or ask my donors to keep giving when I cannot honestly tell them that I have a real path to the White House."

He clarified that he is not terminating his campaign and that his name will "remain on the ballot in most states."

The third-party candidate said he would remove his name from the ballot in about 10 battleground states "where my presence would be a spoiler." He did not specify the states.

He said voters who live in a blue state can vote for him "without harming or helping (former) President Trump or Vice President Harris."

In response, Trump thanked Kennedy during a campaign event in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"That was very nice," the former president said, adding that Kennedy is a "great guy" and "respected by everybody."

Kennedy drew speculation about withdrawing his candidacy and backing Trump in the days leading up to the Friday announcement. On Thursday, he filed the paperwork to withdraw his name from Arizona's ballot, per Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes in a post on X.

Kennedy has faced dwindling polling numbers and financial trouble for his campaign while undertaking a monumental task in getting on states' ballots as an independent candidate. He initially ran as a Democrat but switched to an independent ticket in October 2023.

Kennedy — son of Robert F. Kennedy and the nephew of John F. Kennedy — is part of one of the most storied families in Democratic politics. Throughout his campaign, he amplified anti-vaccine conspiracy theories and was seen as a possible spoiler candidate.

Harris-Walz campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon said "for any American out there who is tired of Donald Trump and looking for a new way forward, ours is a campaign for you," per a Friday statement in response to Kennedy suspending his campaign.

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"In order to deliver for working people and those who feel left behind, we need a leader who will fight for you, not just for themselves, and bring us together, not tear us apart. Vice President Harris wants to earn your support."

Meanwhile, Trump is set to speak in Glendale, Arizona, later Friday. His campaign said Thursday that a "special guest" would join him at the rally.

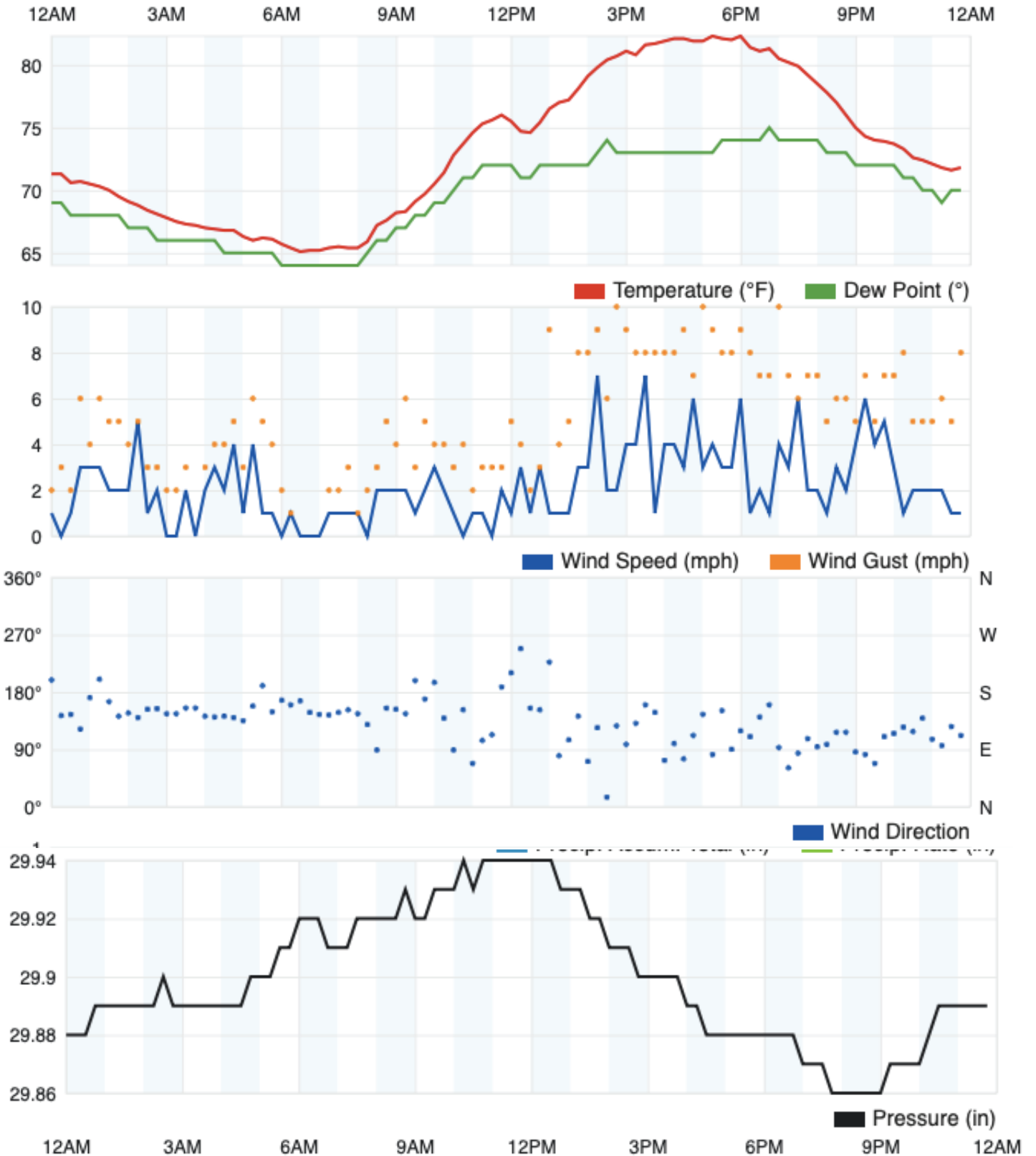
South Dakota Searchlight staff contributed to this report.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

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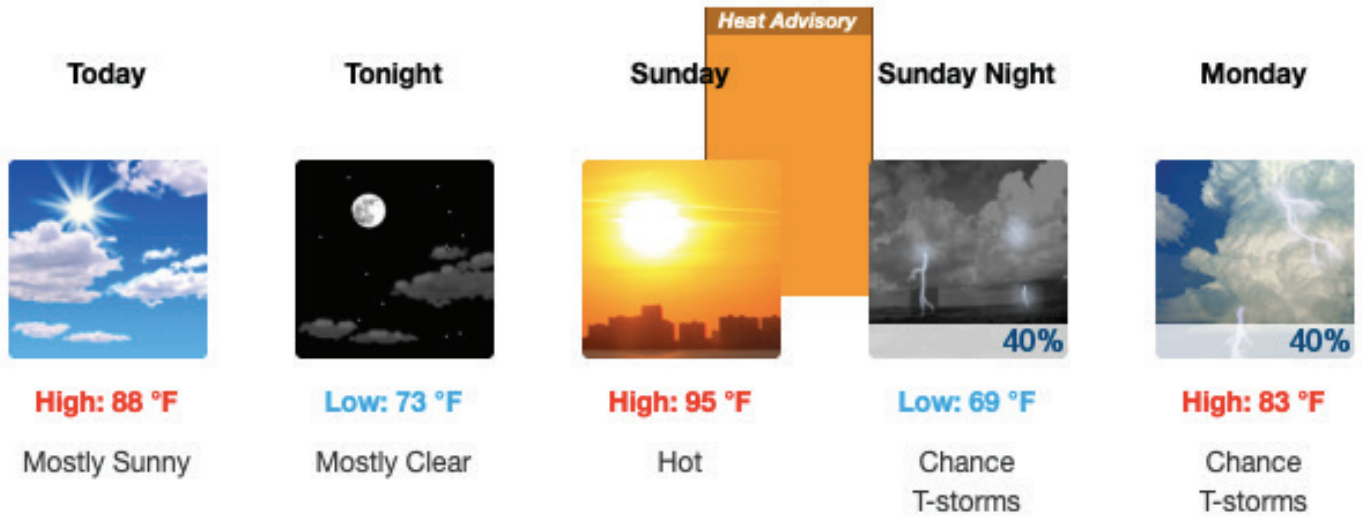
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Apparent Temperatures (Heat Index)

Saturday Morning, Aug 24 - Sunday Evening, Aug 25

	Sat 8/24					Sun 8/25						
	10am	1pm	4pm	7pm	10pm	1am	4am	7am	10am	1pm	4pm	7pm
Aberdeen	76	87	92	90	80	77	75	73	83	97	100	97
Mobridge	80	90	94	93	84	79	74	71	83	92	95	91
Pierre	81	92	97	95	84	79	74	72	83	93	97	93
Sisseton	73	85	88	84	75	73	72	72	79	98	105	99
Watertown	73	82	88	85	76	73	72	71	78	96	101	93

Apparent Temperature (°F)

Information:

The table displays the weather element values based on model predictions from the High Resolution Ensemble Forecast.

Warmer Weekend Ahead

- Warmer temperatures expected today and Sunday.
- Temperatures in much of eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota will feel closer to 100-107 degrees.
- Take caution if spending time outside. Make sure to drink plenty of water and take breaks in cooler areas!

Valid: Sat 10 am CDT - Sun 07 pm CDT

Issued: Sat, Aug 24, 2024, 3 am CDT



More summer-like temperatures are expected this weekend. Heat index values will feel closer to 100-107 degrees Sunday across much of eastern SD and west central MN. Make sure to drink plenty of water and take breaks if spending time outdoors.

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Severe Weather Threat Overview

August 24, 2024

4:18 AM

Sunday evening/night

Timing/Location

Storms will mainly affect locations along and east of a line from Eureka to Pierre after 6 PM CDT.

Primary Threats for the **YELLOW** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low Low Medium High

Max Hail Size

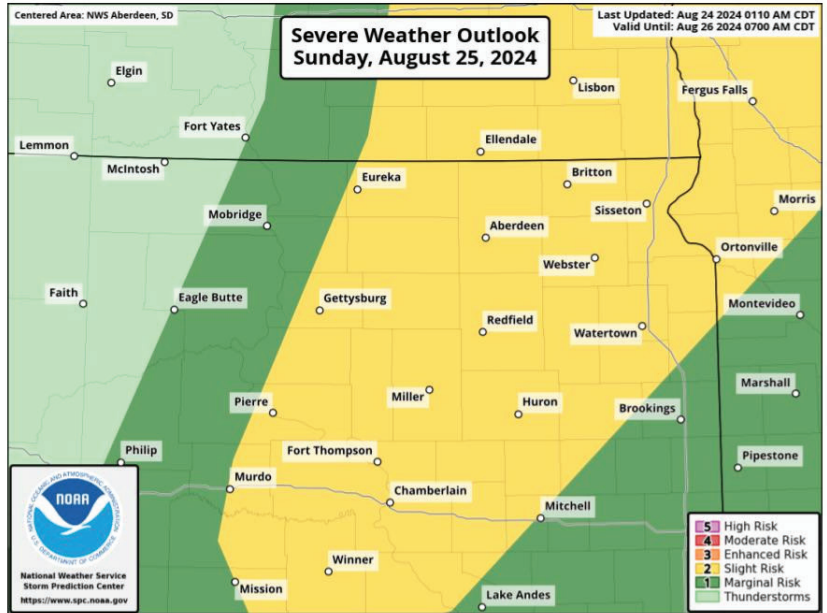
Dimes **Quarters** Golfball Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph **60-70 mph** 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Severe storms are possible across central and eastern SD as well as west central MN Sunday evening and overnight. Areas along and east of a line from Fort Yates to Philip are in a marginal (1 of 5) risk for severe storms and areas along and east of a line from Eureka to Murdo are in a slight (2 of 5) risk of severe storms. The main threats will be one-inch diameter or larger hail and 60+ mph winds.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 5:36 PM

Low Temp: 65 °F at 6:33 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 2:38 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 41 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1929

Record Low: 38 in 1934

Average High: 82

Average Low: 55

Average Precip in Aug.: 1.74

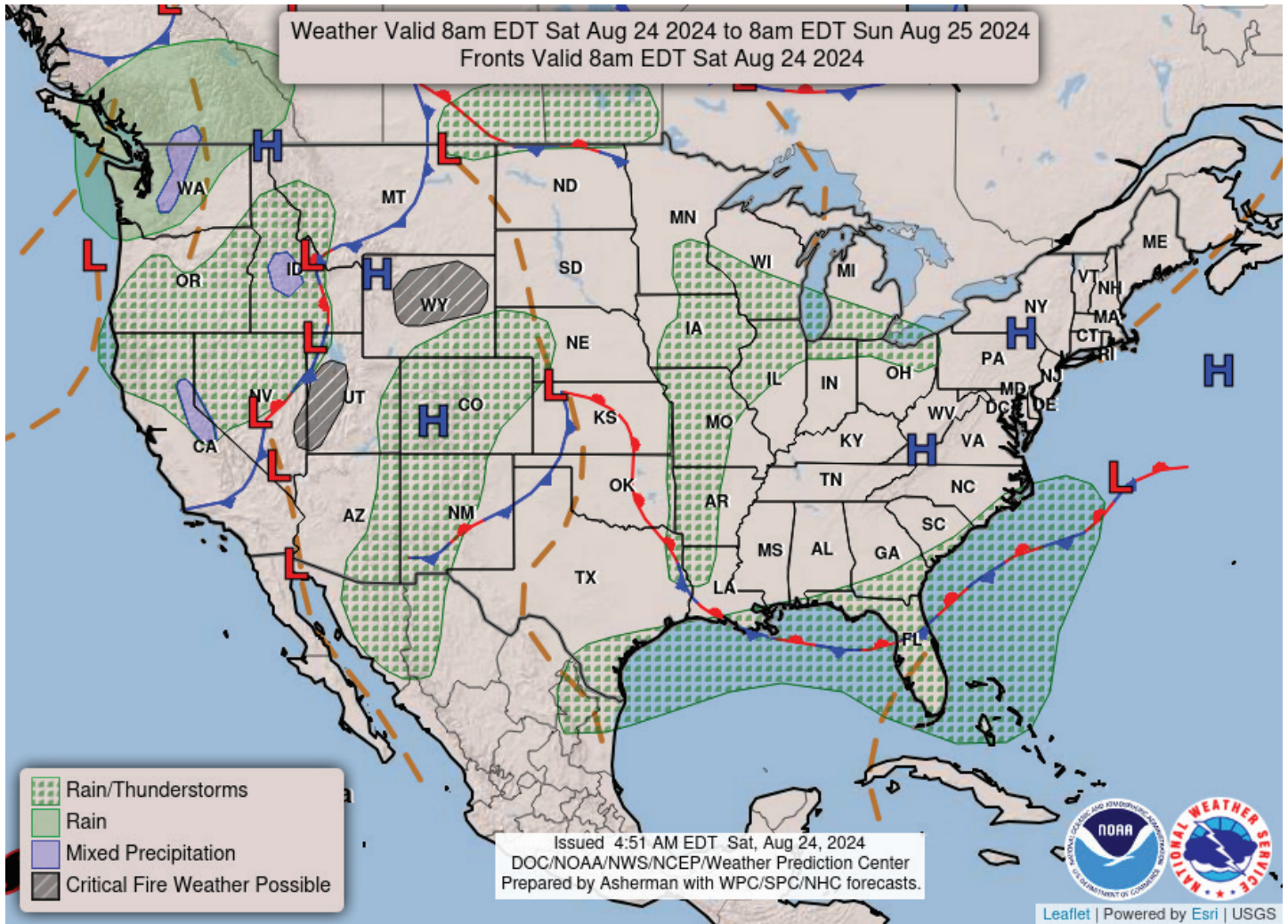
Precip to date in Aug.: 4.29

Average Precip to date: 15.84

Precip Year to Date: 19.18

Sunset Tonight: 8:25:27 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:44:52 am



Today in Weather History

August 24, 1960: A man was injured when a barn was blown over by an F2 tornado that touched down near Hayes, in Stanley County. Hail, up to golf ball size accompanied the storm as well as about three inches of rain, causing some damage to crops and a farmhouse. The sky color in a westerly direction shortly before the tornado hit was described as a distinct shade of green. Evidence suggests that the tornado may have touched down again in northeast Sully County, destroying a barn, a chicken coop, and haystacks on two farms. Also, precipitation more than 3 inches and locally 6 to 8 inches was accompanied by severe hail, causing damage to buildings and crops. Hail damage was most substantial in Stanly County. The wind carried away an estimated 400 tons of baled hay in Haakon County. A measured rainfall amount of 5.1 inches in less than six hours occurred in Onida, causing extensive flooding of basements, streets, and cropland. Additional rainfall amounts include 5.58 inches 4 NW of Onida, 4.50 inches 23 N of Highmore, 3.05 inches 2N of Onaka, 3.42 inches in Clear Lake, 3.11 inches in Miller, 3.02 inches in Eureka, 2.55 inches 1 NW of Faulkton, 2.40 inches in Gettysburg, 2.22 inches in Blunt, 2.20 inches at Oahe Dam, and 2.16 inches in Clark.

August 24, 1998: A line of severe thunderstorms raced southeast across Sully, Hyde, and Hand counties during the morning hours, producing destructive winds up to 100 mph and hail up to the size of baseballs. The winds and hail damaged or destroyed a wide swath of sunflowers and corn. Four power poles south of Highmore on Highway 47 were snapped off. The school in Highmore had twenty screens shredded by the hail and the winds. On a farm northeast of Onida, a grain bin was blown over a distance of 200 yards.

August 24, 2006: Up to 4.25" diameter hail and 9 tornadoes developed across central and northeastern South Dakota between 4:30 pm and 8:00 pm, two of which were rated as F3 intensity. The first of these F3 tornadoes developed in McPherson County west of Hillsview at 5:03 pm, and tracked 24.5 miles southeast to just north of Hosmer before lifting at 5:30 pm. Numerous livestock and deer were killed. Devastating damage was observed to farm equipment, homes, barns, grain bins, and vehicles. A well-anchored mobile home was completely destroyed. Debris from each site was observed up to 3 miles away. One person received minor scrapes and bruises. The second F3 tornado of the event was spawned by a long-track supercell, and this supercell produced the other 7 tornadoes of the day (two F2, an F1, and four F0 roughly from Onida to De Smet). It touched down just south of Wessington in Beadle County at 6:37 pm, and tracked 19.5 miles southeast to just southwest of Huron before lifting at 7:18 pm. This tornado destroyed 8 houses and numerous farm buildings and damaged at least 7 other houses. Five large high-voltage transmission towers were blown down about 3 miles southeast of Wessington. A woman was cut on the neck at a farm southwest of Wolsey where the house and all other buildings were destroyed (non-life threatening). One other injury occurred southeast of Wolsey.

