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# H BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2016



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## Republican looks to overhaul Social Security

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key Republican lawmaker wants to overhaul Social Security, the decades-old program that provides benefits to some 60 million retirees and disabled, with a plan to gradually increase the retirement age and slow the growth

of benefits for higher-income workers. Rep. Sam Johnson of Texas, the chairman of the House Ways and Means subcommittee on Social Security, introduced legislation just before the end of the congressional session last week that he said would "permanently save" the program. He said the bill would increase benefits for lower-income workers. About 168 million people work and pay taxes toward the inevitable monthly Social Security benefits. About 42 million of the beneficia-

ries are retirees and their families. The trustees who oversee Social Security say it has enough money to pay full benefits until 2034, and then Social Security will collect only enough taxes to pay 79 percent of benefits. Unless Congress acts, mil-

lions of people on fixed incomes would get an automatic 21 percent cut in benefits. "Americans want, need, and deserve for us to finally come up with a solution to saving this important program," Johnson said. See, **OVERHAUL**, Page 3

## Public hearing tonight: City Council to hear proposal for a new downtown city park

By **LYNDEL MOODY**  
 Staff Writer  
 Citizens have a chance to give input on a proposed new downtown park at a public hearing set for 5:30 this evening.

**What: Public hearing**  
**When: 5:30 p.m.**  
**Where: City Council Chambers, 207 E. Fourth St.**

According to the City Manager Todd Darden, Brint Ryan, owner of the historic Hotel Settles, will present his proposal for the development of a park that will tie together the hotel and Big Spring City Auditorium. The plan calls for the park to be used for both public and private use. Darden said the development fits into the city's master plan to help revitalize the downtown area, and he encourages public input from the citizenry. According to drawings advertised by the

developer, Cap Rock Holdings, the Cap Rock Plaza will be built between the two buildings. That would also mean the permanent closure of Johnson Street between Fourth and Third streets. The public hearing is scheduled at 5:30 p.m. at the city council chambers, 307 E. Fourth St. Following the hearing, council members will head into their regular meeting. See **HEARING**, Page 3

## County commissioners loan space, not office, to new congressman-elect

By **AMANDA ELSTON**  
 Managing Editor

Congressman-elect Jodey Arrington, while not granted a permanent office in the Howard County Courthouse, will be welcome to use an open conference room while in the area, Howard County commissioners decided on Monday afternoon. After announcing last week that Arrington will be closing District 19's Big Spring office in favor of investing in people to travel throughout the district, Arrington's new chief of staff Russell Thomasson reached out to Judge Kathryn Wiseman to inquire about finding space to work in the courthouse. "He (Thomasson) mentioned several counties that have offered small spaces in their courthouses and they would definitely consider finding someone to man the office if we were to offer him space in the courthouse," said Wiseman. See **MEETING**, Page 3



Crews were out working on wires on Fourth and Birdwell Tuesday afternoon. *HERALD photo/Roger Cline*

## Taking the Word to those truly in need

By **AMANDA ELSTON**  
 Managing Editor

The former pastor of Spring Tabernacle Mona Lou Tonn takes scripture seriously in all aspects of her life, evident by the many ministries Tonn has taken on such as her church and food pantry. But there is one ministry that Tonn has taken on that she is especially passionate about — prison ministry. Last Friday, Tonn, accompanied by a handful of others, baptized over 40 prisoners at the Howard County Jail. Tonn's journey with the jail started more than nine

years ago when the jail first opened only steps away from her church. Where some may have seen a nuisance, Tonn saw an opportunity. "I started doing the prison ministry when they opened the jail," said Tonn. "(Sheriff) Stan Parker invited me to minister to the girls, and I did that for over a year." Tonn, along with her daughter, Gena Ray, ministered to the girls for some time but it wasn't until a crew of men from the prison came to do yard work for the church that they started to serve the entire prison. "One of the guys said, 'Mrs. Tonn, why don't y'all come minister to us?' So I told him that if they let me then I would. So I asked them and they did let me and that was seven years ago."

Tonn, along with Juan Jola, who co-leads the men's Bible study, and Gena Ray, who helps with the women's group, ministers to a different group each week. Armed with snacks and the word of God, the leaders not only discuss the Bible, but things going on in each of the prisoner's lives. "Every time we meet with the guys, I ask if they want to say a prayer," said Tonn. "And they always do." According to Tonn, most of the people she meets with in the prison are open to going to the Bible study. Through patience and trust, Tonn says that over the years, many have surrendered their lives to Christ during their meetings. See **MINISTRY**, Page 3

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### Cowboys confident despite setback in New York

FRISCO, Texas (AP) — By the time rookie quarterback Dak Prescott and the Dallas Cowboys take the field for another Sunday night game, they'll be facing a serious challenge either for the NFC East lead or the conference's No. 1 seed.

Lose at home to Tampa Bay, and that franchise-record 11-game winning streak will be little more than a distant memory. That's how quickly the script changed on a rough night for Prescott at the New York Giants, and another loss to the only team that has beaten Dallas this season.

The Giants hold the tiebreaker thanks to their sweep of the Cowboys (11-2) and can get within a game in the division if they beat Detroit and Dallas loses to the Buccaneers (8-5). If the Lions win, they'll be a game back for the best record in the NFC with a visit to the Cowboys coming next.

"I think I'm anxious to see our team get back in there," tight end Jason Witten said after a 10-7 loss to the Giants. "I know we are all jumping at the bit to bounce back, answer the bell, so to speak. I think the message is simple. It's December, we're 11-2, and we've got ourselves in a good position."



Dallas' Ezekiel Elliott (21) carries the ball during the Cowboys' game at New York Sunday night. The Cowboys host Tampa Bay Sunday.

Prescott is coming off the worst game of a mostly spectacular debut season, and one of the NFL's best offenses on third downs has suddenly turned into one of the worst. The Cowboys are a combined 2 of 24 on third downs the past

two games after converting just once in 15 tries at New York.

Dallas escaped with a 17-15 win despite the third-down struggles at Minnesota, when Prescott threw for a season-low 139 yards. The 23-year-old hasn't

hit the 200-yard mark in three games after getting there in each of the first 10.