79: Stratovolcano, Mount Vesuvius erupted on this day, burying the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

1456: Machiavelli wrote, "On the 24th of August, about an hour before day-break there arose from the Adriatic near Ancona, a whirlwind, which crossing Italy from east to west, again reached the sea near Pisa, accompanied by thick clouds, and the most intense and impenetrable darkness." [Click HERE](#) to read this book.

1992: Hurricane Andrew made landfall in southern Florida at 4:30 AM on this day. The high winds caused catastrophic damage in Florida, with Miami-Dade County cities of Florida City, Homestead, and Cutler Ridge receiving the brunt of the storm. About 63,000 homes were destroyed, and over 101,000 others were damaged. This storm left roughly 175,000 people homeless. As many as 1.4 million people were left without electricity at the height of the storm. In the Everglades, 70,000 acres (280 km²) of trees were knocked down. Additionally, rainfall in Florida was substantial, peaking at 13.98 in (355 mm) in western Miami-Dade County. About \$25 billion in damage and 44 fatalities were reported in Florida.



THREE HUNDRED! WHAT A GAME!

Tombstones are often interesting reminders of what people accomplished in life. One that is very interesting is in Wisconsin. It reads: "He bowled 300 in 1962."

Do you wonder, as I do, if that was his greatest achievement in life? Or how many games he bowled before he had a perfect game? Or was it his first and last game and it left him so stunned that he never bowled again? We'll never know.

But one thing we do know is that we will all be remembered for something. Paul made a most interesting observation about life's accomplishments. He was writing to the Philippians about his achievements. Reading them is like reading the resume of one of the world's great leaders. They are very impressive. But then he pulls the rug out from under his own feet. After what sounds like someone bragging about what they had done he concludes: "But because of Christ I decided that all of my worldly accomplishments are worth nothing."

Paul always had it right. More than anything in life he wanted to be known for his relationship with Christ and what he did for Him. Other than knowing and serving Christ, everything to him was "worthless trash."

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to place You first and foremost in our lives. May we be remembered for what we did for You and through You, because of You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. Philippians 3:4-11

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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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.24

28 30 44 66 69 2

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$575,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.21.24

6 25 41 45 46 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$7,540,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 35 Mins
DRAW: 10 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.24

17 24 28 34 39 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 50
DRAW: Mins 9 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.21.24

4 11 12 25 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 50
DRAW: Mins 9 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.21.24

2 3 28 52 69 3

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 19 Mins
DRAW: 10 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.21.24

27 31 33 38 67 3

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$34,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 19 Mins
DRAW: 10 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- Cancelled:** Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party & Tour of Homes with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Police search for an attacker who killed 3 in a knife attack in the German city of Solingen

By DANIEL NIEMANN and STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN Associated Press

SOLINGEN, Germany (AP) — A large-scale search was underway Saturday in the western German city of Solingen after three people were killed and at least eight others wounded, five of them seriously, in a knife attack at a festival.

"The police are currently conducting a large-scale search for the perpetrator," police said in a statement. They have assembled a large number of forces around Solingen city center, including special units. "Both victims and witnesses are currently being questioned," they said.

Police have also established an online portal where witnesses can upload information relevant to the attack.

People alerted police shortly after 9:30 p.m. Friday to an unknown attacker having wounded several people with a knife on a central square, the Fronhof. Police said that the perpetrator was on the run, and that they so far had only very thin information on the assailant.

They said they believe the stabbings were carried out by a lone attacker and gave no information about the identities of the victims.

The "Festival of Diversity," marking the city's 650th anniversary, began Friday and was supposed to run through Sunday, with several stages in central streets offering attractions such as live music, cabaret and acrobatics.

One of the festival organizers, Philipp Müller, appeared on stage on Friday and asked festivalgoers to "go calmly; please keep your eyes open, because unfortunately the perpetrator hasn't been caught." Solingen has about 160,000 residents and is located near the bigger cities of Cologne and Duesseldorf.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Saturday that the perpetrator of the attack must be caught quickly and punished with the full force of the law.

"The attack in Solingen is a terrible event that has shocked me greatly. An attacker has brutally killed several people. I have just spoken to Solingen's mayor, Tim Kurzbach. We mourn the victims and stand by their families," Scholz said on X.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier also spoke to the mayor of Solingen on Saturday morning.

"The heinous act in Solingen shocks me and our country. We mourn those killed and worry about those injured and I wish them strength and a speedy recovery from all my heart," Steinmeier said in a statement on Saturday.

"The perpetrator needs to be brought to justice. Let's stand together — against hatred and violence."

There has been concern about increased knife violence in Germany, and Interior Minister Nancy Faeser recently proposed toughening weapons laws to allow only knives with a blade measuring up to 6 centimeters (nearly 2.4 inches) to be carried in public, rather than the length of 12 centimeters (4.7 inches) that is currently allowed.

Under sea and over land, the Paris Paralympics flame is beginning an exceptional journey

By BARBARA SURK Associated Press

Two weeks after French star swimmer Léon Marchand extinguished the Olympic flame to close the Paris Olympics, the spotlight is now on its Paralympic counterpart.

The flame will be lit on Saturday in Stoke Mandeville, a village northwest of London widely considered the birthplace of the Paralympic Games. The flame will then travel to France under the English Channel for a four-day relay from Atlantic Ocean shores to Mediterranean beaches, from mountains in the Pyrenees

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to the Alps.

Its journey will end in Paris on Wednesday during the Paralympics opening ceremony — with the lighting of a unique Olympic cauldron attached to a hot-air balloon that will fly over the French capital every evening during 11 days of competition.

The Flame is Lit

The lighting ceremony of the Paralympic Heritage Flame on Saturday will be held in Buckinghamshire, where the Stoke Mandeville Games were first held in 1948 for a small group of wheelchair athletes who had sustained spinal injuries during World War II.

The man behind the idea was Ludwig Guttmann, a Jewish neurosurgeon who fled Nazi Germany and worked at Britain's Stoke Mandeville hospital. At the time, suffering a spinal injury was considered a death sentence, and patients were discouraged from moving. Guttmann made the patients sit up and work muscles, and hit upon competition as way to keep them motivated.

Those later grew into the first Paralympic Games, which took place in Rome in 1960. The Heritage Flame ceremony in Stoke Mandeville was first held ahead of the London Paralympics in 2012.

Crossing the Channel

The flame will then cross the sea like its Olympic twin did when it arrived in France from Greece in May — but this time via the Channel Tunnel. That marks the start of the Paralympic relay.

A group of 24 British athletes will embark on the underwater journey through the 50-kilometer long (30-mile) tunnel. Midway through, they will hand over the flame to 24 French athletes who will bring it ashore in Calais. It will be used to light 12 torches, symbolizing 11 days of competition and the opening ceremony.

4 days, 1,000 torchbearers and 50 cities

Once on French soil, the flame's 12 offshoots will head in different directions to kick off the Paris Olympics' encore and aim to rekindle enthusiasm for the Games.

Among 1,000 torchbearers will be former Paralympians, young para athletes, volunteers from Paralympic federations, innovators of advanced technological support, people who dedicate their lives to others with impairments and people who work in the non-profit sector to support carers.

They will take the flame to 50 cities across the country to highlight communities that are committed to promoting inclusion in sport and building awareness of living with disabilities.

An exceptional flame will be lit in Paris on Sunday to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the French capital from Nazi Germany occupation during World War II.

Highlighting para sport infrastructure and innovation

The relay will highlight places that are committed to developing para sports, as well as places where famous Paralympians grew up, such as Lorient, home of double Paralympic sailing gold medalist Damien Seguin. It will also stop in Blois, which has a sports complex named after its Paralympic track athlete Marie-Amélie Le Fur who has nine medals, including two golds from Rio.

The relay will go through Châlons-en-Champagne, which has the only gymnasium in France designed to facilitate access to sport for people with intellectual disabilities. And Rouen, Chartres, and Troyes, which offer a range of disciplines, from sledge hockey to para tennis, para triathlon, adapted baseball and para climbing.

The flame will stop in Chambly, which, with its three sports facilities adapted for para sports, has served as a training camp location alongside Deauville and Antibes.

Meet the star of the Games – the cauldron

On Wednesday, the 12 flames will become one again when the relay ends in central Paris after visiting historical sites along the city's famed boulevards and plazas before lightening the cauldron during the three-hour opening show.

The cauldron is the first in Olympic history to light up without the use of fossil fuels. It uses water and electric light and is attached to a balloon. It made a stunning first flight at the Olympics opening ceremony.

Each day of the Paralympics, the cauldron will fly more than 60 meters (197 feet) above the Tuileries gardens from sunset until 2 a.m.

Fires break out on abandoned Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion that Yemen rebels attacked in Red Sea

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Fires broke out Friday on a Greek-flagged oil tanker previously attacked by Yemen's Houthi rebels this week, with the vessel now appearing to be adrift in the Red Sea, authorities said.

It wasn't immediately clear what had happened to the oil tanker Sounion, which had been abandoned by its crew on Thursday and reportedly anchored in place.

The Houthis didn't immediately acknowledge the fire. The rebels are suspected to have gone back and attacked at least one other vessel that later sank as part of their monthslong campaign against shipping in the Red Sea over the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. The attacks have disrupted a trade route that typically sees \$1 trillion in goods pass through it annually.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center reported the fires in a note to mariners on Friday night.

"UKMTO have received a report that three fires have been observed on vessel," the center said. "The vessel appears to be drifting."

A United States defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said American officials were aware of the fires and continued to monitor the situation.

The vessel had been staffed by a crew of 25 Filipinos and Russians, as well as four private security personnel, who were taken by a French destroyer to nearby Djibouti, the European Union's Aspides naval mission in the Red Sea said Thursday.

The Sounion has 150,000 tons of crude oil aboard and represents a "navigational and environmental hazard," the mission warned. "It is essential that everyone in the area exercises caution and refrains from any actions that could lead to a deterioration of the current situation."

Late Friday night, the Houthis released footage of an explosion striking the Sounion, their fighters on the water in the distance chanting the group's slogan: "God is the greatest; death to America; death to Israel; curse the Jews; victory to Islam."

A frame-by-frame analysis of the video conducted by The Associated Press suggested three simultaneous explosions struck the deck of the Sounion. That signature suggests an attack conducted by planted explosives, rather than a strike by missile or drone.

The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that also killed four sailors. One of the sunken vessels, the Tutor, went down after the Houthis planted explosives aboard it, after its crew abandoned the ship due to an earlier attack, the rebel group later acknowledged.

Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a U.S.-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets.

The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the U.S. or the U.K. to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran.

As Iran threatens to retaliate against Israel over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, the U.S. military told the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to sail more quickly to the area. Early Thursday, the U.S. military's Central Command said that the Lincoln had reached the waters of the Middle East, without elaborating.

Washington also has ordered the USS Georgia-guided missile submarine to the region, while the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier strike group was in the Gulf of Oman.

Additional F-22 fighter jets have flown into the region and the USS Wasp, a large amphibious assault ship carrying F-35 fighter jets, is in the Mediterranean Sea.

Early Saturday, the U.S. military's Central Command said it had destroyed a Houthi missile system in Yemen over the last 24 hours.

Ohtani hits grand slam in 9th inning, becomes fastest player in MLB history to join 40-40 club

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Shohei Ohtani is baseball's fastest 40-40 man.

The Japanese superstar blasted a two-out grand slam in the ninth inning for his 40th homer after earlier stealing his 40th base, lifting the Los Angeles Dodgers to a 7-3 win over the Tampa Bay Rays on Friday night.

Ohtani achieved the feat in his 126th game and the team's 129th, the quickest in major league history and sixth ever to reach 40 homers and 40 stolen bases in a season. He's also the first Dodgers player to do so.

"It's really more about the winning," Ohtani said through an interpreter. "Obviously the record is part of the process but I think the most important thing is about winning the game."

He broke the previous mark by Alfonso Soriano in Game 148 for the Washington Nationals in 2006.

"It's just storybook — 40-40 on the same night," manager Dave Roberts said. "I don't know if that's ever been done and then he wins it with a grand slam. He's definitely known for the dramatics and this was something I'll remember for a long time."

Ohtani's 389-foot shot snapped a 3-3 tie. Rays center fielder Jose Siri gave chase and the ball bounced back onto the field. He then threw it into the stands, so Ohtani didn't end up with the keepsake, according to Ohtani's interpreter Will Ireton.

Dodgers starter Bobby Miller was in the clubhouse watching on television when Ohtani made history.

"I kind of called that one," he said. "I was like how cool would this be just to get that 40-40 on a walk-off grand slam? He's a really special player."

Ohtani took a curtain call as the crowd of 45,556 stood and cheered. Teammates Miguel Rojas and Teoscar Hernández soaked him with water on the field.

"It means a tremendous amount for me to be able to do this in front of the home crowd," Ohtani said.

Ohtani joins Soriano, Ronald Acuna Jr., Alex Rodriguez, Barry Bonds and Jose Canseco in the 40-40 club. Acuna became a member last season, when he belted 41 homers and stole 73 bases.

After never making the postseason in his six seasons with the Los Angeles Angels, Ohtani finds himself in a pennant race with the NL West-leading Dodgers.

"The number one goal is to get to the postseason and win the World Series," he said. "Whatever the outcome is for my record, that's part of the process."

In the fourth, Ohtani reached on an infield single leading off against Tyler Alexander and stole second during Freddie Freeman's at-bat.

His 12 stolen bases in August without being caught are the most in a month by a Dodger since Rafael Furcal's 12 for 12 in September and October 2007.

"I know that he's taking very good care of his legs to be able to do it and be that dynamic player," Roberts said. "He's doing his homework on opposing pitchers and he's getting great jumps. He's a much better base stealer. He's very efficient."

Roberts noted that earlier in the season and going back to when the Dodgers faced the Angels, Ohtani was tentative on the basepaths and his stolen base percentage wasn't high.

"He's an elite base stealer with a high success rate," the manager said. "I'm sure there'll be more dramatics to come."

New York Yankees star Aaron Judge leads the majors with 49 homers. He's favored to win AL MVP honors with Ohtani predicted to do the same in the NL.

"I just don't see anyone any better, obviously Judge is in the conversation, but man, I'd take Shohei," Roberts said.

Israeli evacuation orders cram Palestinians into shrinking 'humanitarian zone' where food is scarce

By JULIA FRANKEL and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Young girls screamed and elbowed each other in a crush of bodies in southern Gaza, trying desperately to reach the front of the food line. Men doled out rice and chicken as fast as they could, platefuls of the nourishment falling to the ground in the tumult.

Nearby, boys waited to fill plastic containers with water, standing for hours among tents packed so tightly they nearly touched.

Hunger and desperation were palpable Friday in the tent camp along the Deir al-Balah beachfront, after a month of successive evacuation orders that have pressed thousands of Palestinians into the area that the Israeli military calls a "humanitarian zone."

The zone has long been crowded by Palestinians seeking refuge from bombardment, but the situation grows more dire by the day, as waves of evacuees arrive and food and water grow scarce. Over the last month, the Israeli military has issued evacuation orders for southern Gaza at an unprecedented pace.

At least 84% of Gaza now falls within the evacuation zone, according to the U.N., which also estimates that 90% of Gaza's 2.1 million residents have been displaced over the course of the war.

Thirteen evacuation orders have been issued since July 22, according to an Associated Press count, significantly reducing the size of the humanitarian zone declared by Israel at the start of the war while pushing more Palestinians into it than ever before. The increased crowding of evacuees can be seen in satellite photos.

"The food that reaches us from the charity is sufficient for the people in our camp," said Muhammad Al-Qayed, who was displaced from Gaza City and now lives along the beach. "Where do the people who were recently displaced get food from? From where do we provide them?"

Another displaced Palestinian, Adham Hijazi, said: "I have started thinking that if there is no food, I will go and drink seawater to endure it. I am talking seriously. I will drink water and salt."

The military says the evacuations are necessary because Hamas has launched rockets from within the humanitarian zone. In posts on X, the military's Arabic-language spokesperson, Avichay Adraee, has instructed Palestinians to flee immediately, saying the military will soon operate "with force" against Hamas militants in the area.

Yasser Felfel, originally displaced from northern Gaza, has watched his camp swell with waves of evacuees.

"There were 32 people in my tent. Now there are almost 50 people, people I don't know," he said. "A week ago, there was a lot of food left over. We had breakfast, lunch and dinner. Today, because of the number of people who came here, it is barely enough for lunch."

In August alone, the evacuation orders have been issued roughly every two days and displaced nearly 250,000 people, the U.N. said.

"Many people here have been displaced more than 10 times. They're exhausted and broke," said Georgios Petropoulos, the head of the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Gaza.

A pair of satellite photos taken over the last month shows the impact of the orders. The imagery, obtained from PlanetLabs and reviewed by the AP, shows that tent camps along the coast grew more densely packed from July 19 to Aug. 19.

On Aug. 19, tents covered nearly every available sandy patch and were pitched closer to the ocean.

Even Palestinians living in the humanitarian zone Israel declared at the start of the war have been forced to move. On July 22, the military ordered the evacuation of most of the eastern edge of the zone, saying that Hamas had launched rockets at Israel. Then on Aug. 16, the military again shrank the zone, calling on Palestinians living in the center to flee.

The evacuations come as international mediators struggle to bridge differences between Israel and Hamas over a cease-fire agreement that would stop the fighting in Gaza and exchange scores of Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

The war began on Oct. 7, when Hamas militants blew past Israel's border, killing around 1,200 people

and taking about 250 others hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive has now killed over 40,000 people in Gaza and razed the strip's buildings and infrastructure.

Water has been another casualty of the evacuations. The U.N. says the water supply in Deir al-Balah has decreased by at least 70% since the recent wave of evacuations began, as pumps and desalination plants are caught within evacuation zones.

The lack of clean water is causing skin diseases and other outbreaks. The U.N.'s main health agency has confirmed Gaza's first case of polio in a 10-month-old baby in Deir al-Balah who is now paralyzed in the lower left leg.

Meanwhile, aid groups say it is only growing more difficult to offer help. U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said Thursday that the U.N. World Food Program lost access to its warehouse in central Deir al-Balah because of a recent evacuation order.

Standing in the water line Friday, Abu Mohammad observed the scarcity around him and prayed it would end soon.

"There is no water, there is no food, there is no money, there is no work, there is nothing," said Mohammad, who has now been displaced seven times.

"We ask God, not the people, for it to end. We no longer have the capacity. Oh world, we no longer have the capacity."

Conflicting federal policies may cost residents more on flood insurance, and leave them at risk

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Conflicting federal policies may force thousands of residents in flood-prone areas to pay more for flood insurance or be left unaware of danger posed by dams built upstream from their homes and worksites, according to an Associated Press review of federal records and data.

The problem stems from a complex set of flood policies and some national security precautions taken after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

To get the best discount on flood insurance, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's points-based rating system requires communities to chart all the homes, businesses and critical facilities endangered by a potential dam failure and warn people of their risk. But that's difficult or even impossible in some communities, because other federal agencies restrict the release of such information for hundreds of dams that they own or regulate across the U.S., citing security risks.

The quandary has persisted for years, though federal officials have been warned of its implications.

Federal "dam information sharing procedures costs communities points, homeowners money, and potentially citizens lives," a California emergency services official warned in a January 2020 presentation to FEMA's National Dam Safety Review Board at an invitation-only meeting attended by dozens of federal and state officials.

The meeting's minutes were provided to the AP this summer, nearly two-and-half years after the news organization submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to FEMA.

Since that meeting, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has begun publicly posting maps of areas that could be flooded if one of its hundreds of dams were to fail. But similar information remains restricted by other federal agencies, including by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which regulates about 1,800 power-producing dams, and by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, whose 430 dams in the western U.S. include some of the nation's largest structures.

The Bureau of Reclamation said in response to questions from the AP that it is revising its policies and will start sharing more information about dam-failure inundation zones in 2025, though it said the process could take more than eight years to complete for all its dams.

Meanwhile, FEMA is accepting public comment through Sept. 9 on potential revisions to its Community Rating System, which awards discounts on flood insurance in communities that take steps to reduce risks. During a FEMA public hearing Wednesday, the floodplain administrator for Phoenix — the nation's fifth

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largest city — raised concerns that the conflicting federal policies regarding dam flood zones were unfair to communities trying to get better insurance discounts for their residents.

"I believe this is a punishment to us," Phoenix floodplain administrator Nazar Nabaty told FEMA officials.

One community's frustrations

Another community that has been affected by the information-sharing gap is Sacramento, California, which ranks among the most at-risk regions in the U.S. for catastrophic flooding. California's capital sits at the confluence of two rivers and about 25 miles (40 kilometers) downstream from Folsom Dam, a large Bureau of Reclamation structure with a capacity that could cover the equivalent of the entire state of Rhode Island with a foot of water.

During a review about five years ago, Sacramento County achieved one of the best-ever scores in FEMA's rating system. But the county did not qualify for the top flood-insurance discount because the Bureau of Reclamation's restrictions regarding Folsom Dam made it impossible to meet FEMA's criteria for mapping and public outreach about a potential dam break, said George Booth, the county's former floodplain manager.

"We got wrapped around the axle," said Booth, now executive director of the Floodplain Management Association, a professional organization that focuses on flood-risk reduction in California, Hawaii and Nevada.

The city of Sacramento, which receives a separate flood insurance rating, has faced similar struggles meeting FEMA's standards for flood insurance discounts because of limited information about Bureau of Reclamation dams, said Rosa Millino, the city's Community Rating System coordinator.

For an individual homeowner, the missed discounts could make about \$100 difference in annual flood insurance premiums. When spread citywide, the extra cost could reach several million dollars. When costs are higher, fewer people tend to buy insurance. But there's more at stake than just insurance premiums.

"People need to be informed of the potential dangers of living in an area that's protected by a dam," Millino said.

Flood risks and costs

As the climate changes, heavy rains from intense storms have put communities at increased risk of flooding and placed the nation's aging dams in greater jeopardy of failing. That's been evident as recent floodwaters damaged or breached dams in Georgia, Minnesota, New York, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin, forcing evacuations and costly repairs.

Floods have caused about \$108 billion of damage in the U.S. since 2000, according to FEMA. Standard home and commercial property insurance does not cover flood damage.

But FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program is available in 22,692 communities that have adopted and enforced floodplain management regulations. As of the end of July, it provided \$1.3 trillion of flood insurance coverage to about 4.7 million policyholders — down about 1 million policies since the program's peak participation in 2009.

Premium discounts ranging from 5% to 45% are available in jurisdictions that participate in FEMA's Community Rating System, a voluntary program begun in 1990 that grades flood mitigation and safety measures on a 1-to-10 scale. A Class 1 rating earns the largest discount.

Most communities don't seek the extra savings. Just 1,500 local governments take part in the Community Rating System, though they account for three-quarters of policies issued under the National Flood Insurance Program. Just two communities — Roseville, California, and Tulsa, Oklahoma — have achieved the top discount for their residents.

Roseville, which also is near Folsom Dam, used FEMA grant money to create its own inundation maps showing the affects of a potential dam failure. But the city still encountered difficulties trying to share that information with residents. While presenting the inundation data at a public meeting over a decade ago, consultant Rob Flaner said a Bureau of Reclamation official interrupted and told him to stop.

"It was ironic that one federal agency funded it," Flaner said. "It was like, 'Ummm, maybe you guys need to talk to each other.'"

Roseville has since satisfied both federal agencies by creating inundation maps that show the overlapping flood potential of multiple dams without identifying the specific dam failure that could affect each home,

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business or important site, Flaner said. But Roseville is the exception, not the norm.

"There's a lot of jurisdictions that can't meet the requirements because they can't get the maps, or a federal agency is saying, 'No, do not do outreach downstream of our dam,'" said Flaner, who has worked with nearly 300 local governments over three decades, first as a Community Rating System specialist on behalf of FEMA and then as a hired consultant.

Security concerns

FEMA says it is important for communities to have access to dam-failure inundation maps in order to warn residents in harm's way. That's because dam failures can spread floodwaters beyond normal high-risk areas and affect multiple communities downstream.

But after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, some federal agencies cited national security grounds while refusing to release certain information about dams. They said dams could become targets if terrorists knew the potential to cause devastating flooding.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission continues to categorize dam inundation maps as critical infrastructure information that "could be useful to a person planning an attack" and requires those receiving such information to sign non-disclosure agreements, said FERC spokesperson Celeste Miller. But FERC can't prevent a dam owner from independently sharing the information.

The Bureau of Reclamation also has required non-disclosure agreements when sharing dam inundation maps and emergency action plans with local officials. Under its upcoming policy change, the bureau will allow communities to publicly share information about dam inundation zones, including potential flood-wave travel times, flood depths and durations, said Sandy Day, the bureau's chief of public affairs.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which also had shielded certain information about its dams, began posting dam inundation maps online in late 2021 after determining that releasing the information "is more beneficial to the public than any risk of misuse," Corps spokesperson Gene Pawlik said.

A complex system

Three years ago, FEMA sought public input about ways to revamp the Community Rating System to better incentivize communities to reduce flood risks. Several commenters highlighted difficulties in getting credit for dam initiatives, including the reluctance of federal agencies to share information regarding inundation zones from dam failures.

Nothing immediate came from the 2021 review. Though FEMA is again seeking public input on potential changes to the Community Rating System, it doesn't plan to make any changes until 2026.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office has suggested a substantial overhaul may be necessary. In a report last year, the GAO found that the premium discounts offered under FEMA's rating system are not actuarially justified. Mapping projects, flood warning procedures and public information campaigns may have some value, the report said, but don't reduce the flood risk of currently insured properties.

Some local officials contend FEMA's Community Rating System is too costly and complex, especially for governments with small budgets and staffs. The rating system has about 100 items for which communities can earn points, often requiring extensive documentation. The dam safety section is among the most challenging — just four communities got any points for their local efforts during the most recent evaluation, according to FEMA data.

During its last review, Fort Collins, Colorado, earned more than 5,000 points in the Community Rating System — the most of any community, according to FEMA data. Yet the city failed to get a Class 1 ranking, because it didn't meet criteria about potential dam failures or promoting flood insurance. The area has about 20 high-hazard dams that could result in loss of life if they failed.

"We do know where the dams are," said Ken Sampley, the city's water engineering director. "But we don't have as detailed information and direct coordination with a lot of the dam owners as may be required."

Thurston County, Washington, which is home to the state capital of Olympia, spends almost \$200,000 a year to maintain its Class 2 rating in the flood insurance program, resulting in collective premium savings of slightly less than that for residents, said Mark Biever, who coordinated the county's efforts from 2019-2023. But the county decided it wasn't worth it to try for a Class 1 rating, in part because staff didn't have the resources to compile all the information about dams, he said.

The rating process is frustrating and incredibly time-consuming, Biever said. Though it's resulted in a 40% discount for about 600 flood-insurance policyholders, "nobody's every called and said, 'Hey thanks for all that extra effort,'" Biever added.

None of Thurston County's cities and towns participate in the Community Rating System, meaning the county's flood-insurance discount is only available in unincorporated areas.

In Bucoda, a rural Thurston County town nestled along the twisting Skookumchuck River, the high cost of flood insurance means homeowners often skip it unless required to buy it by a mortgage holder, said James Fowler, the town's fire chief and planning commission chair. Yet the town is just 10 miles (16 kilometers) downstream from a dam.

"If that dam that's on that reservoir was to fail, it would be catastrophic flooding," Fowler said. "In a couple hours, there would be 20 feet of water in the town."

Portrait of a protester: Outside the Democratic convention, a young man talks of passion and plans

By MARTHA IRVINE AP National Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Bearded and bespectacled, YM Masood has a quiet nature that suggests he's older than age 20. A political science major, he plans to graduate from college in December, well ahead of schedule. He's studying for the LSAT, the entrance exam for law school.

He has another frequent role as well: protester.

Masood, a student at the University of Illinois Chicago, has taken to the city's streets in recent months for pro-Palestinian rallies, often weekly and — once — twice in the same day.

"Palestine is definitely No. 1 right now," Masood says. Last spring, he also traveled by train to support pro-Palestinian encampments at the University of Chicago and Northwestern and DePaul universities.

That set the stage for this week's Democratic National Convention, where thousands gathered to raise their voices on issues from the Middle East conflict to abortion and immigrant rights. Though the cameras often focused on scraps with police, the overwhelming majority marched peacefully.

Masood was often there, volunteering as a marshal to help organizers of these larger protests keep things in line. The overarching messages to the Democratic Party and its nominee, Kamala Harris, were clear: End the war. Stop sending aid to Israel.

For Masood and other students, the war has become a lightning-rod issue for their generation, just as the Vietnam War was in the 1960s and South Africa's apartheid system was in the 1980s.

Says Masood: "We're not going to stand by while all these people are suffering."

For this protester, the journey is personal

The death toll in Gaza recently surpassed 40,000. In Israel, about 1,200 people have been killed, and officials there say more than 100 Israeli hostages, including two small children, remain in Gaza.

The national Harvard Youth Poll conducted last spring found that 60% of college students and 64% of those who already had a college degree supported a permanent cease-fire in the Middle East. Among those surveyed, ages 18-29, a little over half said they sympathized with both the Palestinian people (56%) and Israelis (52%) — though they were less supportive of each of their governments and Hamas.

These protests, however, have continued to focus on the Palestinian people, as the war has destroyed huge numbers of homes and wiped out entire families.

"Before I got into activism, I was a lot more shy. But for me, this is personal," says Masood, who is a Muslim of Indian descent. His father, an IT specialist, was born in Chicago. His mom, who teaches religious education, came to this country from India in the 1990s. Like his father, Masood was born in Chicago but grew up in a Detroit suburb until his family returned.

On campus, he's known as the guy who drapes a red or black keffiyeh scarf around his shoulders. The Middle Eastern scarves have become an increasingly displayed symbol of solidarity with the Palestinian people. His own keffiyehs belonged to his father and to his late uncle, who also protested in support of

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Palestinians when they were young.

"I have this duty to carry on ... what (my uncle) stood for and bring new meaning to it," Masood says. He jokes that he wears the scarves so often that people wonder if he washes them.

Occasionally, he says, his parents see him on TV at protests with groups such as Students for Justice in Palestine and Students for a Democratic Society. Mostly, they don't want him to do anything "reckless" that would jeopardize his future. He promises them he won't and walks a fine line between his activism and that future — law school and a job, for instance. It's a valid concern, since some college students who've gone public with views on the Hamas-Israel war have lost employment offers or been harassed online.

"My parents ... they're kind of worried about me," Masood says. "But I feel like at this point, they realize that I also, like, have a duty to do. And they're not totally against it."

If he were to get arrested, he concedes, that would likely change.

He doesn't choose confrontation

On a breezy summer day just before the DNC, Masood sat on the grass with a small group, painting protest signs at a park on Chicago's South Side.

One recent college graduate complained about her parents' "weird liberal logic." When Democrat friends were coming over, she said, they asked her to take down a painted sheet she'd hung out her bedroom window decrying what she and many others call a genocide in Gaza. "They didn't want it to be the focus of conversation," she sighed. During the DNC, she put the pro-Palestinian message back up with a "Harris-Walz" sign near another window.

Next to her, a man in his early 30s said he planned to agitate police officers guarding the DNC, his sentiments seeming to echo anti-Vietnam riots at Chicago's 1968 DNC. He painted his hands red and pressed them onto poster board, scrawling the words, "America Has Its Hands Covered In Blood."

There were a few renegade groups at the DNC. One briefly breached an outer security wall, leading to 13 arrests. Dozens more were arrested the second night outside the Israeli consulate.

As a volunteer marshal at the larger March on DNC protests, Masood's role was quite the opposite of agitation. As they were trained to do by organizers, marshals work to minimize conflict with police and counterprotesters.

"We don't usually organize disruptions," Masood says.

Why were the protesters so focused on Democrats, even as the Biden administration continued to push a cease-fire in the Middle East? At the DNC protests, the answer was clear: Many protesters feel the president has not done enough to help Palestinians, and they fear Harris would continue to fund Israel.

"I feel like the Democratic and Republican parties are two of the same parties that just say things differently," Masood says. "They're controlled by corporate interests, and they won't benefit the average person."

This is the first presidential election for which he'll be old enough to vote, but he's not excited. He plans to vote for Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein. While ending the war in Gaza is his top issue, he lists others of importance — abortion rights, immigration and climate change, among them.

But he says his generation feels overloaded.

"We would have loved to live in a world where all we would have had to worry about was us and our families and our education," he says. "But that isn't the world we live in at the moment."

Life among the protesters

On peace in the Middle East, Rania Batrice, a Democratic political strategist who was Bernie Sanders' deputy campaign manager during his 2016 presidential bid — and who is Palestinian American — said she is "cautiously optimistic" with Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee.

"We now have somebody at the top of the ticket who, at minimum, at least has used empathetic language," Batrice says. "She was the first person in the administration to utter the words 'cease-fire.'" The shift in rhetoric, Batrice says, "is a very, very welcome change. It's also not enough."

For that reason, Batrice, who came to Chicago for the DNC, wholeheartedly supported the March on DNC events in which Masood participated.

"I think peaceful protest is not only a longstanding tradition in this country," she says. "It's also how we've seen — over and over and over again — policy shifts happen."

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At the mass protest on the DNC's first day, Masood was among the first to arrive to help with setup, hours before the march began. The scene morphed into a mish-mash of humanity, as pro-Palestinian protesters from across the country and journalists from around the world poured into Union Park.

A group with Israeli flags showed up at one point, circling the park as protest marshals in fluorescent vests scrambled to create a human barrier to fend off potential conflict. Nearby, a man with a guitar sang Christian music, including "Amazing Grace," for hours.

Across the street, another man with a fire-and-brimstone message used a loudspeaker to taunt the much larger group in the park. "You're all terrorists!" he shouted, also saying he supported Donald Trump.

Masood paid him little mind. His own faith, he says, is about love and compassion. "Eventually, you just learn to ignore them. Screaming back if they're screaming at you, you're only going to endanger yourself and endanger others."

As the sea of humanity, numbering thousands, walked a 2-mile (3.2-kilometer) route to another park and back, people banged on drums and waved signs. Masood and fellow marshals used hand signals to keep themselves interspersed on either side of the protest route. Police marched alongside, using bicycles to create rolling barriers to help keep things contained.

Masood felt the message was heard. He pronounced himself "energized." He realizes Stein and the Green Party aren't considered contenders for the presidency. But his first presidential vote is a protest, too.

Whoever wins, Masood says, "We'll be out here in the streets, like how we were today, no matter if it's Democrat or Republican. We will always be protesting for the people."

Harris isn't backing away from Biden's democracy focus. But she's putting her own spin on it

By ALI SWENSON, FARNOUSH AMIRI and GARY FIELDS Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Before dropping his bid for reelection, President Joe Biden framed voters' choice in November in dark and ominous terms, painting Republican nominee Donald Trump as a menace to American democracy and questioning whether the country could survive if he won.

The Democratic Party's new nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, isn't exactly shrinking from that message, warning in her Thursday night acceptance speech of "extremely serious" consequences of Trump returning to the White House.

But Harris is putting her own spin on what has been a central messaging strategy for Democrats. Rather than focusing on the existential threat a second Trump term could pose to the country's foundational institutions and traditions, she is expanding Democrats' definition of what's at stake in this election: It's about preserving personal freedoms.

The fresh frame was on full display this week at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where attendees wrote their own definitions of freedom on handmade posters and Beyoncé's anthem "Freedom" boomed through the loudspeakers. The convention dedicated a day's theme to "fighting for our freedoms," with special guest Oprah Winfrey suggesting those working to preserve reproductive rights are "the new freedom fighters."

Harris drove the point home over and over as she summarized her promises to American voters.

"The freedom to live safe from gun violence in our schools, communities and places of worship," Harris said Thursday. "The freedom to love who you love openly and with pride. The freedom to breathe clean air, and drink clean water and live free from the pollution that fuels the climate crisis. And the freedom that unlocks all the others: the freedom to vote."

Experts say the Democrats' more positive, personal appeal signals that the party is trying to boost morale and reclaim terms such as freedom and liberty — ideas that Republicans have spent years branding as their own.

"I think everybody on the Democratic progressive side is hungry and was just ready for that positive vision," said Lauren Groh-Wargo, CEO of national voting rights organization Fair Fight Action.