The biggest concern is that Prescott doubled his season total in interceptions with two, including a forced throw into double coverage

on a deep ball to Dez Bryant. Coach Jason Garrett's answer didn't change overnight when the topic turned to 10-year starter Tony Romo, now the backup because of Prescott's scintillating start.

"You can make it as

simple or complex as you want to make it," Garrett said Monday. "It's pretty simple for us. Dak's going to play quarterback as we go forward."

While Prescott failed his first December road test on a division rival's cold field, he gets two chances in his climate-controlled stadium to keep the Cowboys in control of their path to home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. Beat Tampa Bay and Detroit, and another potentially bone-chilling trip, the regular-season finale at Philadelphia, won't matter.

"He's a tough guy, he's a pro," Bryant rook- ie Ezekiel Elliott, the NFL's leading rusher, said of Prescott. "He is going to get in that film room, take notes. He is going to listen to what coach tells him to do and take it the field next week and be prepared next Sunday."

Bryant had just one catch in each game against the Giants, and a fumble after the one at the Meadowlands ended Dallas' last realistic chance to come back. The 2014 All-Pro had a wistful look after his critical mistake, not the scowl he showed so often on the sideline earlier in his career.

AP photo

### Sports calendar

#### TODAY

##### Boys' basketball

Big Spring at Greenwood, 7:30 p.m.

Coahoma at Hermleigh, 8 p.m.

Stanton at Forsan, 8 p.m.

##### Girls' basketball

Big Spring at Greenwood, 6:30 p.m.

Coahoma at Hermleigh, 6:30 p.m.

Christoval at Forsan, 6:30 p.m.

#### THURSDAY

##### Boys' basketball

Forsan at Sands tournament, TBA.

##### Girls' basketball

Coahoma at Sands tournament, TBA.

#### FRIDAY

##### Boys' basketball

Seminole at Big Spring, 7:30 p.m.

Klondike at Coahoma, 6:30 p.m.

Forsan at Sands tournament, TBA.

##### Girls' basketball

Anderews at Big Spring, 6 p.m.

Coahoma at Sands tournament, TBA.

Coahoma at Winters, 6:30 p.m.

To submit a calendar item, call 432-263-7331, ext. 235, or email reporter@bigspringherald.com.

### Mavs have rare blowout victory

DALLAS (AP) — Wesley Matthews and the Dallas Mavericks have a long way to go to recover from a miserable start plagued by injuries.

Consecutive home wins for the first time and a .500 record over six games are a start.

Matthews scored 25 points and the last-place Mavericks enjoyed a rare blowout, beating the listless Denver Nuggets 112-92 on Monday night.

Harrison Barnes had 18 points for the Mavericks (6-18), who led 65-43 at the break.

They expanded the margin to a season-high 28 points in the third quarter on the way to their second win in three games since a 31-point home loss to Sacramento that prompted a team meeting.

"That's how we're supposed to play," said Matthews, who finished a point shy of the season high he

reached in three of the previous five games. "Now it's just about harnessing that, trying to get a string and run off a couple of wins."

The Nuggets were finishing a season-long six-game road trip and played like it, shooting 42 percent with their starters getting outscored 80-37. Backup center Nikola Jokic led Denver with a season-high 27 points and 11 rebounds.

Denver missed a chance to split the six-game trip, instead losing for the eighth time in 11 games. Emmanuel Mudiay scored 17 points and Danilo Gallinari had 12 points.

"Very disappointed," coach Michael Malone said after bursting through the locker room door, causing it to slam loudly into a wall. "Not just in the loss, but how we played. It's a bad loss for us."

The NBA's worst-shooting team coming in at 41.5 percent, Dallas shot 65 per-

cent in the first half and a season-high 58 percent for the game. The Mavericks were 12 of 26 from 3-point range after missing six of their first seven.

It was the best showing for an offense still missing star forward Dirk Nowitzki (strained right Achilles tendon), starting center Andrew Bogut (right knee injury) and key backup guard J.J. Barea (left calf strain).

"We won't go away," said second-year player Justin Anderson, who provided a spark with 11 points and six rebounds. "We are not going to get down. We are going to continue to build off this."

Matthews was 10 of 14 from the field and hit his first five 3-point attempts before finishing 5 of 7. He even made long-range shots that didn't count, hitting a desperation shot from about 30 feet after a shot-clock buzzer in the fourth quarter.

It was the third game in four nights for the Mavericks, but two were at home and all three in Texas. And they showed plenty of energy, taking a 10-2 lead in the first five minutes and never trailing.

Undrafted Dallas rookie Dorian Finney-Smith had career highs in points and rebounds for the second straight home game, finishing with 13 points and nine boards three nights after getting 12 and eight in a win over Indiana.

#### QUIET NIGHT FOR LOCALS

It was a quiet night for Mudiay, who played high school basketball in the area, and Dallas high school product Darrell Arthur. Mudiay was a minus-20 despite his scoring total, and Arthur was pulled 4 1/2 minutes into the game and didn't return. All Malone would say after the game was that Arthur wasn't hurt.

### Harden leads Rockets to seventh straight win

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Rockets overcame their inability to make defensive stops by running over the Brooklyn Nets on the offensive end.

James Harden had 36 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds to lead the Rockets to their seventh straight win, 122-118 over the Nets on Monday night.

"There's 82 games — every game isn't going to be perfect," Harden said. "You've got to figure out ways to win, and that's what we did tonight."

Eric Gordon scored 24 points on 6-for-10 shooting on 3-pointers, and Ryan Anderson added 19 for the Rockets. Houston shot 17 for 43 on 3s, making at least 10 for an NBA-record 24th straight game.

Brook Lopez scored 26 points and Sean Kilpatrick added 17 for the Nets. "They made some plays and we didn't," Brooklyn coach Kenny Atkinson said. "It could've gone either

way."

Jeremy Lin returned to action for Brooklyn for the first time since Nov. 2 when he suffered a strained left hamstring. Although Lin did not start, he played 20 minutes off the bench, scoring 10 points.

Atkinson said Lin's presence on the court helped Brooklyn's offense by keeping the team organized and said he was glad Lin didn't try to do too much following a five-week absence.

"I felt a lot better than I thought I would with my win, but I struggled with the rhythm," Lin said. "The shots, the feel and getting back out there — you practice all these shots, but I got in there and it felt like I was shooting a football."

Brooklyn trailed for much of the game until Joe Harris tied it at 118 with a layup with less than 40 seconds remaining.

Gordon gave Houston a two-point lead with a free throw with 11.9 sec-

onds left, and the Rockets came up with a key steal on the ensuing inbound pass. Gordon then made two more from the line and the Rockets held on for the win.

The Rockets improved to 7-0 in December while knocking Brooklyn down to 1-5 in the month. The Nets haven't won on the road since Nov. 12.

Houston outscored Brooklyn by five in each of the first two quarters to take a 53-43 lead at the half.

#### TIP-INS

Nets: C Justin Hamilton missed his second straight game with migraines. Atkinson said he will be reevaluated in a few days. ... The Nets scored 42 points in the third quarter, the team's most points in a quarter this season.

Rockets: Houston allowed 68 points in the paint, a season high for their opponents. ... Harden passed Eric "Sleepy" Floyd (2,363 assists) for seventh on the franchise's all-time assists list.



## Obituaries

## Jesus V. Lara



Jesus V. Lara, age 63, of Kermit, passed away on Saturday, December 10, 2016. He was born on February 9, 1953 in Big Spring, TX to Guadalupe and Fransica Lara. Jesus married Irene Escobedo on August 23, 1982 and they celebrated 34 years together.

Jesus or "Don Chuy" as he was known to his friends was a devoted family man. He loved joking with and telling stories to his grandkids.

Often, Jesus could be found singing, baking a cake or having a cup of coffee. He had a big love of watching wrestling on TV and watching his flowers grow.

Jesus is survived by his wife: Irene Lara of Kermit; sons: Jesus Lara Jr. and wife Stephane of Kermit, TX and Christopher Lara and wife Mayra of Phoenix, AZ; daughter: Emma Gomez Lara of Big

Spring, TX; brother: Ramon Hernandez of Phoenix, AZ; sister: Celia Fernandez of Phoenix, AZ; 10 grandchildren: Manuel, Daniel, Jesus III, Jessica, Anysia, John, Alexia, Anthony, Emmarie and Jesus Anthony.

He was preceded in death by his parents: Guadalupe and Fransica Lara; daughter: Jessica Lara; brothers: Ramiro Lara Sr., Juan Lara Sr., and Guadalupe Lara Jr.; and sisters: Victoria Escobedo and Martha Alvarez.

A Rosary will be held 7 p.m. Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at Family Services Funeral Chapel in Kermit. Funeral Services will be held 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 14, 2016 at the Family Services Funeral Chapel. Honorary Pallbearers will be: Manuel Ramirez, Daniel Ramirez, Jesus Lara III, John Lara, Valente Gallardo, Nick Escobedo, Lucas Escobedo and Anthony Lara.

Arrangements are entrusted to Family Services Funeral Parlor and online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.fs-fp.com](http://www.fs-fp.com).

*Paid obituary*

## Vivian Hart



Vivian Elizabeth "Beth" Hart, 74, of Big Spring, died Monday, December 12, 2016, at her residence. Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, December 14, 2016, at the Dorn Cemetery in Mitchell County with the Rev. Ken McMeans, officiating.

Beth was born September 17, 1942, in Sweetwater, Texas, and married Lowell "Bud" Hart July 19, 1957, in Colorado City, Texas.

She was a member of the College Baptist Church of Big Spring.

Beth is survived by her husband, Bud Hart; two daughters, Tamera Sneed and husband, Ricky, and Debra Lewis and husband, Sammy, all of

Big Spring; one son, John Hart of Big Spring; five grandchildren, Cody Sneed, and wife, Dawn, Daniel Sneed, Jennifer Ausbie and husband, Gwan, Jessica Lewis, and Stormy Thomas and husband, Kyle; six great grandchildren, Madison, Mason and Hudson Sneed, Kendall and Kai Ausbie, and Teyten Thomas; one brother, Ralph Harris; and one sister, Susan Buckalew.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Lloyd and Viola (Blankenship) Harris, and three brothers, Weldon, Neal, and Billy Harris.

The family suggests memorials be made to Home Hospice, 111 E 7th St A, Big Spring, Texas 79720.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Online condolences may be made at: [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com).

## Jean Frances Lee



Jean Frances Lee, 65, of Big Spring, died Saturday, December 10, 2016, in a local hospital. Private family services will be held at a later date.

She was born October 6, 1951, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Jean had worked at the Big Spring State Hospital for 20 years. She also worked at Trinity Memorial Park and at Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home.

Survivors include three sons, Thomas Pence and

fiance, Cinzia of San Antonio, Andrew Schlaupitz and wife, Lisa of Tucson, Arizona and Michael Pence of Cincinnati, Ohio; one daughter, Tina Coots and husband, James Shannon of Big Spring; one brother, James Ponder of Cincinnati, Ohio; and nine grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Frank and Agnes Stein; and 12 brothers and sisters.

The family suggests memorials to the American Diabetes Association, 3001 N. Big Spring St., Midland, Texas 79705 or to a favorite charity.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences may be made at: [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com).

## Richard Sorenson



Richard Sorenson, 48, of Big Spring died Friday, December 9, 2016 at University Medical Center in Lubbock. The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 14, 2016, at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Thursday, December 15, 2016, at Myers & Smith Chapel with Doug Shelley, Pastor of East Side Baptist Church and Derrick Looney, Pastor of Spring Creek Fellowship, officiating. Burial will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

He was born January 28, 1968, in Rochester, Minnesota. Richard married Loyda Quezada on Decem-

ber 21, 1991, in San Juan Capistrano, California. He moved to Big Spring in 1997 from California. Richard was a veteran of the United States Marines, serving in Desert Storm. He was employed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for 19 years. He was a member of East Side Baptist Church.

Richard is survived by his wife, Loyda Sorenson; two sons, Andrew Sorenson and Levi Sorenson; four daughters, Natty Sorenson, Genesis Sorenson, Ruth Sorenson and Danielle Sorenson, all of Big Spring and his father, David Sorenson of Williston, North Dakota.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Loretta Patnaude Sorenson.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at [www.myersand-smith.com](http://www.myersand-smith.com).