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A word like freedom is “abstract enough” that people can project their own aspirations for the best version of American society on it, said Matthew Delmont, professor of history at Dartmouth College. He said it’s a smart strategy for Democrats to use phrases that Republicans have long deployed, though it doesn’t stop Republicans from defining the term in their own way.

Democrats at the convention said they understood why Biden had focused on the threat-to-democracy narrative. After all, it was his presidency that was jeopardized by Trump’s lies about the 2020 election that led to the violent assault on the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to halt the transfer of power.

“But Kamala is all about the future and she can do that,” said Holly Sargent, a 68-year-old delegate from York, Maine. “She can accept that he was a warrior who got us to where we are, and now we need to focus on the future.”

Biden, who dropped out of the race last month after urgent pleas from within his party, seemed to accept his duty as a messenger of the campaign’s new theme. In his Monday convention speech, he said this election’s results will determine “whether democracy and freedom will prevail.”

Even as newly energized Democrats lean into personal freedom as a pillar of their campaign, the Trump camp isn’t willing to cede the messaging ground on that word, liberty or any other patriotic themes.

“It’s always good to see Americans express a love of our nation,” Trump senior adviser Brian Hughes said. “But a party that has opened our borders to drugs and crime, diminished our standing as a force for global peace and made it difficult for fellow Americans to afford the basics of life seems the exact opposite of patriotic.”

Shortly after Harris’ acceptance speech, Trump sought to poke holes in the idea that she could provide positive changes for the country. He argued if she wanted change, she could have achieved it already in her current role as vice president.

“Why didn’t she do the things that she is complaining about?” he told Fox News shortly after her acceptance speech. “She could have done it three-and-a-half years ago. She could do it tonight by leaving the auditorium and going to Washington, D.C., and closing the border.”

Harris has particularly leaned into abortion access and reproductive issues as a main talking point since launching her campaign last month. Democrats see focusing on the freedom for people to make their own health care decisions as a winning play up and down the ballot, as they target Trump for boasting about nominating three Supreme Court justices who helped overturn the constitutional right to abortion two years ago.

The “freedom” narrative also has allowed Democrats to create a more expansive campaign message that includes an issue they often have struggled to address nationally — gun control.

In a solemn moment at the convention Thursday, five people whose lives had been touched by gun violence — including a teacher and a parent who spoke about the Sandy Hook and Uvalde school massacres — stood onstage together and shared their stories. Behind them, the words “FREEDOM FROM GUN VIOLENCE” stood out on the convention center’s main screen.

“In pushing for freedom from gun violence, Vice President Harris is illustrating how dramatically the calculus has changed on this issue. What was once a political third rail is now being framed as an inalienable right,” said John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety, a national advocacy group that works to fight gun violence.

To be sure, the Democrats’ national gathering did not represent a full pivot from their warning that American democracy is on the line in November. Several speakers, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and former Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger, pointed to the need to guard American and distinctly democratic institutions. They also issued stark reminders of the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot in which Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, attacked police officers and sought to halt the certification of the 2020 election.

The bustling convention hall shared a rare quiet moment as video showing footage of the attack played onscreen.

Still, mentions of freedom outstripped those of threats to democracy, and “Freedom” signs often filled the area where the thousand of delegates were gathered. Harris’ running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz,

never used the word "democracy" in his speech to the delegates on Wednesday while using "freedom" eight times.

As the race enters its final months, Democratic pollster Cornell Belcher said Republicans are likely to focus on "darkness and danger, and we're going to be invaded on the border, and you can't afford groceries."

Harris, meanwhile, wants voters to see the stakes of the election in terms of "the future and freedoms and not going backwards," he said, adding that it taps into American ideals of optimism that often carry the day in elections.

Liz Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO and a delegate at the Democratic convention, said Harris has been successful at outlining the stakes for voters in November while also maintaining that sense of hope and optimism.

"This isn't some esoteric democracy kind of thing," Shuler said. "It's bringing it down to the ground, showing people how it relates to them and them seeing themselves in it."

Oklahoma teachers were told to use the Bible. There's resistance from schools as students return

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

BIXBY, Okla. (AP) — Oklahoma's Bixby school district has lots to show off for a fast-growing Tulsa suburb: a state-of-the-art new high school set to open by 2025, a new ninth grade gymnasium and plans for a \$12 million upgrade to a football complex that already rivals that of many small colleges.

But, what the district does not have as students returned this week is a Bible in every classroom — despite a statewide mandate from Oklahoma's education chief to incorporate Bible lessons and promises of repercussions for those that don't comply. Other large school districts have also publicly indicated they aren't making changes either.

The resistance follows a summer order that propelled Oklahoma to the center of a growing push by conservatives to give religion a bigger role in public schools across the U.S. Still, the fight may be far from over while other states, including neighboring Texas, are seeing Republicans advance similar efforts to incorporate the Bible into classrooms.

"If there is no curricular standard that ties with that particular classroom, what would be the purpose of a Bible if not for pure indoctrination?" said Bixby Superintendent Rob Miller, a former Marine Corps artilleryman whose office walls are adorned with medals from some of the 18 marathons he's run and a sign that reads: "Positive Vibes Only."

Miller said it's not uncommon to see students carrying a Bible or praying during a moment of silence at the start of each school day. Two copies of the Bible are available for checkout in the high school library's reference section, along with a book titled "The History of the Bible" that includes maps and other historical details about the holy lands featured in scripture.

But he said a Bible simply doesn't make sense for a seventh grade math classroom or a high school chemistry class.

"As a Christian myself, I am a little offended by diminishing the word of God to a mere classroom prop," he said.

It is unclear how many, if any, Oklahoma school districts are resuming schools this month with a Bible in every classroom. A spokesperson for the state education department, Dan Isett, said the mandate is not optional and that the superintendent has "a wide range of tools to deal with rogue districts" that do not comply.

Under the mandate, Oklahoma schools must incorporate the Bible into lesson plans for all public school students in grades five through 12 in Oklahoma.

School districts also have been offered guidance from law firms that represent them and the state's largest teachers union, the Oklahoma Education Association, that the superintendent doesn't have the unilateral authority to issue such a requirement and that the edict is unenforceable.

The decision by many Oklahoma school districts to disregard state Superintendent Ryan Walters' directive didn't sit well with the first-term Republican, who chastised those districts at the start of a recent board meeting.

"These are the districts that want pornography in front of kids under the name of inclusivity, but don't want the historical context of the Bible," Walters said, referring to a failed effort by his education department to force a local district to remove the books "The Kite Runner" and "The Glass Castle" from library shelves because of sexual content.

"It's outrageous. We will not allow it. Just because they don't like it, just because they're offended by it, just because they don't want to do it doesn't mean that they won't do it. They will be held accountable."

The directive from Walters is the latest salvo in an effort by conservative-led states to target public schools: Louisiana has required them to post the Ten Commandments in classrooms, while others are under pressure to teach the Bible and ban books and lessons about race, sexual orientation and gender identity. Earlier this summer the Oklahoma Supreme Court blocked an attempt by the state to have the first publicly funded religious charter school in the country.

Walters, himself a former public school teacher who was elected to his post in 2022, ran on a platform of fighting "woke ideology," banning books from school libraries and getting rid of "radical leftists" who he claims are indoctrinating children in classrooms.

Among his Republican colleagues in the Legislature, patience with Walters appears to be wearing thin. State Rep. Mark McBride, a Republican from Moore who chairs the subcommittee that funds public schools, earlier this month sought an investigation into Walters over what McBride says are failures by the department to comply with legislative directives on funding and provide requested documents on expenditures. More than two dozen GOP House members signed on to McBride's request, prompting Speaker of the House Charles McCall to request an independent investigation of the education department.

For his part, Walters dismissed the inquiry as a "political attack" from House leaders and hinted toward the 2026 governor's election, where both McCall and Walters have been mentioned as possible candidates for the seat being vacated by term-limited Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt.

Grant Sullivan, who owns Scott's Hamburgers in downtown Bixby and delivers a sermon every Sunday at a small church in the nearby town of Morris, said he questions whether the Bible mandate is a good idea.

"Have we thought this through?" asked Sullivan, who has a master's degree in theology from Oklahoma Christian University and two children in Bixby schools. "What if you happen to have an atheistic teacher? Are they going to teach it in a way that may be more problematic than helpful?"

"It just feels like that's for the home and the church is how I feel about that."

RFK Jr. suspends his presidential bid and backs Donald Trump before appearing with him at his rally

By JONATHAN J. COOPER, MICHELLE L. PRICE and GABRIEL SANDOVAL Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suspended his independent campaign for the White House and endorsed Donald Trump on Friday, a late-stage shakeup of the race that could give the former president a modest boost from Kennedy's supporters.

Hours later, Kennedy joined Trump onstage at an Arizona rally, where the crowd burst into "Bobby!" cheers.

Kennedy said his internal polls had shown that his presence in the race would hurt Trump and help Democratic nominee Kamala Harris, though recent public polls don't provide a clear indication that he is having an outsize impact on support for either major-party candidate.

Kennedy cited free speech, the war in Ukraine and "a war on our children" as among the reasons he would try to remove his name from the ballot in battleground states.

"These are the principal causes that persuaded me to leave the Democratic Party and run as an independent, and now to throw my support to President Trump," Kennedy said at his event in Phoenix.

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However, he made clear that he wasn't formally ending his bid and said his supporters could continue to back him in the majority of states where they are unlikely to sway the outcome. Kennedy took steps to withdraw his candidacy in at least two states late this week, Arizona and Pennsylvania, but election officials in the battlegrounds of Michigan, Nevada and Wisconsin said it would be too late for him to take his name off the ballot even if he wants to do so.

Kennedy said his actions followed conversations with Trump over the past few weeks. He cast their alliance as "a unity party," an arrangement that would "allow us to disagree publicly and privately and seriously." Kennedy suggested Trump offered him a job if he returns to the White House, but neither he nor Trump offered details.

Kennedy's running mate, Nicole Shanahan, this week entertained the idea that Kennedy could join Trump's administration as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The announcement ended days of speculation and landed with heaps of confusion and contradictions from Kennedy's aides and allies, an emblematic cap for a quixotic campaign.

Shortly before his speech in Phoenix, his campaign had said in a Pennsylvania court filing that he would be endorsing Trump for president. However, a spokesperson for Kennedy said the court filing had been made in error and the lawyer who wrote it said he'd correct it. Kennedy took the stage moments later, aired his grievances with the Democratic Party, the news media and political institutions, and extolled Trump. He spoke for nearly 20 minutes before he said explicitly that he was endorsing Trump.

Kennedy later joined Trump onstage at a rally co-hosted by Turning Point Action in Glendale, where Trump's campaign had teased he would be joined by "a special guest."

Kennedy was greeted by thundering applause as he took the stage to the Foo Fighters and a pyrotechnics display after being introduced by Trump as "a man who has been an incredible champion for so many of these values that we all share."

"We are both in this to do what's right for the country," Trump said, later commending Kennedy for having "raised critical issues that have been too long ignored in this country."

With Kennedy standing nearby, Trump invoked his slain uncle and father, John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy, saying he knows "that they are looking down right now and they are very, very proud."

He said that, if he wins this fall, he will establish a new independent presidential commission on assassination attempts that will release all remaining documents related to John F. Kennedy's assassination.

And he repeated his pledge to establish a panel — "working with Bobby" — to investigate the increase in chronic health conditions and childhood diseases, including autoimmune disorders, autism, obesity and infertility.

A year ago, some would have thought it inconceivable that a member of arguably the most storied family in Democratic politics would work with Trump to keep a Democrat out of the White House. Even in recent months, Kennedy has accused Trump of betraying his followers, while Trump has criticized Kennedy as "the most radical left candidate in the race."

Five of Kennedy's family members issued a statement Friday calling his support for Trump "a sad ending to a sad story" and reiterating their support for Harris.

"Our brother Bobby's decision to endorse Trump today is a betrayal of the values that our father and our family hold most dear," read the statement, which his sister Kerry Kennedy posted on X.

Kennedy Jr. acknowledged his decision to endorse Trump had caused tension with his family. He is married to actor Cheryl Hines, who wrote on X that she deeply respects her husband's decision to drop out but did not address the Trump endorsement.

"This decision is agonizing for me because of the difficulties it causes my wife and my children and my friends," Kennedy said. "But I have the certainty that this is what I'm meant to do. And that certainty gives me internal peace, even in storms."

In a statement, Harris campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon reached out to Kennedy's supporters who are "tired of Donald Trump and looking for a new way forward" and said that Harris wanted to earn their backing.

At Kennedy's Phoenix event, 38-year-old Casey Westerman said she trusted Kennedy's judgment and

had planned to vote for him, but would support Trump if Kennedy endorsed him.

"My decision would really be based on who he thinks is best suited to run this country," said Westerman, who wore a "Kennedy 2024" trucker hat and voted for Trump in the last two presidential elections.

Kennedy first entered the 2024 presidential race as a Democrat but left the party last fall to run as an independent. He built an unusually strong base for a third-party bid, fueled in part by anti-establishment voters and vaccine skeptics who have followed his anti-vaccine work since the COVID-19 pandemic. But he has since faced strained campaign finances and mounting legal challenges.

At Trump's event in Las Vegas, Alida Roberts, 49, said Kennedy's endorsement of Trump spoke volumes about the current state of the Democratic Party.

"It says that he doesn't trust what's going on, that it's not the party he grew up in," Roberts said.

Roberts, who voted twice for Trump, said she was relieved and excited by the endorsement because she'd been "teeter-tottering" between the two candidates.

Recent polls put Kennedy's support in the mid-single digits, and it's unclear if he'd get even that in a general election.

There's some evidence that Kennedy's staying in the race would hurt Trump more than Harris. According to a July AP-NORC poll, Republicans were significantly more likely than Democrats to have a favorable view of Kennedy. And those with a positive impression of Kennedy were significantly more likely to also have a favorable view of Trump (52%) than Harris (37%).

An attack at a festival in a German city kills 3 people and seriously wounds at least 5

By DANIEL NIEMANN and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

SOLINGEN, Germany (AP) — An attacker with a knife killed three people and seriously wounded at least five late Friday at a festival in the western German city of Solingen, authorities said.

Witnesses alerted police shortly after 9:30 p.m. to an unknown attacker having wounded several people indiscriminately with a knife on a central square, the Fronhof. Police said the perpetrator was on the run, and they had only very little information on the man so far.

They said they believe the stabbings were carried out by a lone attacker.

One of the festival organizers, Philipp Müller, appeared on stage and asked festivalgoers to "go calmly; please keep your eyes open, because unfortunately the perpetrator hasn't been caught."

He said many people had been wounded by "a knifeman."

At least one helicopter was seen in the air, while many police and emergency vehicles with flashing blue lights were on the road and several streets were closed off.

Police put the number of seriously injured at five. The region's top security official, Herbert Reul, gave a figure of six as he visited the scene in the early hours of Saturday.

"None of us knows why" the attack took place, said Reul, who is the interior minister of North Rhine-Westphalia state.

"I can't say anything about the motive now" and it isn't clear who the assailant was, he said, but the attacker left the scene "relatively quickly."

Mayor Tim Kurzbach said in a Facebook post, "This evening, we in Solingen are all in shock. We all wanted to celebrate our city's anniversary together and now have dead and wounded to lament."

"It breaks my heart that an attack on our city happened," he added.

Local newspaper Solinger Tageblatt quoted Celine Derikartz, its reporter covering the festival, as saying that "the atmosphere is spooky." She said a party atmosphere had turned to shock within minutes and she saw festivalgoers weeping.

The "Festival of Diversity," marking the city's 650th anniversary, began Friday and was supposed to run through Sunday, with several stages in central streets offering attractions such as live music, cabaret and acrobatics.

The city canceled the rest of the festival after the attack. Solingen has about 160,000 residents and is

located near the bigger cities of Cologne and Duesseldorf.

There has been concern about an increase in knife violence in Germany recently.

In May, a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant on members of a group that describes itself as opposing "political Islam" left a police officer dead.

Germany's top security official, Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, proposed toughening weapons laws to allow only knives with a blade measuring up to 6 centimeters (nearly 2.4 inches) to be carried in public, rather than the length of 12 centimeters (4.7 inches) that is allowed now.

Arbitration hearing between Canadian railroads and union ends with no decision on back-to-work order

By ROB GILLIES and JOSH FUNK Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A workers union on Friday threatened a strike at one of Canada's two major freight railroads, only hours after the company's trains restarted following a potentially devastating stoppage. A government-ordered arbitration hearing wrapped up without a decision, and Canadian National trains were expected to keep moving at least through Monday morning.

CN and Canadian Pacific Kansas City Ltd. locked out their workers on Thursday when negotiations over a new labor contract reached a deadline without an agreement. That resulted in a near total shutdown of freight rail in the country for more than a day, until Canadian National resumed its service on Friday morning. Trains operated by CPKC remain parked and its workers, who had already been on strike since Thursday, stayed on the picket line Friday.

The government forced the companies and the union, Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, into arbitration overseen by the Canada Industrial Relations Board — an order the union is challenging. Friday's nine-hour hearing ended with no order from the board.

The union filed a 72-hour strike notice against CN on Friday morning shortly after it announced that it planned to challenge the arbitration order, union spokesperson Marc-André Gauthier said.

If the board orders the union back to work, "the TCRC will lawfully abide by the decision, but will undertake steps to challenge to the fullest extent," the Teamsters said in a statement. "Unfortunately this will not provide immediate relief but the Union is prepared to appeal to federal court if necessary."

"We do not believe that any of the matters we have been discussing over the last several days are insurmountable and we remain available for discussion in order to resolve this matter without a further work stoppage," the union said in its letter to CN management.

Canadian National, which has about 6,500 workers involved in the dispute, said the impact of the strike notice will depend on the timing of the CIRB's decision. "It is in the national interest of Canada that the CIRB rule quickly, before even more harm is caused," the railroad said in a written statement. CPKC has about 3,000 engineers, conductors and dispatchers involved.

Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, said the union's latest actions "will prolong the damage to our economy and jeopardize the wellbeing and livelihoods of Canadians, including union and non-union workers across multiple industries."

Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon had announced the decision to force the parties into binding arbitration on Thursday afternoon, more than 16 hours after the lockout shut down the railroads, saying the economic risk was too great to allow them to continue. The government had declined to order arbitration two weeks ago. MacKinnon said he had hoped that negotiations between the companies and the union on a new contract would succeed. A spokesman for MacKinnon declined to comment Friday on the strike notice.

"This is not about disobeying the minister's order. It's about exercising our right," Teamsters Canada President Francois Laporte said Friday in announcing the strike. "We will exercise our right within the legal framework."

Canadian National trains had begun rolling at 7 a.m. across Canada, said CN spokesperson Jonathan Abecassis. The development initially appeared to at least partially end a work stoppage that threatened

to wreak havoc on the economies of Canada and the United States. Both countries, across all industries, rely on railroads to deliver their raw materials and finished products.

"While CN is focused on its recovery plan and powering the economy, Teamsters are focused on getting back to the picket line and holding the North American economy hostage to their demands," Abecassis said following the union's strike notice.

Getting even one of the railroads running again is a relief for businesses. In most past rail labor disputes, only one of the Canadian railroads stopped and the economy was able to weather that disruption.

The negotiations that began last year are hung up on issues around the way workers are scheduled and contract rules designed to prevent fatigue. The railroads had proposed shifting away from the current system that pays workers based on the number of miles they travel, to a system based on the hours they work. The railroads said the switch would make it easier to provide predictable schedules. But the union resisted because it feared the proposed changes would erode hard-fought protections against fatigue and jeopardize safety.

Similar quality-of-life concerns about demanding schedules and the lack of paid sick time drove U.S. railroads to the brink of a strike two years ago before Congress and President Joe Biden intervened and forced workers to accept a deal.

In Canada, another issue at CN is the railroad's intention to expand a system that allows it to temporarily relocate workers to other parts of its network when it's short on employees in a certain region.

Regarding wages, the railroads said they both offered raises in line with other recent deals in the industry for what are already well-paying jobs. Canadian National has said its engineers make about \$150,000 and conductors earn roughly \$121,000 for working 160 days a year though some of their time off is spent stuck at hotels on the road between train trips while getting required rest. CPKC says its pay is comparable.

Nearly all of Canada's freight handled by rail — worth more than \$1 billion Canadian (US\$730 million) a day and adding up to more than 375 million tons of freight last year — stopped Thursday along with rail shipments crossing the U.S. border. A number of smaller short-line freight railroads that handle local deliveries continued operating but were unable to hand off shipments to either of the major railroads while they were idle.

About 30,000 commuters in Canada were also affected because their trains use CPKC's lines. CPKC and CN's trains continued operating in the U.S. and Mexico during the lockout.

Billions of dollars of goods move between Canada and the U.S. via rail each month, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"There are a lot of goods and services shipped across borders," Sean O'Brien, President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, said at a rally in Calgary, Alberta, on Friday. "If this company chooses to continue its bad behavior then it is going to have an impact. ... They've got a lot of decisions they need to make. And they need to make the most important decision: Reward these workers with what they've earned and also don't try to diminish safety just so they need to feed their bottom lines."

3 Detroit-area mall guards not guilty of involuntary manslaughter in man's death in 2014

By ED WHITE Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — A jury swiftly acquitted three security guards of involuntary manslaughter Friday in the death of a man who was held to the floor at a Detroit-area mall in 2014, a case that was closed without charges years ago but reopened by state prosecutors.

The jury of eight women and four men heard closing arguments in the weeklong trial and returned with a verdict after approximately an hour.

McKenzie Cochran, a Black man with an enlarged heart, repeatedly said, "I can't breathe," while five guards restrained him at Northland Center. The confrontation followed a call from a jewelry shop owner who said Cochran told him that he wanted to kill someone.

The 10-minute struggle was recorded on dark, grainy mall video, as well as by onlookers. Cochran, 25,

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was eventually handcuffed and placed against a pillar while guards waited for police and paramedics. The cause of death was asphyxiation.

Defense attorneys argued that the guards were protecting themselves and mall patrons by trying to bring Cochran under control so they could handcuff him. The encounter grew from two guards to five and initially involved pepper spray.

"If someone found a gun in that man's pocket, they'd be hailing these men as heroes," defense attorney Jamil Khuja told the jury. "Instead, 10 years later — not a Monday morning quarterback, a 10-years-later quarterback — come and turn their lives upside down."

John Seiberling, Gaven King and Aaron Maree embraced one another and their attorneys after the verdicts were read. They declined to comment about the acquittals.

Their family and friends applauded, gasped and cheered in the courtroom. No one from Cochran's family attended the trial; his mother and sister are deceased.

During closing arguments, a prosecutor urged jurors to apply "common sense" and convict the guards, arguing that their gross negligence led to the tragedy.

"This death did not have to happen," Assistant Attorney General LaDonna Logan said.

"When a man says several times, 'I can't breathe,' common sense says that these defendants should have repositioned him. They did nothing," Logan said.

Cochran's death was classified by the medical examiner as an accident in 2014, and the Oakland County prosecutor did not pursue charges.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel reversed course in 2021 and filed charges amid national outrage over the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was pinned to the ground by Minneapolis police.

In a written statement, Nessel, a Democrat, said the acquittals were "not what we had hoped for."

Defense lawyers repeatedly reminded the jury of the decade that has passed since Cochran's death.

"They had all this information 10 years ago. No charges. There was no negligence," Wright Blake said. "So what changed between 2014 and 2021? ... Is it her own political gains?"

Blake noted there was no new evidence, except for the opinion of a forensic pathologist, Dr. Carl Schmidt, who looked at records and testified that the death was not an accident and might be considered a homicide. He had no role in the 2014 autopsy.

"When you allow politics and personal advancement to drive whether or not to charge the case, that's not the right way to do things," King's attorney, Doraid Elder, told The Associated Press.

He said Jessica Cooper, the local prosecutor who declined charges 10 years ago, should feel vindicated. She was defeated for reelection in 2020.

The last trial witness was Charles Key, a former Baltimore police supervisor who is considered an expert in the use of force. He said Cochran's struggle to breathe didn't change his opinion that the guards' efforts to restrain him while trying to handcuff him were reasonable.

"If he's talking it means he's breathing. He may not be breathing well," Key testified. "Resisting aggressively — that also can't be done without taking oxygen."

Key said Cochran could have been handcuffed in just 30 seconds without resistance.

Another guard, Lucius Hamilton, pleaded guilty last week in anticipation of only 90 days in jail. The guard who led the encounter with Cochran died in 2017.

South Carolina sets date for first execution in more than 13 years

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina has set a Sept. 20 date to put inmate Freddie Eugene Owens to death in what would be the state's first execution in more than 13 years.

South Carolina was once one of the busiest states for executions, but for years had had trouble obtaining lethal injection drugs due to pharmaceutical companies' concerns that they would have to disclose that they had sold the drugs to officials.

The state Legislature has since passed a law allowing officials to keep lethal injection drug suppliers secret and, in July, the state Supreme Court cleared the way to restart executions.

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Owens, who killed a store clerk in Greenville in 1997, will likely have the choice to die by lethal injection, electrocution or by the newly added option of a firing squad. A Utah inmate in 2010 was the last person to have been executed by a firing squad in the U.S., according to the nonprofit Death Penalty Information Center.

The prisons director has five days to confirm that all three execution methods will be available. He must also give Owens' lawyers proof that the lethal injection drug is stable and correctly mixed, according to the high court's 2023 interpretation of the state's secrecy law on executions that helped reopen the door to South Carolina's death chamber.

Owens, 46, will then have about a week to let the state know how he wishes to be killed. If he makes no choice, the state will send him to the electric chair by default.

A lawyer for Owens said the defense is waiting for prison officials to submit a sworn statement next week about the purity, potency and quality of the lethal injection drug under the terms of the South Carolina's new shield law and will see if it satisfies both the state and federal courts.

"The lack of transparency about the source of the execution drugs, how they were obtained and whether (they) can bring about as painless a death as possible is still of grave concern to the lawyers that represent persons on death row," attorney John Blume said Friday via email.

The justices didn't specify how much information has to be released but they have promised a swift ruling if an inmate challenged the details in the disclosure.

South Carolina used to use a mix of three drugs, but now will use one drug, the sedative pentobarbital, for lethal injections in a protocol similar to executions carried out by the federal government.

Owens can ask Republican Gov. Henry McMaster for mercy and to reduce his sentence to life without parole. No South Carolina governor has ever granted clemency in the modern era of the death penalty.

South Carolina's last execution was in May 2011. The state didn't set out to pause executions, but its supply of lethal injection drugs expired and companies refused to sell the state more if the transaction was made public.

It took a decade of wrangling in the Legislature — first adding the firing squad as a method and later passing a shield law — to get capital punishment restarted.

South Carolina has put 43 inmates to death since the death penalty was restarted in the U.S. in 1976. In the early 2000s, it was carrying out an average of three executions a year. Only nine states have put more inmates to death.

But since the unintentional execution pause, South Carolina's death row population has dwindled. The state had 63 condemned inmates in early 2011. It currently has 32. About 20 inmates have been taken off death row and received different prison sentences after successful appeals. Others have died of natural causes.

Along with Owens, at least three other inmates have exhausted their regular appeals and a few more are close, meaning the death chamber could be busy to close out 2024.

The recent state Supreme Court ruling that reopened the door for executions found that the state shield law was legal and both the electric chair and firing squad were not cruel punishments.

The South Carolina General Assembly authorized the state to create a firing squad in 2021 to give inmates a choice between it and the same electric chair the state bought in 1912.

Supporters of the firing squad, including some Democrats reluctant about the death penalty, said it appears to be the quickest and most painless way to kill an inmate.

Owens killed store clerk Irene Graves during a string of robberies in 1997. He has been sentenced to death three separate times during his appeals.

After being convicted of murder his initial trial in 1999 but before a jury determined his sentence, Owens killed his cellmate at the Greenville County jail.

Owens gave investigators a detailed account of how he killed his cellmate, stabbing and burning his eyes, choking him and stomping him while another prisoner was in the cell and stayed quietly in his bunk, according to trial testimony.

A 2nd ex-Memphis officer pleads guilty in Tyre Nichols' death. He could serve 40 years in prison

By JONATHAN MATTISE and TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Federal prosecutors agreed to recommend a prison sentence of no more than 40 years for a former Memphis police officer who pleaded guilty Friday to federal civil rights violations in the 2023 fatal beating of Tyre Nichols.

Emmitt Martin is the second former officer to plead guilty in the killing that sparked outrage and renewed calls for police reform. Three former officers still face trial in federal court next month, and two of their former colleagues could testify against them.

Martin entered his change of plea before U.S. District Judge Mark Norris in Memphis under an agreement with prosecutors, pleading guilty to excessive force and witness tampering charges. Sentencing is set for Dec. 5.

Nichols' mother, RowVaughn Wells, was in the courtroom. She nodded her head and smiled when the judge accepted Martin's change of plea.

In a news conference with civil rights attorney Ben Crump after the hearing, Wells said it was "very emotional" and "bittersweet." She said the latest plea is a step in the right direction, but that she won't be content until all of the officers are brought to justice.

"Tyre was just coming home. He was just minding his own business," she said.

Nichols died in a hospital on Jan. 10, 2023, three days after he was kicked, punched and hit with a police baton after a traffic stop. The officers said they pulled Nichols over because he was driving recklessly, but Police Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis has said no evidence was found to support that allegation.

Police video released Jan. 27 last year showed the officers beating Nichols as he yelled for his mother about a block away from the home they shared. Video also showed the officers milling about and talking with each other as Nichols struggled with his injuries.

An autopsy report showed Nichols died from blows to the head, and that the manner of death was homicide. The report described brain injuries, cuts and bruises to the head and other parts of the body.

"I will never have my son back. I will never hear his voice again," Wells told reporters Friday. "They murdered my son for nothing. And until we get justice for all of them, I won't be content."

In November, former Memphis officer Desmond Mills Jr., reached a similar deal with federal prosecutors and changed his plea to guilty. Prosecutors agreed to recommend a prison sentence not to exceed 15 years for Mills.

Both Mills and Martin could be called to testify against the final three — Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith — who remain charged with federal civil rights violations and have pleaded not guilty. The judge set a Monday deadline for any plea agreements in the case. Attorneys for the other three officers attended the hearing but left early. Haley's attorney later declined to comment, while attorneys for the two others did not immediately respond to emails requesting comment Friday afternoon.

All five former officers accused in Nichols' death have been charged separately in state court with second-degree murder. That trial is postponed until the federal proceedings are complete. Mills previously agreed to plead guilty in state court. Shelby County District Attorney General Steve Mulroy issued a statement on Friday saying he expects Martin to make a similar plea in state court at the appropriate time.

Nichols was a 29-year-old father from Sacramento, California. He worked at FedEx with his stepfather and enjoyed skateboarding and photography in his spare time. Nichols was Black.

The five accused ex-officers also are Black. They were fired after Nichols' killing for violating Memphis Police Department policies.

Martin, who was the second officer to come into contact with Nichols during the Jan. 7 traffic stop, helped Haley to force Nichols from his vehicle, according to documents filed in the case to permanently ban Martin from working in law enforcement in Tennessee.

Nichols ran from Martin and his two partners after they threatened and pepper-sprayed him but he was apprehended within six minutes. As other officers tried to handcuff Nichols, who was on the ground,

Martin kicked him in the upper torso and punched him in the face while two other officers held Nichols' arms, the documents show.

Martin's defense attorney, Stephen Ross Johnson, said after the hearing that Martin was "driven by anger" when he "violated Mr. Nichols' civil rights and used excessive force," but that he was "driven by fear when he later attempted to cover that up — fear of the consequences of what he had done."

"Today, we are all witnesses to Mr. Martin accepting responsibility for what he did," Johnson said.

The criminal charges are separate from the U.S. Department of Justice's "patterns and practices" investigation into how Memphis officers use force and conduct arrests, and whether the department in the majority-Black city engages in racially discriminatory policing.

The Justice Department also has announced a separate review concerning use of force, de-escalation strategies and specialized units within Memphis police.

Additionally, Nichols' mother has filed a \$550 million lawsuit against the city and its police chief.

After the hearing, Wells said she hopes the other three officers will also plead guilty so that she and her children do not have to go through a trial.

"I'm hoping that after today, that the other three officers will look in the mirror, and look at themselves, and say that they're guilty, because they know they are," she said.

Texas, other GOP-led states sue over program to give immigrant spouses of US citizens legal status

By GISELA SALOMON and VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

Sixteen Republican-led states are suing to end a federal program that could potentially give nearly half a million immigrants without legal status who are married to U.S. citizens a path to citizenship.

The coalition filed suit Friday to halt the program launched by President Joe Biden in June, saying in court filings that the administration bypassed Congress to create a pathway to citizenship for "blatant political purposes."

"This action incentivizes illegal immigration and will irreparably harm the Plaintiff states," the suit filed in federal court in Tyler, Texas, says.

Under the policy, which started taking applications Monday, many spouses without legal status can apply for something called "parole in place," offering permission to stay in the U.S., apply for a green card and eventually get on a path to citizenship.

But the program has been particularly contentious in an election year where immigration is one of the biggest issues, with many Republicans attacking the policy and contending it is essentially a form of amnesty for people who broke the law.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said in a statement Friday that the plan "violates the Constitution and actively worsens the illegal immigration disaster that is hurting Texas and our country."

The suit filed against the Department of Homeland Security, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and other Biden administration officials accuses the agency of attempting to parole spouses "en masse," which the states contend is an abuse of power. The states also filed a motion asking for the program to be put on hold while the lawsuit proceeds.

In a post on X, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody said her state is challenging the parole in place policy because she believes the Biden administration "is illegally using 'parole' in a systematic way to advance their open-borders agenda."

The conservative nonprofit America First Legal, which is headed by Stephen Miller, a former adviser to President Donald Trump, is serving as co-counsel in the lawsuit.

Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Mayra Alejandra said the agency will defend the Keeping Families Together program in court and continues to process already submitted applications as well as accept new applications.

"Keeping Families Together is grounded in well-established legal authority, and its purpose — enabling the families of U.S. Citizens to live without fear of separation — is consistent with fundamental American

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values," Alejandra said.

White House spokesperson Angelo Fernández Hernández fired back against Republicans "playing politics" and characterized the lawsuit as another form of family separation.

"This lawsuit is seeking to force U.S. citizens and their families, people who have lived in the United States for more than ten years, to continue to live in the shadows," Fernandez said in a statement.

The bipartisan immigration and criminal justice organization FWD.us said the program is in compliance with the law and noted the timing of the lawsuit — as Vice President Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic nomination for president.

"The only motivation behind this lawsuit is the cruelty of tearing families apart and the crass politics of hoping a judge might do the bidding of the anti-immigrant movement," the organization said in a statement.

Karen Tumlin, founder and director of the Justice Action Center, called the legal challenge "unsurprising yet extremely disappointing and cruel."

"However, it's important to emphasize that nothing changes for now, and the process is still open and accepting applications," she said.

To be eligible for the program, immigrants must have lived continuously in the U.S. for at least 10 years, not pose a security threat or have a disqualifying criminal history, and have been married to a citizen by June 17 — the day before the program was announced.

They must pay a \$580 fee to apply and fill out a lengthy application, including an explanation of why they deserve humanitarian parole and a long list of supporting documents proving how long they have been in the country.

If approved, applicants have three years to seek permanent residency. During that period, they can get work authorization. The administration estimates about 500,000 people could be eligible, plus about 50,000 of their children.

Before this program, it was complicated for people who were in the U.S. illegally to get a green card after marrying an American citizen. They can be required to return to their home country — often for years — and they always face the risk they may not be allowed back in.

The lawsuit contends that states will bear the burden of additional immigrants staying in the country.

Texas, the suit says, spends tens of millions of dollars each year on a program that provides health insurance for children, including those in the country illegally. It says that the state also spends millions each year "for increased law enforcement as its citizens suffer increased crime, unemployment, environmental harm, and social disorder due to illegal immigration."

Because the program beneficiaries will be entitled to work authorization, those additional workers "will drive down the wages of Texas residents, directly harming the State and its citizens," the lawsuit says.

Evelyn Wiese, an immigration attorney at Americans for Immigrant Justice, described the lawsuit as an "attack" on mixed status families who have spent years contributing to their communities in the United States.