Survivors include her husband, Philip Frank Gressett of Lake Brownwood; children, Gary and Tommie Gressett of Lubbock, Texas, Phylis Edds of Lake Brownwood, Texas, Philip Gressett of Lake Brownwood, Texas, Byron and Shanon Gressett of Big Spring, Texas, Bill and Darlene Gressett of Lake Brownwood, Texas, Wayne and Debbie Gressett of Haskell, Texas and Michael Gressett of Big Spring, Texas; two brothers, James and Rhonda Killough of Taylor, Texas and Bobby and Linda Killough of Kyle, Texas; 16 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, seven sisters, two brothers and one grandchild.

Heartland Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## Myrtle Faye Gressett



A memorial service for Myrtle Faye Gressett, age 89, of Lake Brownwood, Texas will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, December 13, 2016, at Heartland Funeral Home. Mrs. Gressett passed away December 11, 2016, at her residence.

Faye was born September 30, 1927, in Pueblo, Texas to William Collins and Irene Blackwell Killough (Ollie Mae Killough). On March 9, 1946, she married Philip

Frank Gressett. Faye was a retired telephone operator and a homemaker.

## Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity:

• **JAMES ANTHONY TORRENCE**, 51, of 2323 Curtis St., Denver, Colorado, was arrested on charges of public intoxication and possession of a controlled substance (less than 1 gram).

• **ABEL MOLINA**, 25, of 1220 E. 13th St. was arrested on warrants for no driver's license-when unlicensed, and from another agency.

• **JOSEPH MARTINEZ**, 25, of 609 State St., was arrested on a warrant for another agency.

• **DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 1300 block of W. 4th St., in the 1900 block of Wasson Road, 1900 block of E. FM 700, and in the area of 4th St. and Settles.

• **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported in the 1600 block of S. Main St.

• **THEFT** was reported in the 3600 block of W. Highway 80, the 1500 block of Tucson St., and in the 2600 block of Barksdale Drive.

• **MINOR ACCIDENT** was reported in the 300 block of Main St.

• **BURGLARY OF A HABITATION** was reported in the 500 block of N. Birdwell Lane.

• **DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 1600 block of State St.

## Sheriff

The Howard County Sheriff's Department reported the following activity:

Note - Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 83 inmates at the time of this report.

• **BENJAMIN SAMUEL AGUERO**, 21, was booked by the BSPD on warrants for speeding (10 percent or more above posted limit), and violating promise to appear.

• **JORGE ANTONIO ESCAJEDA**, 41, was booked by the HCSO on a warrant for theft of service (more than \$750 but less than \$2,500).

• **JOSEPH MARTINEZ**, 25, was booked by the BSPD on a warrant for bail jumping and failure to appear.

• **ABEL ARMANDO MOLINA**, 25, was booked by the BSPD on warrant for theft of property (more than or equal to \$50 but less than \$500), and no driver's license (when unlicensed).

• **JAMES ANTHONY TORRENCE**, 51, was booked by the BSPD on charges of public intoxication, and possession of a controlled substance (less than 1 gram).

## Fire/EMS

Big Spring Fire Department/EMS reported the following activity:

• **MEDICAL CALL** was reported in the 900 block of E. 6th. One person was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center.

• **MEDICAL CALL** was reported in the 1600 block of Lark.

• **MEDICAL CALL** was reported in the 1200 block of E. 3rd. One person was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center.

• **MEDICAL CALL** was reported in the 1500 block of S. Lancaster. One person was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center.

• **MEDICAL CALL** was reported in the 1700 block of E. FM 700. One person was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center.

• **MEDICAL CALL** was reported in the 1800 block of N. Hwy 87. One person was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center.

• **MEDICAL CALL** was reported in the 6100 block of W. 846. One person was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center.

• **TRAFFIC ACCIDENT** was reported at the intersection of Fourth and Owens.

• **FALSE FIRE ALARM** was reported in the 1700 block of S. Lancaster.

## Support Groups

## WEDNESDAY

• **RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy)** a chronic pain disease, a support and informative group, meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at (432) 517-9207 for more information.

• **Alcoholics Anonymous**, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; open 12 & 12 study meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

## THURSDAY

• **Alcoholics Anonymous**, 615 Settles, open discussion noon to 1 p.m.; women's meeting; 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Newcomers' meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

• **Weight Watchers** meets at 6 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Weigh-in is at 5:30 p.m. Weigh-in is confidential and you don't have to talk if you don't want to. Flexible payment options.

• **A Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder** support

group meeting is at 6:30 p.m. at the VA Medical Center Veteran's Healing Center.

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LOCATED IN THE BACK CORNER OF THE COLLEGE PARK SHOPPING CENTER  
TUES - THURS 9 A.M -10 P.M.  
FRID-SUN 9 A.M- MIDNIGHT

**Help Wanted**



Howard College is accepting applications for a full-time HVAC/Electrician Tech on the Big Spring site. 3 years related experience with a Refrigerant Recovery Certification B and valid Texas Drivers' License required. Pre-employment physical and criminal background checks are required. Excellent benefits. For application and complete position notice visit [www.howardcollege.edu](http://www.howardcollege.edu). For more information contact: Human Resources, 1001 Birdwell Lane, Big Spring, TX 79720 or (432) 264-5100, email [humanresources@howardcollege.edu](mailto:humanresources@howardcollege.edu).

**Help Wanted**

**BIG SPRING STATE HOSPITAL RETIREMENT AND PAYFLEX BENEFITS**

Registered Nurses  
Job Posting #298933 & #303578  
Earn up to \$5,312.11 per month (DOE)

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Job Posting #298944  
Earn up to \$3,678.00 per month (DOE)

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Contact our Job Center for Job Descriptions or to Arrange a Campus Tour  
432-268-7341 or 432-268-7298 or Complete an application online at <https://jobshportal.hhsc.state.tx.us/>

Big Spring State Hospital  
1901 North Highway 87,  
Big Spring, TX 79720

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Benefits include health insurance, paid holidays, paid vacations and uniforms. Class B license required. No experience necessary. Call (432)517-4527

DRIVER --- Penta Petro has immediate openings for commercial fuel transportation drivers in Big Spring. Pay starts at 30% of freight revenue with benefits. Must be 23 years of age, possess CDL/Hazmat/Tanker and must have fuel transportation experience. If qualified please contact Shae at 432.689.0660. [www.penta-petro.com](http://www.penta-petro.com)

The Howard County Extension Office will be accepting applications for the position of Office Clerk. Basic computer and filing skills required. You may apply in the County Agents Office, 2411 Echols St, behind Howard College, Big Spring, TX EOE

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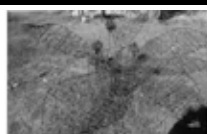
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7	4	3	6	5	1	8	2	9
1	6	8	9	7	2	5	4	3
9	5	2	8	4	3	1	7	6
6	1	9	3	2	5	4	8	7
4	2	7	1	6	8	3	9	5
3	8	5	7	9	4	6	1	2
8	9	4	2	3	6	7	5	1
2	3	1	5	8	7	9	6	4
5	7	6	4	1	9	2	3	8

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# MINISTRY

Continued from Page 1

"I ministered to them and told them about a prayer that we can all say together," said Tonn, remembering a specific men's Bible study session. "It's a prayer of repentance and a prayer of inviting Jesus into your life. And I told them if you want that, it'll work. If you mean it, it'll work. But if you don't mean it, it won't work because Jesus knows your heart. And they still wanted to say it."

"After they all said the prayer they just stood there," continued Tonn. "They weren't ready to leave."

Over the years, Tonn said she has had many people in her classes that have given their lives over to Jesus. For Christians, the next step after committing your life to Jesus is baptism, a public declaration of your faith and a symbolic "washing away" of ones sins. While a bit more difficult in jail, Tonn wanted the members of her prison ministry to be able to have the chance to be baptized as well.

"The Spirit is electric in the jail," said Tonn. "Some of the people who have already made the decision wanted to be baptized... It is just a picture of your salvation — buried with Christ and then raised to walk."

So after months of planning and preparations with Sheriff Parker and Howard County Jail overseer Mike Averette, Tonn, along with pastors Mike and Michelle Villareal, baptized 45 men and women at the jail.

"Some of the women were weeping and crying. They were saying they have been so lifted up," said Tonn. "They were all so excited and couldn't wait for their turn."

"They came in and before we baptized them we told them what baptism is," continued Tonn. "It is not a saving part of salvation. You get saved and then Jesus said to repent and be baptized. So when you are saved and you get baptized, it is like the icing on the cake. I thought that would help make them understand what it was about."

Although this was the first time a baptism like this has been performed at the Howard County Jail, Tonn said it will not be the last.

"We are planning it for every three to four months," said Tonn. "We have just been wanting to do it and we finally figured out how we could do it."

Tonn, Jojola, and Gena Ray continue to have weekly Bible study visits with the men and women of the Howard County Jail every Tuesday.

"It was just an awesome experience for all the guys and all the girls and it was for us," said Tonn. "That many people at one time being baptized...it was just a very emotional and exciting time. Because that's what we are going to the jail for. For people to get their life right with God. It was just a beautiful thing that I've ever experienced. With that many people being baptized at the same time at the same place it was just like God did a miracle."



Courtesy photo

From left, Juan Jojola, Mona Lue Tonn, Michelle Villareal, and Mike Villeareal pose for a photo at Friday's baptism at the Howard County Jail. Forty-five people were baptized.

# HEARING

Continued from Page 1

Items listed on the agenda are:

- Final approval to amend the 2016 adopted budget to increase the Motel Tax Fund Budget for the purpose of purchasing a chiller for the Big Spring Auditorium.

- Final approval to amend the adopted budget to increase the general fund by accepting a TIFMAS grant to be used for additional travel/training expense.

- Bids for two new EKG monitors/defibrillators for use of the fire department.

- First reading to amend the adopted budget for the purpose of purchasing a radio repeater for the fire department.

- An appointment to the Colorado River Municipal Water District Board.

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# OVERHAUL

Continued from Page 1

Next year, with Donald Trump as president, congressional Republicans plan to take a wrecking ball to the eight years of President Barack Obama's policies, from the health care law to environmental regulations.

Medicare, a program created under another Democrat, Lyndon B. Johnson, is in the crosshairs of Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Trump's pick for Health and Human Services secretary, Rep. Tom Price.

Ryan and Price favor privatizing the program, arguing that a voucher-system is necessary to ensure Medicare's long-term solvency.

Conservatives like Johnson, who have pushed their priorities for years under divided government, see an opportunity to tackle Social Security next year.

Johnson's bill is designed to slow the growth of Social Security costs while boosting some minimum benefits for those who earned lower wages over longer careers.

It would also limit the size of benefits for spouses and children of high-income earners, among other changes in how

the benefits are calculated.

The retirement age would be gradually increased to 69, starting with those who were born in 1968 and would likely retire in the mid-2030s.

Currently, individuals can receive benefits as early as age 62. The bill's summary says the new retirement age would better reflect Americans' longer life expectancy.

But it's unclear if his proposal — or any others to revise Social Security — will move. Trump, who enjoyed strong support from working-class Americans, promised during the campaign not to cut Social Security and Medicare. Ryan told CBS' "60 Minutes" earlier this month that he has no plans to change Social Security.

The issue has long been unpopular on Capitol Hill, where even some GOP lawmakers are nervous about changing a program seniors rely on so heavily.

President George W. Bush proposed a partial privatization of the program in his second term, but the effort failed in a Republican-led Congress and may have contributed to his party's sweeping losses in the 2006 mid-

term elections.

Neither Ryan nor the Republican chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Texas Rep. Kevin Brady, would endorse Johnson's bill.

AshLee Strong, a spokeswoman for Ryan, said the bill "is one of many Republican ideas put forward to strengthen the program." Lauren Aronson, a spokeswoman for Brady, said he appreciates Johnson's commitment to a thoughtful conversation but also "sees the proposal as one of many ideas" to address the program's challenges.

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Richard Sorenson, 48, died Friday. The family will receive friends from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM on Wednesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Funeral service will be at 11:00 AM Thursday at Myers & Smith Chapel with burial at Trinity Memorial Park.

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# MEETING

Continued from Page 1

After Commissioner Craig Bailey opened up the discussion, Wiseman said that Thomasson did not indicate if the position would be full or part-time work.

"If he isn't having a full-time office here, I think we are opening up a door for any representative in the future to be using our office," said Commissioner John Cline. "I don't think he will be here enough to give him an office."