"Trying to rip apart these families and prevent them from accessing a lawful pathway to status in the U.S. is cruel and reflective of anti-immigrant extremism," she said.

Stock market today: Wall Street rallies near its record heights as 'time has come' for cuts to rates

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks rallied close to their records Friday after the head of the Federal Reserve finally said out loud what Wall Street has been expecting for a while: Cuts to interest rates are coming soon to help the economy.

The S&P 500 rose 1.1% after Fed Chair Jerome Powell said in a highly anticipated speech that the time has come to lower its main interest rate from a two-decade high. The index pulled within 0.6% of its all-time high set last month and has clawed back virtually all of its losses from a brief but scary summertime swoon.

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The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 462 points, or 1.1%, to close above the 41,000 level for the first time since it set its own record in July, while the Nasdaq composite jumped 1.5%.

Powell's speech marked a sharp turnaround for the Fed after it began hiking rates two years ago as inflation spiraled to its worst levels in generations. The Fed's goal was to make it so expensive for U.S. households and companies to borrow that it slowed the economy and stifled inflation.

While careful to say the task is not complete, Powell used the past tense to describe many of the conditions that sent inflation soaring after the pandemic, including a job market that "is no longer overheated." That means the Fed can pay more attention to the other of its twin jobs: to protect an economy that's slowing but has so far defied many predictions for a recession.

"The time has come for policy to adjust," Powell said. "The direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks."

That second part of his statement held back some of the details that Wall Street wanted so much to hear. Treasury yields had already pulled back sharply in the bond market since April on expectations the Federal Reserve's next move would be to lower its main interest rate. The only questions were by how much the Fed would cut and how quickly it would move.

A danger is that traders have built their expectations too high, something they've frequently done in the past. Traders see a high likelihood the Fed will cut its main interest rate by at least 1 percentage point by the end of the year, according to data from CME Group. That would require the Fed to go beyond the traditional move of a quarter of a percentage point at least once in its three remaining meetings scheduled for 2024.

If their predictions are wrong, which has also been a regular occurrence, that could mean Treasury yields have already pulled back too much since their decline began in the spring. That in turn could pressure all kinds of investments. On Thursday, for example, the S&P 500 fell to its worst loss in more than two weeks after Treasury yields climbed.

"Like usual, we will be sitting on the edge of our seats not only trying to figure out what the next data point will be, but how the Fed will interpret the data," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management.

For Friday, at least, Powell's speech heled lead to a widespread rally across Wall Street.

The smaller stocks in the Russell 2000 jumped 3.2% to lead the market. Smaller companies can feel greater benefit from lower interest rates because of their need to borrow to grow.

In the S&P 500 index of big companies, more than 85% of the stocks climbed. The strongest push upward came from Nvidia, which rose 4.5%.

Its stock has been shaky this summer amid worries that investors took it and other highly influential Big Tech stocks too high in their mania around artificial-intelligence technology. But Nvidia has been charging back recently ahead of its highly anticipated profit report scheduled for next week.

Most of the other companies in the S&P 500 have been reporting better-than-expected profit so far this reporting season, as is usually the case.

Ross Stores added 1.8% after topping analysts' estimates for profit and revenue during the latest quarter. But CEO Barbara Rentler also said the retailer's low- and moderate-income customers continue to feel the pressure of high prices across the economy, even if inflation has slowed. It's a concern that many CEOs have been echoing recently.

That helped offset an 8.2% tumble for Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, which reported a worse loss for the latest quarter than expected. It cited a slowdown across the restaurant industry.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 63.97 points to 5,634.61. The Dow jumped 462.30 to 41,175.08, and the Nasdaq composite gained 258.44 to 17,877.79.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 3.79% from 3.86% late Thursday. The two-year Treasury yield, which moves more closely with expectations for action by the Fed, dropped to 3.91% from 4.01% late Thursday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose modestly in Europe after finishing mixed across Asia.

The Nikkei 225 added 0.4% in Tokyo after Bank of Japan Gov. Kazuo Ueda appeared to indicate more increases to interest rates may be coming, but they would be gradual.

The Bank of Japan helped set off a scary summertime swoon in financial markets after a rate hike forced many hedge funds and other investors to abandon a popular trade all at once. An ensuing assurance from a top bank official that it wouldn't raise rates again as long as markets were unstable helped calm conditions.

Competing measures to expand or limit abortion rights will appear on Nebraska's November ballot

By MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska voters will choose between two competing abortion measures to either expand abortion rights or limit them to the current 12-week ban — a development likely to drive more voters to the polls in a state that could see one of its five electoral votes up for grabs in the hotly contested presidential race.

Nebraska Secretary of State Bob Evnen announced Friday that the rival initiatives each gathered enough signatures to get on the November ballot, making Nebraska the first state to carry competing abortion amendments on the same ballot since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

Nebraska also becomes the last of several states to put an abortion measure on the November ballot, including the swing states of Arizona and Nevada where abortion ballot measures could drive higher voter turnout. Others are Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, Montana and South Dakota. New York has a measure that supporters say will effectively guarantee access, though it doesn't mention abortion specifically.

In Nebraska, organizers of the competing efforts announced last month that they turned in far more signatures than the approximately 123,000 required.

One of the initiatives, like measures on ballots elsewhere in the U.S., would enshrine in the state constitution the right to have an abortion until viability or later to protect the health of the pregnant woman. Organizers said they submitted more than 207,000 signatures.

The other measure would write into the constitution the current 12-week ban, with exceptions for rape, incest and to save the life of the pregnant woman. Organizers said they submitted more than 205,000 signatures.

Evnen said his office validated more than 136,000 signatures for both proposals.

Organizers of a third effort, which would have effectively banned abortion at all stages of pregnancy and defined embryos as people, did not submit petitions.

It's possible voters could end up approving both measures, but because they're competing and therefore cannot both be enshrined in the constitution, the one that gets the most "for" votes will be the one adopted, Evnen said.

Evnen's office said that if both measures are approved by voters, Gov. Jim Pillen is responsible for determining whether there is a conflict. Asked if there is a scenario in which the Republican governor could order the measure that gets the lesser number of votes to be enshrined in the constitution, Evnen's office said it didn't see how that could occur, but added it could not speak for the governor.

Asked the same question, Pillen's office said it would not "comment on a hypothetical future legal issue," but hedged on ensuring that the measure with the most votes would be written into the state constitution.

"The overwhelming majority of Nebraskans support strong constitutional protections for the unborn, so the Governor expects only the pro-life initiative to prevail," Laura Strimple, a spokeswoman for Pillen, said in an email to The Associated Press. "In any other scenario, the Governor will consult with the Attorney General as to his legal duties."

Most Republican-controlled states have implemented abortion bans of some sort since *Roe* was overturned, which ended 50 years of the right to abortion across the U.S. But abortion rights supporters have prevailed in all seven ballot questions on the issue that have gone before voters at the state level since 2022.

That tracks with public opinion polling that has shown growing support for abortion rights, including a

recent Associated Press-NORC survey that found 6 in 10 Americans think their state should allow someone to obtain a legal abortion if they don't want to be pregnant for any reason.

Fourteen states currently have bans on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with some exceptions; four ban it after about six weeks, which is before many women know they are pregnant. Nebraska and North Carolina are the only states that have opted for bans that kick in after 12 weeks of pregnancy.

In Nebraska, abortion could play an outside role in the Omaha-centered 2nd Congressional District for both the U.S. House and presidential races.

The House race — a rematch between Republican Rep. Don Bacon against Democratic challenger and state Sen. Tony Vargas — is widely regarded as neck-and-neck. Bacon defeated Vargas in 2022 by fewer than 3 percentage points, and Vargas has outraised him during this campaign with \$300,000 more in cash on hand according to the latest campaign finance reports released last month.

In the presidential election, increased voter turnout could boost Vice President Kamala Harris to pick off the district's lone electoral vote. Nebraska is one of two states that splits its electoral votes, and while the state overall is reliably Republican, the Omaha district is competitive.

The 2nd District has twice awarded its electoral vote to a Democratic presidential candidate — to Barack Obama in 2008 and to Joe Biden in 2020.

Prosecutor says ex-sheriff's deputy charged with manslaughter in shooting of an airman at his home

By KATE PAYNE, CURT ANDERSON and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. (AP) — A Florida sheriff's deputy was charged with manslaughter with a firearm, launching a rarely seen criminal case against a Florida law officer after a Black U.S. Air Force senior airman was killed after answering his apartment door while holding a gun pointed toward the ground.

Former Okaloosa County deputy Eddie Duran, 38, was charged in the May 3 shooting death of 23-year-old Roger Fortson, Assistant State Attorney Greg Marcille said. The charge is a first-degree felony punishable by up to 30 years in prison.

Marcille said a warrant has been issued for Duran's arrest but he was not in custody as Friday afternoon.

"Let this be a reminder to law enforcement officers everywhere that they swore a solemn oath to protect and defend, and their actions have consequences, especially when it results in the loss of life," civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who represents the airman's family, said Friday.

Sabu Williams, president of the local branch of the NAACP, told The Associated Press that "I think this is the best that we could have hoped for in this particular case."

Duran listed himself as Hispanic on his voter registration, and the charging documents released Friday also identify him that way.

Authorities say Duran had been directed to Fortson's Fort Walton Beach apartment in response to a domestic disturbance report that turned out to be false.

After repeated knocking, Fortson opened the door while holding his handgun at his side, pointed down. Authorities say that Duran shot him multiple times; only then did he tell Fortson to drop the gun.

On Friday, candles and framed photos of Fortson in uniform graced the doorway of the apartment where he was killed.

Okaloosa Sheriff Eric Aden fired Duran on May 31 after an internal investigation concluded his life was not in danger when he opened fire.

Duran's attorney, John Whitaker, did not immediately respond to a phone call and email seeking comment.

It is highly unusual for Florida law enforcement officers to be charged for an on-duty killing — it has only happened four times in the last 35 years before Friday. Even then, only one of those officers has been convicted.

Four Miami-Dade officers were recently indicted on manslaughter charges in connection with a shootout with two robbers who hijacked a UPS truck. The shootout left the UPS driver and a passerby dead along with the hijackers.

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Three police officers in the Okaloosa County town of Crestview are awaiting trial on manslaughter charges for the 2021 death of a man who reportedly died after being jolted with a stun gun. Those officers have pleaded not guilty.

A former Palm Beach Gardens officer is serving a 25-year prison sentence for manslaughter and attempted murder for a 2015 shooting. The officer was undercover and in plain clothes when he fatally shot a Black man whose SUV had broken down on an interstate off-ramp. The man had feared he was being robbed, pulled out his licensed handgun and tried to flee before he was shot.

A Broward sheriff's deputy was charged with manslaughter for the 2014 fatal shooting of a Black man who was carrying an air rifle he had just purchased. A judge later threw out that charge.

The U.S. Supreme Court has given law enforcement officers "qualified immunity" for their on-duty actions, making it difficult to charge and convict them for questionable shootings. The court says that officers can only be convicted if the evidence shows that their conduct was illegal and they should have known they were violating "clearly established" law.

Duran began his law enforcement career as a military police officer in the Army. He was hired by an Oklahoma police department in 2015 after his military discharge. He joined the Okaloosa County sheriff's office in 2019, but resigned two years later and then rejoined the sheriff's office in 2023.

Okaloosa personnel records show he was reprimanded in 2021 for not completing his assignment to confirm the addresses of three registered sex offenders by visiting their homes. Then assigned to a high school as its on-campus deputy, he was also disciplined that year for leaving the school before the final bell and the students' departure. Florida law requires that an armed guard be on campus when class is in session.

In a statement Friday, the sheriff's office said it stands by its decision to terminate Duran and has been "fully accountable and transparent" throughout the case.

The apartment complex where Fortson lived is about 8 miles (13 kilometers) from Hurlburt Field, where Fortson was assigned to the 4th Special Operations Squadron as a special missions aviator serving on an AC-130J Ghost Rider gunship.

Duran went to the apartment complex on May 3 after getting the domestic disturbance call. Duran met an apartment manager who directed him to Fortson's fourth-floor unit, telling him there had been frequent arguments, the deputy's body camera video shows.

But Fortson, who had no criminal record, lived alone and had no guests that afternoon. He was on a video call with his girlfriend, who told investigators they had not been arguing. She said Fortson was playing a video game.

Also, 911 records show deputies had never been called to Fortson's apartment previously but they had been called to a nearby unit 10 times in the previous eight months, including once for a domestic disturbance.

When Duran arrived outside Fortson's door, he stood silently for 20 seconds and listened, but no voices inside are recorded on Duran's body camera video.

He then pounded on the door, but didn't identify himself. He then moved to the side of the door, about 5 feet away (1.5 meters). He told investigators he feared that the person inside might fire through the door or open the door and push him over the rail and to the ground about 40 feet (12 meters) below.

He waited 15 seconds before pounding on the door again. This time he yelled, "Sheriff's office — open the door!" He again moved to the side. A muffled voice can be heard on the video — Duran said he heard someone cursing at the police.

Less than 10 seconds later, Duran moved back in front of the door and pounded again, announcing himself once more.

Fortson's girlfriend told investigators that the airman asked who was there but did not get a response. She said Fortson told her he was not going to answer the door because no one comes to his apartment. She said neither of them heard the deputy yell that he was with the sheriff's office.

After the third knock, she said Fortson told her, "I'm gonna go grab my gun because I don't know who that is."

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When Fortson opened the door holding his gun, Duran said "Step back," and then two seconds later began firing. Fortson fell backward onto the floor.

Only then did the deputy yell, "Drop the gun!"

Fortson replied, "It's over there."

The deputy called for paramedics, but Fortson died a short time later at the hospital.

What polling shows about Americans' views of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Recent polls show that Republicans are more likely than Democrats to have a favorable opinion of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who suspended his presidential campaign on Friday and gave his support to Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

During a speech made in Arizona, Kennedy cited concerns that continuing his campaign would help Democratic nominee Kamala Harris. Kennedy's support appeared to have declined in recent polls as he struggled to find his political lane in a race reshaped by the departure of Democratic President Joe Biden and Harris' nomination in his place. The developments left relatively narrow room for Kennedy's presence — or departure — to make a difference in the election outcome. Recent polls don't give a clear indication that Kennedy's presence in the race had an outsized impact on support for either major-party candidate.

While some polls earlier in the year put Kennedy's support in the double digits, his support hovered in the mid-single digits in most recent polls. It's unclear if Kennedy would have even received that level of support in the general election, since third-party candidates frequently don't live up to their early poll numbers when voters actually cast their ballots.

Partisan appeal

In recent months, Americans overall have been split in their views of Kennedy, 70, the son of former U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

About as many people had a favorable as unfavorable view of Kennedy, according to a July AP-NORC poll that was conducted before Biden dropped out of the presidential race last month. That marked a decline from February, when more had a positive than negative view of Kennedy, and about 3 in 10 did not have an opinion.

In the most recent poll, about 2 in 10 U.S. adults didn't know enough about Kennedy to give an opinion.

Republicans were significantly more likely than Democrats and independents to have a favorable view of Kennedy. And those with a positive impression of Kennedy were more likely to also have a favorable view of Trump (52%) than Harris (37%).

Kennedy also struggled to endear himself to political independents. Although he was running as an independent presidential candidate, polling showed about 4 in 10 independents did not know enough to form an opinion. Those who did were divided equally between favorable and unfavorable opinions.

The base of support

Kennedy's appeal largely rested on being an alternative to the match-up many Americans dreaded when Biden was facing Trump in a rematch of the 2020 election won by Biden. A Pew Research Center poll from July found that about half of voters who were supporting Kennedy said the main reason they backed him was because he was neither Biden nor Trump, compared with about 3 in 10 who listed Kennedy's characteristics or policies.

Harris' move to the top of the Democratic ticket may have further harmed Kennedy's prospects. An August Pew poll suggested that Harris had gained support at Kennedy's expense. She appeared to have received the support of some women and non-white voters who previously were considering Kennedy.

About that family name

Kennedy's initial pitch was largely focused on his family name and his relation to other famed Kennedys, including his father and his uncle, former President John F. Kennedy. CNN polling conducted last summer when RFK Jr. was running for the Democratic nomination found that many Democrats said they'd consider supporting him because of the Kennedy name or his family connections. Many members of the Kennedy

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family endorsed Biden before he withdrew from the race.

John F. Kennedy remains the most highly rated former president in Gallup's retrospective approval ratings, and his appeal crosses party lines. Nine in 10 Americans approve of how Kennedy, a Democrat, handled his job as president, according to data from last summer, with Democrats, independents and Republicans in agreement.

News of Robert Kennedy's withdrawal comes a little over a week since a New York judge ruled that he should not appear on the ballot in the state because he listed a "sham" address on nominating petitions. Kennedy appealed the ruling, but has faced several similar challenges around the country.

Ready or not, election season in the US starts soon. The first ballots will go out in just two weeks

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS undefined

It might feel like the presidential election is still a long way off. It's not.

There are just over 70 days until Election Day on Nov. 5, but major dates, events and political developments will make it fly by. Think about it this way: The stretch between now and then is about as long as summer break from school in most parts of the country.

In just two weeks, Sept. 6, the first mail ballots get sent to voters. The first presidential debate is set for Sept. 10. Former President Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, is scheduled to be sentenced in his New York hush money case on Sept. 18. And early in-person voting will start as soon as Sept. 20 in some states.

Here's a look at why the calendar will move quickly now that the Democratic and Republican conventions are wrapped.

Who's ready to vote?

The first batch of ballots typically sent out are ones to military and overseas voters. Under federal law, that must happen at least 45 days before an election — which this year is Sept. 21.

Some states start earlier. North Carolina will begin sending mail ballots to all voters who request them, including military personnel and overseas voters, in just two weeks, Sept. 6.

Voter registration deadlines vary by state, with most falling between eight and 30 days before the election, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The deadline is Oct. 7 in Georgia, one of this year's most prominent presidential battlegrounds.

Nearly all states offer some version of in-person voting, though the rules and dates vary considerably. In Pennsylvania, another of the major presidential battleground states, voters can visit their local election office to request, complete and return a mail ballot beginning Sept. 16. For those counting, that's about three weeks from now.

The gloves come off

Whether and where the Democratic and Republican presidential and vice presidential nominees debate has been a point of contention for weeks. But for now, two match-ups are on the calendar.