Commissioner Oscar Garcia echoed Cline's concerns.

"Without knowing if they are going to hire someone full or part time, I don't know if they have a need to have an office here," said Garcia.

After a few minutes of discussion, the commissioners agreed to let Arrington and his staff use a conference room if he needed it, but to not designate an office specifically for him.

To open up the meeting, Wiseman presented long-time election administrator Saundra Bloom with a plaque for her years of service to Howard County. Bloom started working in the county in 1990.

In other business, commissioners also approved:

- A donation of \$5000 from the Friends of the Library to go towards the Howard County Library.

- Accepted bids for road maintenance, sealcoating, shoulder widening, and pipeline crossings.

The last meeting of the Howard County commissioners for 2016 will be held on Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9 a.m.

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## Texas wins \$5 million federal grant to combat Zika virus

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Gov. Greg Abbott says Texas has won a \$5 million Centers for Disease Control grant to combat the Zika virus.

In a statement Monday, Abbott said the money was awarded as part of supplemental Zika funding approved by Congress to increase preparedness and response efforts.

Word of the grant comes three days after state health officials confirmed four more cases of Zika in Texas that were likely transmitted by mosquito bites.

Abbott said, "This money will be crucial in our efforts to contain and combat further transmission."

He said the Texas Health Department has dedicated \$18 million to combatting Zika and implementing a state preparedness plan — though counties are being required to cover many Zika-related costs themselves.

## Winds likely contributed to Texas pelicans killed by traffic

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — Strong winds and high tides may have contributed to the deaths of more than 60 brown pelicans killed by oncoming traffic along a highway near Texas' border with Mexico.

The Brownsville Herald reports (<http://bit.ly/2hgtnyR>) that northerly winds and surging tides Thursday likely pushed pelicans to roost near a concrete traffic divider on a highway connecting Port Isabel and Brownsville, Texas.

Tom deMaar, senior veterinarian at Brownsville's Gladys Porter Zoo, was driving when he saw the birds close to oncoming traffic.

DeMaar and a sheriff's deputy stopped and tried to get the pelicans to relocate. But traffic moved fast through the area and 64 pelicans were killed.

## Pasadena house fire kills girl, injures her mom

PASADENA, Texas (AP) — Investigators are trying to determine what caused an overnight fire in a suburban Houston house that killed a 17-year-old girl and injured her mother.

The Houston Chronicle reports that the blaze broke out around 12:30 a.m. Saturday in a two-story home in Pasadena, southeast of Houston's city center.

Pasadena Fire Marshal David Brannon said the teen, her mother and her grandmother were in the house when it caught fire. The grandmother escaped unharmed.

The teen's mother jumped from a second-floor window and was hospitalized, suffering from smoke inhalation. She is expected to survive.

The girl, whose name was not released, died in the fire.

## Zoo sets up baby registry for pregnant orangutan

WACO, Texas (AP) — A Texas zoo has set up a gift registry for an orangutan couple who are expecting a baby.

The Cameron Park Zoo in Waco is requesting several items on the Target registry, including the movie "Zootopia," stuffed animals, a musical crib mobile, SpongeBob SquarePants bubble bath, books and a Dolly Parton CD.

Several items on Mei and KJ's registry have been purchased. Mei is due in late January.

Zoo curator of exhibits and programs Terri Cox says each of the items on the gift registry was selected to help provide enrichment for the new arrival and other zoo animals.

# English-language learners cut from special education

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Under pressure from the state, some Texas school districts are reducing the number of special education students by shutting out thousands of English-language learners in a move critics call clear discrimination against immigrant families.

In one school district alone, in the South Texas city of Victoria, just 39 of nearly 1,000 English-language learners receive services such as tutoring and speech therapy, which amounts to a 70 percent drop from a decade ago, according to a review by the Houston Chronicle (<http://bit.ly/2gx5h3k>).

The newspaper has found that while many districts are warning teachers that English learners are over-identified in special education, statistics show the opposite is true.

Among the tactics districts use to decline services, some have refused to conduct eligibility evaluations in languages other than English and have rejected medical records from other countries, according to data and dozens of interviews with current and former educators. There are districts that have eliminated special education for international students altogether at some schools.

"It's almost impossible to get my kids into special ed," said Arlene De Los Santos, a middle school teacher in Victoria. "They have to have very, very severe needs for the school to even consider it."

The Texas Education Agency says ideally just 8.5 percent of the student population should be in special education, and has audited school districts for exceeding the benchmark and penalized districts for over-identification of minorities.

In defending the benchmark to federal regulators last month, agency officials acknowledged "some possible under-representation" of English learners. They declined to answer the newspaper's questions about the restrictions.

"Even if the policy was not meant to be discriminatory, it has clearly had that effect," said Gary Orfield, a social scientist and co-founder of The Civil Rights Project while at Harvard University, who called it the most outrageous education policy he's seen. "If schools are creating systems in which students are not getting services simply because of the language they speak, that's discrimination."

Many educators say immigrants often don't understand how special ed works. Part of the reason for the drop in English learners, they said, is that parents are unable to fight the hurdles that the state agency target has introduced for families seeking special education.

"These parents don't understand the system," said Iliana Benitez, a social worker at Baylor College of Medicine. "Culturally, they're not inclined to speak up ... and nobody tells them they have rights."

## Advocates: Revamp Texas adoption care after mistreated teens

By DAVID WARREN

Associated Press

DALLAS — The child-protection system in Texas should be revamped to better monitor adoptions and prevent a recurrence of the seven special-needs children found near Houston isolated and living in filthy conditions, child advocates say.

Authorities have described the discovery last month of the disabled adopted teenagers as "heartbreaking," detailing an oppressive existence in which they were kept in a bedroom, fed two daily meals of rice and beans and disciplined for things like making too much noise.

Their room was fouled by human waste and one boy with Down syndrome was found wearing a soiled diaper. None attended school.

Already, Gov. Greg Abbott, lawmakers, experts and advocates have said the troubled, understaffed Child Protective Services' agency is in need of a broader overhaul, with the Legislature giving it nearly \$150 million in special emergency funding to hire 800 workers.

That could close a hole in oversight revealed by the Houston-area case, as state caseworkers don't do follow-up visits once an adoption is completed unless a complaint is lodged.

The case wasn't publicized until Monday, with officials saying detectives needed time to pursue a complicated investigation. The Nov. 22 discovery of the teens — ages 14 to 16 — was shocking to the community of Richmond, which is southwest of Houston, according to

Ruthanne Mefford, chief executive of Child Advocates of Fort Bend.

"If we're going to prevent this in the future we need to think about a system-wide program where we can ensure children are protected and safe, even when the adoption closes," Mefford said.

Mefford's agency interviewed the teens after they were removed from the home and will represent them as the case proceeds against the two people arrested in the matter — their adoptive mother, Paula Sinclair, and husband Allen Richardson, 78. Sinclair and a former husband adopted the children in 2003 and 2004 and had been their foster parents, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services spokeswoman Tiffani Butler said.

CPS went to the home in 2011 when a 7-year-old boy with cerebral palsy who was blind and mute died there.

Authorities ruled the death a result of natural causes. After that, caseworkers didn't visit until one

received a tip last month.

Butler said caseworkers normally would not visit a home once an adoption is completed unless they receive a complaint of abuse or neglect — something Mefford believes needs to change. She wants to see mandated, periodic visits to adoptive homes.

"One of the things that is a red flag is that these children never went to school," she said.

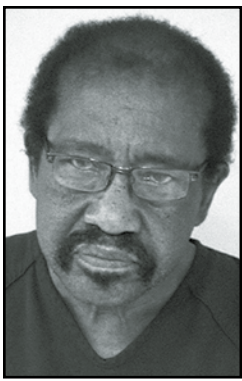
She also wants a child-protection network as a continuing resource to parents, a notion supported by Dimple Patel, a senior policy analyst for The Texas Association for the Protection of Children, a non-partisan agency that works to prevent abuse.

"I don't think we spend enough time with families after adoption," said Patel, noting that disruptions can arise years after an adoption is completed.

She adds that CPS, which is beset by low morale and high turnover, needs to have seasoned workers with manageable workloads who are skilled in doing investigations.

Sinclair and Richardson are jailed in Fort Bend County; records don't indicate whether they have attorneys. A 2007 Houston Chronicle story shows Sinclair started a charity to raise money for the children's care. It lost its nonprofit status in 2012 after failing to file required forms.

"I just couldn't see these children doing well in the foster care system, because they were so badly injured and had so many special needs," she told the newspaper. "I feel like this is what God called me to do — to take care of these babies."



Richardson



Sinclair

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**HERALD**



**Texas A&M student with unspecified medical condition dies**

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (AP) — College Station police say a 23-year-old Texas A&M student who'd been sick has died at his residence.

Lt. Steve Brock on Monday said there were no obvious signs of foul play in the death of Andrew Sutter of Portland. An autopsy was ordered.

Emergency personnel Sunday night were dispatched on a report of a man not breathing. Brock says the investigation revealed Sutter had an unspecified medical condition, was ill for several days and had been napping Sunday afternoon in the living room. Sutter's roommate later found him unresponsive.

It's the third A&M student death this year.

Sigma Phi Epsilon member Matthew Hayes was found dead Dec. 6 at his fraternity house. Autopsy results haven't been released.

**Texas official attacks school for axing biblical reference**

KILLEEN, Texas (AP) — The Texas attorney general is criticizing a school district's decision to remove a portion of a poster that included a biblical verse recited by Linus in the film "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

Attorney General Ken Paxton says in a statement that the so-called Merry Christmas law adopted in 2013 means schools can't "silence a biblical reference to Christmas."

He said Thursday that the decision by officials in Killeen, north of Austin, is an "attack on religious liberty."

But KWTX-TV reports that Killeen administrators argue school employees are not permitted to impose their personal beliefs on students.

A staffer had placed the poster on a school door. It shows Linus and the line from the gospel of Luke: "unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior."

**Accreditation group gives 'warning' to Baylor University**

WACO, Texas (AP) — A leading university-accrediting body has issued a "warning" to Baylor University that the school's compliance with the body's standards will be closely monitored for the next year.

Baylor said in a statement it was notified by the Southern Association of College and Schools earlier this month that it will monitor the university's compliance with three standards: whether university student support services are adequate, institutional control of intercollegiate athletics is firm and a healthy, safe and secure student environment is being maintained.

The Board of Regents has told The Wall Street Journal that 17 women had reported domestic violence or sexual assaults involving 19 football players since 2011, including four gang rapes. They told The Dallas Morning News that about 125 cases of sexual assault or harassment campus-wide were under review.

**Lawsuit challenges new Texas rules over fetal remains**



AP Photo

In this July 13, 2013 file photo, abortion rights advocates, left, protest in the State Capitol as anti-abortion rights supporters pass them in Austin, Texas. A coalition of national advocacy groups sued Texas on Monday, Dec. 12, 2016, seeking to block Texas' soon-to-be-implemented rules mandating the burial or cremation of fetal remains. The lawsuit filed Monday by the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights is the latest legal battle in a state whose tough anti-abortion laws were already largely voided this summer by the U.S. Supreme

By WILL WEISSERT

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Advocacy groups filed a lawsuit Monday seeking to prevent Texas from requiring hospitals and abortion clinics to bury or cremate fetal remains rather than disposing of them in a sanitary landfill, as they most often currently do with such remains and other biological medical waste.

The lawsuit filed in a federal court in Austin by the Center for Reproductive Rights and other groups contends that the rules set to take effect next Monday serve no medical purpose and are meant to shame women who seek abortions and make it harder for doctors to provide them.

"Texas has failed to provide any credible evidence of what health benefit this might serve because there aren't any," Nancy Northup, the Center for Reproductive Right's president, said on a conference call. "Women do not want these laws. Doctors do not want these laws. And the Constitution does not allow them."

Carrie Williams, a spokeswoman for Texas' Health and Human Services Commission, said the agency is reviewing the lawsuit and will respond "at the appropriate time." Louisiana and Indiana have similar requirements, but they are on hold due to court challenges.

Texas officials have denied that their new requirements are meant to shame women who get abortions or make things harder on abortion providers. In response to the more than 35,000 public comments it received about the proposed rule changes, the health department wrote it "believes the methods allowed by the rules will protect the public by preventing the spread of disease while also preserving the dignity of the unborn in a manner consistent with Texas laws."