Trump and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris have accepted an invitation from ABC News to debate Sept. 10 in Philadelphia.

Harris' pick for vice president, Tim Walz, and Trump's, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, have agreed to an Oct. 1 debate hosted by CBS News in New York City.

Harris has forecast a possible second debate with Trump, but her proposal appeared to be contingent on the GOP nominee's participation in the Sept. 10 debate. Trump has proposed three presidential debates with different television networks.

Vance has challenged Walz to a second vice presidential debate on Sept. 18, although it's not been set.

A possible criminal sentence for Trump

Trump is scheduled to be sentenced Sept. 18 in his hush money criminal case, though his lawyers have asked the judge to delay the proceeding until after Election Day. A decision is expected in early September.

In a letter last week to Judge Juan M. Merchan, Trump's lawyers suggested that holding the sentencing

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as scheduled, about seven weeks before Election Day, would amount to election interference. On Sept. 16, Merchan is expected to rule on Trump's request to overturn the guilty verdict and dismiss the case because of the U.S. Supreme Court's July presidential immunity ruling.

Trump was convicted in May on 34 counts of falsifying business records to conceal a \$130,000 hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels just before the 2016 presidential election. Falsifying business records is punishable by up to four years in prison. Other potential sentences include probation, a fine or a conditional discharge that would require Trump to stay out of trouble to avoid additional punishment.

Next steps in Trump's other New York cases

On Sept. 6, the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will hear arguments in Trump's appeal of a jury's verdict last year ordering him to pay \$5 million to writer E. Jean Carroll after it found him liable for sexually assaulting and defaming her. Trump also is appealing a verdict in a second trial in January in which a jury found him liable on additional defamation claims and ordered him to pay Carroll \$83.3 million. Trump's lawyers have until Sept. 13 to file a brief in that appeal.

On Sept. 26, a New York appeals court will hear oral arguments in Trump's challenge of a nearly \$500 million civil fraud judgment in state Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit against him. The court typically rules about a month after arguments, meaning a decision could come before the November election. Trump's lawyers argue that a judge's Feb. 16 finding that the former president lied for years about his wealth as he built his real estate empire was "erroneous" and "egregious." State lawyers responded in court papers this week that there's "overwhelming evidence" to support the verdict.

What about Trump's election and document cases?

A state case in Georgia that charged Trump and 18 others in a wide-ranging scheme to overturn his 2020 loss in the state is stalled with no chance of going to trial before the election.

Federal prosecutors have brought two criminal cases against Trump, but one was dismissed by a judge last month and the other is likely to be reshaped by the recent U.S. Supreme Court opinion that conferred broad immunity on former presidents for official acts they take in office.

Special counsel Jack Smith has appealed the dismissal by U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon of an indictment charging Trump with hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida and obstructing the FBI's efforts to get them back. But even if a federal appeals court reinstates the case and reverses the judge's ruling that Smith's appointment was unconstitutional, there's no chance of a trial taking place this year.

In light of the Supreme Court's immunity ruling, a federal judge in Washington is now tasked with deciding which allegations in a separate case charging Trump with plotting to overturn the 2020 election can remain part of the prosecution and which ones must be discarded. Deciding which acts are official and which are not is likely to be an arduous process.

Fights over voting and the election

Before the first ballots are even cast, both camps are gearing up to fight over voting.

Battles over election rules have become a staple of American democracy, but they're expected to reach new heights this year. Trump installed his own leadership team at the Republican National Committee, including a director of election integrity who helped him try to overturn Biden's win in 2020. The RNC has filed a blizzard of lawsuits challenging voting rules and promises that more are on the way.

Democrats also are mobilizing and assembling a robust legal team. Among other things, they are objecting to GOP efforts to remove some inactive voters or noncitizens from voter rolls, arguing that legal voters will get swept up in the purges.

Republicans have particularly escalated their rhetoric over the specter of noncitizens voting, even though repeated investigations have shown it almost never happens. Some also are pushing to give local election boards the ability to refuse to certify election results.

All indications are these efforts are laying the groundwork for Trump to again claim the election was stolen from him if he loses and to try to overturn the will of the voters. But there's no way to know if that will happen until the ballots are cast.

At least 5 Secret Service agents have been placed on modified duty after Trump assassination attempt

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

At least five Secret Service agents have been placed on modified duty after the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump in July, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press.

They include the special agent in charge of the Pittsburgh field office and three other agents assigned to that office, which was responsible for the security planning ahead of the July 13 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, according to the law enforcement official who had direct knowledge of the matter. One of the five agents was assigned to Trump's protective detail, the official said.

The official was not authorized to publicly disclose details of the personnel investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The agents are on administrative leave, meaning they cannot do investigative or protective work.

Multiple investigations have been launched as officials probe a complicated law enforcement failure that allowed a man with an AR-style rifle to get close enough to shoot and injure Trump at the rally.

Trump was struck in the ear but avoided serious injury. One spectator was killed and two others were injured.

The shooting was a devastating failure of one of the agency's core duties and led to the resignation of the Secret Service's then-director, Kim Cheatle.

At a congressional hearing after the assassination attempt, Cheatle acknowledged that the Secret Service was told about a suspicious person two to five times before the shooting. She also revealed that the roof from which Thomas Matthew Crooks opened fire had been identified as a potential vulnerability days before the rally.

Acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe Jr., who took over after Cheatle's resignation, has said he "cannot defend why that roof was not better secured."

Takeaways from Fed Chair Powell's speech at Jackson Hole

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell all but proclaimed victory in the fight against inflation and signaled that interest rate cuts are coming in a much-anticipated speech Friday in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Under Powell, the Fed raised its benchmark rate to the highest level in 23 years to subdue inflation that two years ago was running at the hottest pace in more than four decades. Inflation has come down steadily, and investors now expect the Fed to start cutting rates at its next meeting in September — an expectation that essentially got Powell's endorsement Friday.

Powell declares victory over inflation

"My confidence has grown that inflation is on a sustainable path back to 2%," Powell said in his keynote speech at the Fed's annual economic conference in Jackson Hole.

He noted that inflation, according to the Fed's preferred gauge, had fallen to 2.5% last from a peak of 7.1% two years ago. Measured by the better known consumer price index, inflation has dropped from a peak 9.1% in mid-2022 to 2.9% last month. Both are edging closer to the Fed's 2% target.

Powell sounded confident that the Fed would achieve a so-called soft landing — containing inflation without causing a recession. "There is good reason to think that the economy will get back to 2% inflation while maintaining a strong labor market," he said.

Higher rates contributed to progress against inflation, as did the easing of supply chain bottlenecks and worker shortages that caused shipping delays and higher prices as the economy bounded back with unexpected strength from COVID-19 lockdowns.

Rate cuts are coming

Powell suggested Friday that rate cuts are all but inevitable. "The direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks,"

he said.

Last year, the Fed had predicted that it would trim rates three times this year. But the cuts kept getting pushed back as the progress against inflation faltered early in 2024. Since then, the steady drop in inflation has resumed, giving the Fed more confidence that victory was in sight.

Fed misjudged inflation

Powell acknowledged that he and his Fed colleagues misjudged the inflationary threat when it emerged in early 2021. At the time, they expected the flareup of higher prices to be short-lived — the temporary consequence of pandemic-related supply chain disruptions. The pressure, they thought, would fade “fairly quickly without the need for a monetary policy response — in short, that the inflation would be transitory.”

They weren’t alone in their optimism. “The good ship Transitory was a crowded one,” Powell said, “with most mainstream analysts and advanced-economy central bankers on board.”

But the word “transitory” came back to haunt the Fed as inflation proved more intractable than expected. It spread from goods that were subject to supply chain backlogs into services, where it is harder to dislodge without raising rates and risking severe economic pain in the form of layoffs and higher unemployment. The Fed proceeded to raise rates 11 times in 2022 and 2023.

Unpredictable economy leaves policymakers humble

Powell admitted that policymakers and economists have struggled to understand and respond to an economy that has been unpredictable since COVID-19 hit in early 2020. First, the pandemic shut down commerce and companies collectively slashed millions of jobs. Then the economy roared back with unexpected vigor, setting off inflationary pressures that been dormant since the early 1980s. When the Fed belatedly responded with aggressive rate hikes, economists predicted the hiring borrowing costs would cause a painful recession. But it didn’t.

“The limits of our knowledge — so clearly evident during the pandemic — demand humility and a questioning spirit focused on learning lessons from the past and applying them flexibly to our current challenges,” Powell said.

Powell at Jackson Hole: ‘The time has come’ for the Fed to soon begin reducing interest rates

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

JACKSON, Wyoming (AP) — With inflation nearly defeated and the job market cooling, the Federal Reserve is prepared to start cutting its key interest rate from its current 23-year high, Chair Jerome Powell said Friday.

Powell did not say when rate cuts would begin or how large they might be, but the Fed is widely expected to announce a modest quarter-point cut in its benchmark rate when it meets in mid-September.

“The time has come for policy to adjust,” Powell said in his keynote speech at the Fed’s annual economic conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. “The direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks.”

His reference to multiple rate cuts was the only hint that a series of reductions is likely. Powell stressed that inflation, after the worst price spike in four decades inflicted pain on millions of households, appears largely under control. According to the Fed’s preferred measure, inflation fell to 2.5% last month, far below its peak of 7.1% two years ago and only slightly above the central bank’s 2% target level.

“My confidence has grown,” he said, “that inflation is on a sustainable path back to 2%.”

Powell’s assessment signaled that the Fed is making a fundamental shift from its 2 1/2-year fight against inflation, toward a broader effort to keep the economy growing and employers hiring.

The Fed chair’s assurance that rate cuts are coming helped fuel a rally on Wall Street. Bond yields fell, and stock indexes were broadly higher.

“The only question remaining for the Sept. 18 meeting is: By how much will the Fed be cutting?” said Joseph LaVorgna, chief economist at SMBC Nikko Securities.

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"The outcome of the August employment report," which will be reported Sept. 6, LaVorgna said, "is obviously critical." If that report shows a second straight month of weak hiring, the Fed may cut its key rate by a more aggressive half-point.

Most economists expect the Fed to cut its benchmark rate by a quarter-point at each of its final three meetings this year. Wall Street traders, though, foresee a one-in-three likelihood that the Fed will cut by a half-point at one of those meetings, according to futures prices. A lower Fed benchmark rate will lead eventually to lower rates for auto loans, mortgages and other forms of consumer borrowing and could also boost stock prices.

In his remarks Friday, the Fed chair suggested that rate cuts should help extend the much sought-after "soft landing," whereby inflation falls back to the Fed's 2% target without a recession occurring.

Continued growth could boost Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential campaign, even as most Americans say they're dissatisfied with the Biden-Harris administration's economic record, largely because average consumer prices remain far above where they were before the pandemic.

"We will do everything we can," Powell said, "to support a strong labor market as we make further progress toward price stability."

By cutting rates, he said, "there is good reason to think that the economy will get back to 2% inflation while maintaining a strong labor market."

A rate cut in mid-September, coming less than two months before the presidential election, could bring some unwelcome political heat on the Fed, which seeks to avoid becoming entangled in election-year politics. Former President Donald Trump has argued that the Fed shouldn't cut rates so close to an election. But Powell has repeatedly underscored that the central bank would make its rate decisions based purely on economic data, without regard to the political calendar.

In his remarks, Powell said the Fed has grown concerned about slower hiring and a rising unemployment rate, even while it still wants to see inflation fall further. That dual focus is replacing the Fed's previous singular focus on inflation.

"The cooling in labor market conditions is unmistakable," the Fed chair said. "Job gains remain solid but have slowed this year. ... We do not seek or welcome further cooling in labor market conditions."

In what amounted to something of a victory lap, Powell noted that the Fed had succeeded in conquering high inflation without causing a recession or a sharp rise in unemployment, which many economists had long predicted.

The soft landing "did come as a big surprise to the (economics) profession," Gauti Eggertson, an economist at Brown University, said during a presentation Friday at the Jackson Hole conference. He attributed that outcome to the unraveling of the pandemic's disruptions to supply chains and labor markets and a reduction in job vacancies, which allowed wage growth to cool.

Powell noted that, according to surveys and financial market gauges, Americans never really expected high inflation to stick. Such expectations can become self-fulfilling: If people expect inflation to stay high, they typically demand ever-higher pay or they accelerate their purchases before prices rise still further. Those steps can perpetuate higher inflation.

But "inflation expectations" rose only modestly and have since largely fallen back to pre-pandemic levels.

"The healing from pandemic distortions," the Fed's rate hikes and the fact that Americans did not expect higher inflation, "have worked together to put inflation on what increasingly appears to be a sustainable path to our 2% objective," the Fed chair said.

Powell also addressed criticism that the Fed was too slow to raise rates even after inflation had begun surging once the pandemic recession ended. Fed officials had initially argued that the price spikes coming out of the pandemic in early 2021 were merely "transitory" and would soon fade as the supply chain disruptions that left some grocery shelves bare and auto lots empty had healed.

Powell acknowledged that the healing of supply disruptions took much longer than the Fed had expected — and so did the persistence of high inflation.

"The good ship transitory was a crowded one, with most mainstream analysts and advanced-economy

central bankers on board," he said. "I think I see some shipmates out there today," he said in an ad-libbed remark addressed to the economists and central bankers assembled for the conference.

Separately, Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank of England, expressed some optimism that inflation in the United Kingdom is also steadily declining. But Bailey took a much more cautious approach than Powell about what the central bank may do next. Early this month, the Bank of England cut its key rate for the first time in four years.

Bailey said the U.K. will likely be able to tame inflation without a jump in unemployment or a hit to the economy. But he warned that inflation wasn't fully defeated.

"It is too early to declare victory," he said. "We need to be cautious because the job is not completed."

Indian Prime Minister Modi offers to help 'as a friend' to bring peace to Ukraine

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered "as a friend" to help bring peace to Ukraine in a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a brief visit on Friday that many in the war-battered country hope will pave the way for an Indian role in peace mediation.

Modi's trip marks the most prominent wartime visit by a leader from a nation that maintains a neutral position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. India's support is seen as a factor that could bolster efforts toward peace negotiations.

Zelenskyy and Modi discussed at length Ukraine's peace formula, which prioritizes territorial integrity and the withdrawal of Russian troops, according to the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"We say it very loudly and clearly that we support the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity," Modi said through a translator during his meeting with Zelenskyy. "It's our highest priority."

Modi added that during his visit to Russia last month, he told Russian President Vladimir Putin "that problems cannot be resolved on the battlefield."

"The only way of resolving problems is through dialogue and diplomacy," he said, adding that "it must be done without losing any time."

Zelenskyy called Modi's visit friendly and symbolic, because it came the day before Ukraine's Independence Day.

"We chose to stay away from war. That doesn't mean we are neutral," said the Indian leader.

"We are on the side of peace," Modi added. "Personally, as a friend, if there is any role that I can play, I would very much like to play that role toward peace."

Modi and Zelenskyy spent two and a half hours behind closed doors before they signed cooperation agreements in the spheres of agriculture, medicine, and culture. The joint statement said both countries agreed on the importance of closer dialogue to "ensure a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace."

Analysts say the visit to Ukraine could also be an attempt by Modi to strike a more neutral stance after what has been seen as his lean toward Russia. Zelenskyy had criticized his visit to Moscow in July, when Modi met with Putin on the day Russian missiles struck across Ukraine, killing scores of people.

Zelenskyy described that meeting as a "huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts." He also chided Modi for hugging Putin during their meeting. But on Friday Zelenskyy also hugged Modi, apparently putting aside his criticism.

A Ukrainian analyst said the outcome of Modi's first visit is likely to be modest, as this is just "the beginning of a complex dialogue between India, Ukraine, and Europe."

"Establishing relations with India will be challenging and a long process," said Yurii Bohdanov on his Telegram channel. But he emphasized it was critical Ukraine.

If India were to support Ukraine's approach to a peace settlement, it could enhance Kyiv's chances of gaining more backing from other countries in the "Global South," where "India remains China's main competitor for influence."

"This will further increase pressure on Russia," Bohdanov added.

At the start of their meeting, Modi and Zelenskyy visited a memorial for hundreds of Ukrainian children killed in more than two years of war. Zelenskyy published a video on Telegram showing the two hugging each other after shaking hands.

"Conflict is particularly devastating for young children," Modi wrote on the social media platform X. "My heart goes out to the families of children who lost their lives, and I pray that they find the strength to endure their grief."

They laid teddy bears at the memorial at the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in World War II before observing a moment of silence.

Ukrainian media said Modi also met with representatives of the Indian diaspora who gathered around him and cheered "Modi, Modi, Modi." He also paid tribute at the Mahatma Gandhi Monument in Kyiv.

The chief of Ukraine's Presidential Office Andriy Yermak said Modi's visit was historic and emphasized Ukraine's expectation that India could play a role in ending the war with a "just peace," referring to Ukraine's peace formula.

"We respect India as a very big democracy in the world and a powerful country," Yermak told the India Today newspaper. "But now it's necessary to say who is the aggressor, who is the victim."

Before arriving in Ukraine, Modi urged for diplomatic efforts to end the war during a visit to Poland on Thursday, pledging India's support and saying that no conflict can be solved on a battlefield.

India has avoided condemning Russia's invasion and instead has urged Moscow and Kyiv to resolve the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

Modi's visit is the first by an Indian prime minister to Ukraine since the two countries established diplomatic relations over 30 years ago.

Snipers kill 4 hostage-takers at Russian prison who claimed allegiance to Islamic State group

MOSCOW (AP) — Snipers from Russia's National Guard on Friday killed four inmates who had stabbed four prison guards to death and briefly held others as hostages while declaring allegiance to the Islamic State group.

The Federal Prison Service said that four inmates took eight prison guards and four inmates hostage. It said they stabbed four of the guards, three of whom died on the spot and the fourth one later died at a hospital. The agency said three other guards were hospitalized with injuries.

Russia's National Guard said its snipers "neutralized" all four attackers, freeing all the hostages, while the Federal Prison Service also claimed credit for killing the assailants.

The discrepancy couldn't be immediately explained. Details of the violence at the prison in Surovkino in the Volgograd region, 860 kilometers (535 miles) southeast of Moscow, were sparse and it was not clear how the inmates had taken hostages several hours earlier.

Videos that purportedly came from the scene and circulated on Russian media and messaging app channels showed men wielding knives inside and in a prison yard and several men in what appeared to be guard uniforms lying in blood on the ground.

In the videos, the alleged attackers claimed support for the Islamic State group and for the suspects arrested in the March terrorist attack on a Moscow concert hall that left 145 people dead. An IS affiliate claimed responsibility for that attack, in which gunmen killed patrons waiting for a popular music group to perform and set the building on fire.

The state news agency Tass said court records showed that the hostage-takers were from former Soviet Central Asian countries; all the concert hall attack suspects are from Tajikistan.

Harris confronts Democratic divisions over Gaza war in convention speech

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With anger over the war in Gaza simmering, Vice President Kamala Harris tried to defuse one of the most divisive issues within the Democratic Party on the biggest political stage of her life.

Her remarks Thursday night in her speech accepting the party's presidential nomination hewed closely to previous statements on the conflict, which began when Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7.

Harris said she "will always stand up for Israel's right to defend itself and I will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself." She's opposed restrictions on arms sales to Israel.

Then Harris pivoted to the destruction that Israel has caused in Gaza, where 40,000 Palestinians have been killed.

"So many innocent lives lost," she said. "Desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety, over and over again. The scale of suffering is heartbreaking."

Harris said she was working with President Joe Biden on a cease-fire deal that would also release hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, a step toward helping Palestinians "realize their right to dignity, security, freedom, and self-determination."

Such a deal has been elusive despite pressure from the White House. Biden and Harris spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday, while the Democratic National Convention was underway.

Harris addressed the conflict in a similar way last month after meeting with Netanyahu in Washington, offering no concrete changes from Biden's strong support of Israel but increasing the rhetorical emphasis on the needs of Palestinians.

Harris hopes to alleviate divisions over the war within the Democratic Party. However, she also risks disappointing activists who want her to explicitly change course and stop sending weapons to Israel that have been used to kill Palestinian civilians.

Protests over the war did not derail the convention as some Democrats had feared. Organizers did not gather the tens of thousands that they wanted, and outbursts in the United Center were rare and overshadowed by the party's excitement over Harris' nomination.

However, there was still no shortage of reminders of dissatisfaction with the war. Uncommitted delegates, representing Democratic primary voters who didn't back a candidate in protest over the war, held a protest outside the United Center when convention organizers declined requests to have a Palestinian American speaker on stage.

They pointed out that the parents of an American hostage were given the opportunity to speak.

"We are Democrats. We are a part of this party. And we are just saying, 'Hear us because it matters,'" said Rep. Cori Bush of Missouri, who is nearing the end of her term in Congress after losing her primary earlier this month.

This Italian sprinter will become the first transgender woman to compete at the Paralympics

By DANIELLA MATAR AP Sports Writer

BOLOGNA, Italy (AP) — Valentina Petrillo fell in love with athletics as a 7-year-old while watching Italian sprinter Pietro Mennea win gold in the 200 meters at the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

"I said I wanted to be like him," said Petrillo, a transgender woman who was raised as a boy. "I wanted to put on the blue (Italy) shirt, I wanted to go to the Olympics. But — and there was a but — I wanted to do it as a woman because I didn't feel like a man, I didn't feel like myself."

Four decades later, at 50, Petrillo is about to finally realize her dream, but not at the Olympics. In two weeks, she is set to become the first transgender woman to compete at the Paralympics when she runs the 200 and 400 meters in the T12 classification for visually impaired athletes in Paris.

World Athletics last year banned transgender women from competing in the female category at international events if they transitioned after puberty. But its para counterpart, World Para Athletics, has not

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followed suit.

Petrillo, who was diagnosed as a teenager with Stargardt disease, a degenerative eye condition, considers herself lucky despite the challenges she's faced. She's lived most of her life as a man and only came out as transgender to her wife — with whom she has a son — in 2017 before beginning hormone therapy two years later.

"Yes, I have problems with my vision, I'm partially sighted, I'm trans — and let's say that's not the best in our Italy, being trans — but I am a happy person," she told The Associated Press in an interview at a track she trains on in a suburb of Bologna, where she lives.

"I began transitioning in 2019 and in 2020 I realized my dream, which was to race in the female category, to do the sport that I had always loved doing," she said in Italian. "I got to 50 before it came true ... we all have the right to a second choice of life, a second chance."

In a statement to AP, the WPA said transgender athletes in its women's competitions are required to declare their gender identity for sporting purposes is female and provide evidence that their testosterone levels have been below 10 nanomoles per liter of blood for at least 12 months prior to their first competition.

Testosterone is a natural hormone that increases the mass and strength of bone and muscle after puberty. The normal adult male range rises to up to about 30 nmol per liter of blood compared with less than 2 nmol/L for women.

"Any future changes to WPA's rules position in this area will only be considered following appropriate consultation with teams and athletes and taking into consideration the rights and best interests of all those involved," it said.

In a sport already grappling with how to create a level playing field among athletes with different levels of impairment, some of Petrillo's competitors say she has an unfair advantage.

There was a backlash against Petrillo in Spain last year after she narrowly beat Spanish athlete Melani Berges to fourth place in the semifinal of the world championships, meaning that Berges didn't qualify for the final and so missed out on the chance of making it to the Paralympics.

Berges called it an "injustice," telling Spanish sports site Relevo that while she "accepts and respects" transgender people, "we are no longer talking about daily life, we are talking about sport, which requires strength, a physique."

The Spanish Paralympic Committee told AP that its stance had not changed since last year, when a spokesperson told Spanish media that "we respect the regulations of World Para Athletics, which currently allow trans women to compete, as is the case with Valentina Petrillo, but, looking to the future, we believe that it would be appropriate to move towards uniformity of criteria with the Olympic world in relation to this matter."

German T12 sprinter Katrin Mueller-Rottgardt, who has also competed against Petrillo, expressed similar concerns to German tabloid Bild.

"Basically, everyone should live how they like in everyday life. But I find it difficult in professional sports. She lived and trained for a long time as a man, so there's a possibility that physical conditions are different than for someone who comes into the world as a woman. So she could have advantages from it," Mueller-Rottgardt said.

Petrillo said she understands to some extent those who question whether she should be competing in the female category.

"I have asked myself 'But Valentina, if you were a biological woman and you saw a Valentina racing with you, what would you think?' And I responded to myself that I would also have some doubts," she said. "But then through my experiences and what I learned I can state clearly ... that it doesn't mean that because I was born a man that I will be stronger than a woman."

Petrillo referred to a study funded by the IOC — and published in April in the British Journal of Sports Medicine — showing that transgender women were actually at a physical disadvantage compared to cisgender women across several areas, including lung function and lower body strength.

"This means rather that I have a disadvantage, because apart from anything else, going through hormonal treatment means I am going against my body so against the biology of my body and that's certainly

something that's not good for it," she said.

Petrillo grew up in the southern Italian city of Naples. She thought her running aspirations were over when she was diagnosed with Stargardt disease at 14.

She moved to Bologna, in northern Italy, to study computer science at the Institute for the Blind and lives on the outskirts of the city, where she works in the IT sector.

Sport continued to be part of her life – she played five-a-side soccer for visually impaired athletes – but it wasn't until the age of 41 that Petrillo returned to the track, winning 11 national competitions in the male T12 category between 2015 and 2018.

She ran her first race as a female in 2020 and went on to finish fifth in the European Para Athletics Championships. She won bronze in the 200 and 400 meters at last year's World Para Athletics Championships.

At the Paralympics, the finals of the women's T12 400m and 200m will take place on Sept. 3 and 7 respectively, with the heats the previous day.

Petrillo will be cheered on by her ex-wife and 9-year-old son as well as her brother.

However, she says that she has already won her biggest challenge, no matter what happens when she takes to the track in the Stade de France.

"Unfortunately, we still live in a situation where transgender people are marginalized, who will never be able to change a document like I did, who will never be able to get what they deserve, the respect they deserve," Petrillo said. "And therefore, my thoughts go to them, to those who have been less fortunate than me."

An Iceland volcano erupts again but spares the nearby town of Grindavik for now

By MARCO DI MARCO and DAVID KEYTON Associated Press

GRINDAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Lava continued to spew from a volcano in southwestern Iceland on Friday — the sixth time since December the volcano has erupted on the Reykjanes Peninsula.

The eruption from a new fissure began shortly after 9 p.m. Thursday following a series of strong earthquakes and within the hour a 4-kilometer (2.4-mile) fissure cut through the Sundhnúkur crater.

Iceland authorities say the eruption's effects remain localized with road closures but do not threaten the population.

Halldór Björnsson, head of weather and climate at the Norwegian Meteorological Agency, told the Icelandic news portal Vísir that unlike previous eruptions, the lava flow was not heading for the town of Grindavik that was largely evacuated in December when the volcano came to life after being dormant for 800 years.

"If this continues like this, Grindavík is not in danger," geophysicist Magnús Tuma Guðmundsson told the website after flying over the eruption. "Of course, we don't know what will happen in the near future, but it is likely that this has reached its peak and then it will start to subside like the other eruptions."

As news of the eruption spread, hundreds of curious onlookers drove to nearby vantage points for a view of the stunning natural phenomenon that has become a key tourism attraction.

"We just thought that it was the northern lights," said Mahnoor Ali, visiting from Maryland in the U.S. "It's like the coolest thing I've seen in my whole life, honestly."

Friends Ameerul Awalludin from Malaysia and Shohei Miyamoto from Japan were with an Icelandic friend when they heard the news and quickly rushed to the region of the eruption.

"We have like a volcano as well," said Miyamoto, but "we cannot see lava like this."

But for people living and working on the Reykjanes Peninsula, the regular eruptions and ensuing evacuation orders cause more frustration than excitement.

The repeated volcanic eruptions close to Grindavík, a town of 3,800 people about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of the capital, Reykjavik, have damaged infrastructure and property and forced many residents to relocate to guarantee their safety.

The few who had returned were forced out once again Thursday night as strong winds blew plumes of toxic gas over the town.

The nearby Blue Lagoon geothermal spa — one of Iceland's biggest tourist attractions — was also evacuated with social media videos showing sirens blasting around dusk.

The spa was closed Friday but staff was preparing to reopen it, Helga Árnadóttir, manager of sales, operations and services, told national broadcaster RUV.

Iceland, which sits above a volcanic hot spot in the North Atlantic, averages one eruption every four to five years. The most disruptive in recent times was the 2010 eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano, which spewed clouds of ash into the atmosphere and disrupted trans-Atlantic air travel for months.

The latest eruption is not expected to impact air travel.

A bird flu outbreak is spreading among cows in the US. Scientists are hunting for answers

By MARY CONLON and MIKE STOBBE Associated Press

AMES, Iowa (AP) — At first glance, it looks like an unassuming farm. Cows are scattered across fenced-in fields. A milking barn sits in the distance with a tractor parked alongside. But the people who work there are not farmers, and other buildings look more like what you'd find at a modern university than in a cow pasture.

Welcome to the National Animal Disease Center, a government research facility in Iowa where 43 scientists work with pigs, cows and other animals, pushing to solve the bird flu outbreak currently spreading through U.S. animals — and develop ways to stop it.

Particularly important is the testing of a cow vaccine designed to stop the continued spread of the virus — thereby, hopefully, reducing the risk that it will someday become a widespread disease in people.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture facility opened in 1961 in Ames, a college town about 45 minutes north of Des Moines. The center is located on a pastoral, 523-acre (212-hectare) site a couple of miles east of Ames' low-slung downtown.

It's a quiet place with a rich history. Through the years, researchers there developed vaccines against various diseases that endanger pigs and cattle, including hog cholera and brucellosis. And work there during the H1N1 flu pandemic in 2009 — known at the time as "swine flu" — proved the virus was confined to the respiratory tract of pigs and that pork was safe to eat.

The center has the unusual resources and experience to do that kind of work, said Richard Webby, a prominent flu researcher at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

"That's not a capacity that many places in the U.S. have," said Webby, who has been collaborating with the Ames facility on the cow vaccine work.

The campus has 93 buildings, including a high-containment laboratory building whose exterior is reminiscent of a modern megachurch but inside features a series of compartmentalized corridors and rooms, some containing infected animals. That's where scientists work with more dangerous germs, including the H5N1 bird flu. There's also a building with three floors of offices that houses animal disease researchers as well as a testing center that is a "for animals" version of the CDC labs in Atlanta that identify rare (and sometimes scary) new human infections.

About 660 people work at the campus — roughly a third of them assigned to the animal disease center, which has a \$38 million annual budget. They were already busy with a wide range of projects but grew even busier this year after the H5N1 bird flu unexpectedly jumped into U.S. dairy cows.

"It's just amazing how people just dig down and make it work," said Mark Ackermann, the center's director.

The virus was first identified in 1959 and grew into a widespread and highly lethal menace to migratory birds and domesticated poultry. Meanwhile, the virus evolved, and in the past few years has been detected in a growing number of animals ranging from dogs and cats to sea lions and polar bears.

Despite the spread in different animals, scientists were still surprised this year when infections were suddenly detected in cows — specifically, in the udders and milk of dairy cows. It's not unusual for bacteria to cause udder infections, but a flu virus?

"Typically we think of influenza as being a respiratory disease," said Kaitlyn Sarlo Davila, a researcher

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at the Ames facility.

Much of the research on the disease has been conducted at a USDA poultry research center in Athens, Georgia, but the appearance of the virus in cows pulled the Ames center into the mix.

Amy Baker, a researcher who has won awards for her research on flu in pigs, is now testing a vaccine for cows. Preliminary results are expected soon, she said.

USDA spokesperson Shilo Weir called the work promising but early in development. There is not yet an approved bird flu vaccine being used at U.S. poultry farms, and Weir said that while poultry vaccines are being pursued, any such strategy would be challenging and would not be guaranteed to eliminate the virus.

Baker and other researchers also have been working on studies in which they try to see how the virus spreads between cows. That work is going on in the high-containment building, where scientists and animal caretakers don specialized respirators and other protective equipment.

The research exposed four yearling heifers to a virus-carrying mist and then squirted the virus into the teats and udders of two lactating cows. The first four cows got infected but had few symptoms. The second two got sicker — suffering diminished appetite, a drop in milk production and producing thick, yellowish milk.

The conclusion that the virus mainly spread through exposure to milk containing high levels of the virus — which could then spread through shared milking equipment or other means — was consistent with what health investigators understood to be going on. But it was important to do the work because it has sometimes been difficult to get complete information from dairy farms, Webby said.

“At best we had some good hunches about how the virus was circulating, but we didn’t really know,” he added.

USDA scientists are doing additional work, checking the blood of calves that drank raw milk for signs of infection.

A study conducted by the Iowa center and several universities concluded that the virus was likely circulating for months before it was officially reported in Texas in March.

The study also noted a new and rare combination of genes in the bird flu virus that spilled over into the cows, and researchers are sorting out whether that enabled it to spread to cows, or among cows, said Tavis Anderson, who helped lead the work.

Either way, the researchers in Ames expect to be busy for years.

“Do they (cows) have their own unique influenzas? Can it go from a cow back into wild birds? Can it go from a cow into a human? Cow into a pig?” Anderson added. “Understanding those dynamics, I think, is the outstanding research question — or one of them.”

Today in History: August 24, Hurricane Andrew strikes Florida

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 24, the 237th day of 2024. There are 129 days left in the year.

Today in history: On August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew smashed into Florida; the storm resulted in 65 deaths and caused more than \$26 billion in damage across Florida, Louisiana and the Bahamas.

Also on this date:

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British forces invaded Washington, D.C., setting fire to the still-under-construction Capitol and the White House, as well as other public buildings.

In 1912, Congress passed a measure creating the Alaska Territory.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart embarked on a 19-hour flight from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, making her the first woman to fly solo, non-stop, from coast to coast.

In 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty came into force.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Communist Control Act, outlawing the Communist Party in the United States.

In 1981, Mark David Chapman was sentenced in New York to 20 years to life in prison for murdering John Lennon.

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In 1989, Baseball Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti (juh-MAH'-tee) banned Pete Rose from the game for betting on his own team, the Cincinnati Reds.

In 1991, in response to a coup attempt by hardline Communist leaders attempting to reassert control over the Soviet Union, Ukrainian parliamentarians voted to approve a Declaration of Independence for the state of Ukraine.

In 2006, the International Astronomical Union declared that Pluto was no longer a full-fledged planet, demoting it to the status of a "dwarf planet."

In 2012, a Norwegian court found Anders Behring Breivik guilty of terrorism and premeditated murder for twin attacks on July 22, 2011 that killed 77 people; he received a 21-year prison sentence that can be extended as long as he is considered dangerous to society.

In 2018, the family of Arizona Sen. John McCain announced that he had discontinued medical treatment for an aggressive form of brain cancer; McCain died the following day.

In 2019, police in Aurora, Colorado, responding to a report of a suspicious person, used a chokehold to subdue Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old Black man; he suffered cardiac arrest on the way to the hospital and was later declared brain dead and taken off life support.

In 2020, Republicans formally nominated President Donald Trump for a second term on the opening day of a scaled-down convention; during a visit to the convention city of Charlotte, North Carolina, Trump told delegates that "the only way they can take this election away from us is if this is a rigged election."

Today's Birthdays: Composer-musician Mason Williams is 86. R&B singer Marshall Thompson (The Chilites) is 82. WWE co-founder Vince McMahon is 79. Author Paulo Coelho is 77. Actor Anne Archer is 77. Author Alexander McCall Smith is 76. Composer Jean-Michel Jarre is 76. Author Orson Scott Card is 73. Poet Linton Kwesi Johnson is 72. Actor Kevin Dunn is 69. Former Arkansas governor and political commentator Mike Huckabee is 69. Actor-writer Stephen Fry is 67. Actor Steve Guttenberg is 66. Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. is 64. Actor Jared Harris is 63. Talk show host Craig Kilborn is 62. Actor Marlee Matlin is 59. Basketball Hall of Famer Reggie Miller is 59. Film director Ava DuVernay is 52. Actor-comedian Dave Chappelle is 51. Actor James D'Arcy is 50. Actor Carmine Giovinazzo (jee-oh-vihn-AH'-zoh) is 51. Actor Alex O'Loughlin is 48. Author John Green is 47. Actor Chad Michael Murray is 43. Actor Rupert Grint is 36. Basketball player Kelsey Plum is 30.