The new rules were proposed to the health commission at the behest of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in July, just days

after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down anti-abortion laws that would have left Texas with 10 abortion clinics, down from more than 40 in 2012.

They would require fetal remains from miscarriages and abortions, regardless of the state of gestation, to be treated like those of a deceased person by having them buried or cremated. Cremated remains would still have to be buried or scattered.

Remains are currently most often disposed of in sanitary landfills, and that cost is included in the price of getting an abortion or otherwise undergoing treatment for a terminated pregnancy. Critics say cremation, and especially burial, would cost more and force women to have to cover the additional expenses.

Mandating burial or cremation "imposes a funeral ritual on women who have a miscarriage management procedure, ectopic pregnancy surgery, or an abortion," the lawsuit argues. "Further, it threatens women's health and safety by providing no safe harbor for sending tissue to pathology or crime labs."

Amy Hagstrom-Miller, president of Whole Woman's Health, which operates Texas abortion clinics and is a lead plaintiff in the case, said it would be absurd to require all fetal tissue to be disposed of in this way.

"For every embryo. Even at five weeks. Even if you can't see it," Hagstrom-Miller said.

Republican state lawmakers also have pre-filed bills that would codify the coming agency rule into Texas law. The GOP-controlled Legislature convenes Jan. 10.

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different.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Everything will be better with a little preparation, especially those things that you usually wouldn't have to prepare for -- a casual conversation with a friend, for instance.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** People will respond to your respect. In fact, it's the most motivating thing you can do for another person today -- respect the efforts, the attitude, the person's expression in this world.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** You heard the music before, and now you can't hear it. But this is not cause for alarm. The songbird has not flown away. The songbird is inside you always. It just needs to, once in a while, rest its voice.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Don't let other people's opinions knock you off your game. Someone else's judgment doesn't have to be unsettling; uncertainty could, in fact, call forward your best self. It's all in your interpretation.

so I took him home.

I put up signs with his picture, saying I had found him. No one responded. I decided it was safe to "adopt" him. I named him Snoopy.

Having the companionship of a dog really helped with my loneliness. I went out for walks and took him to the dog park on weekends. Snoopy even helped me meet my husband. You see, one Saturday afternoon at the dog park, Snoopy started playing with a huge black Labrador. The Lab's owner came up

Tomorrow's Horoscope

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Your imagination gets an injection of color. It's like a brand-new ink cartridge in your printer, ready to flesh out some vivid imagery for you. Dream that you'll make it. Dream big and dream wild.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** It's not enough to have an opinion. Anyone can do that. But to have an opinion that's thoroughly and uniquely thought out -- you really admire the person who presents you with such a thing today.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** If thoughts were furniture, a few timeless pieces deserve the prime mental real estate you give them. Then there are some broken down, archaic pieces that you would do well to move on out and replace.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** To know someone very well, so well that you're comfortable with this person in a myriad of situations -- it's a wonderful feeling. Plus, making efforts toward this end is nothing but pleasure.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You may find yourself thinking harshly of a situation. It doesn't make you a bad person. It's natural to have a whole array of feelings, some darker than others. Just watch your words, is all. You can't take them back.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Some have trouble saying "no" while others are afraid to say "yes." Everyone is different. Set up those personal rules again, and this time, make sure they are catered to you.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** How can you take the relationship to more-splendid levels? You will accomplish this aim, mostly because you have the creativity, curiosity and moxie that it takes to ask this question.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 13).** You will accept people who felt unacceptable, love those who exhibit unlovable behavior and emotionally support individuals who might never reciprocate. These exercises in exemplary character would be pure self-

lessness if they didn't happen to make you rich in every conceivable way this year. Cancer and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 30, 12, 24 and 48.

**ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS:** "Never one to go from relationship to relationship, I have not been in a serious mutual relationship since my marriage broke up five years ago. As a Pisces born March 6, 1964, I think I'm ready for a serious relationship, but I'm not sure. I was seeing a Taurus, but he ended things. Even though he was mean and not too attentive, I still have very strong feelings for him."

I don't think you're ready for a "serious relationship," but I would advise a humorous relationship, a whimsical relationship, a relationship that could never work out in a million years followed by a relationship that lasts approximately three weeks. In other words, lighten up! As a Pisces, you can relate to people from all walks of life, at least for a limited period of time,

and what you'll learn about yourself in the process will give you the confidence to trust your choices when it's really important. So date wide instead of deep. Think of dating as a chance to, while making new friends and sharing interesting environments and experiences, develop your relationship with your lifelong mate: you!

**CELEBRITY PROFILES:** The supermoon on her birthday is an excellent omen for Sagittarius superstar Taylor Swift -- a person who, objectively, doesn't seem to need good fortune. But even those on the top of the world have trials and troubles and areas of life they want to heal. Swift's moon and Jupiter are in reflective Cancer, indicating a deeply sensitive nature that no doubt aids in the delivery of thoughtful music.

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Annie's Mailbox

to me, and we struck up a conversation. Long story short, we were married within three years. (We had our dogs walk down the aisle to give them credit for introducing us.)

Fast-forward 10 years. Snoopy was diagnosed with hemangiosarcoma. The vet gave him three months to live. My husband and I were devastated. I simply couldn't imagine life without this dog. He had been such a wonderful companion to us. Two months after his diagnosis, he passed away. Since then, I have been so depressed. I am having trouble concentrating at work.

This companion who was there through so much of my life is now gone. My husband is sad, too, but keeps trying to tell me to snap out of it. I am so

sad; I can't. How can I get over this loss? -- Grieving for Snoopy

**Dear Grieving:** I am so sorry for your loss. I, too, am an animal lover and understand how much animals truly are members of the family. It sounds as if you gave Snoopy a great home. Take comfort in knowing that you gave him a wonderful life, the best life he could have asked for. Though you will never forget Snoopy, I promise that time will lessen the pain. He will always live on in your heart. I've always found comfort in a poem by Steve and Diane Bodofsky, "The Rainbow Bridge":

"By the edge of a woods, at the foot of a hill, is a lush, green meadow where time stands still. "Where the friends of man and woman do run, when their time

on earth is over and done.

"For here, between this world and the next, is a place where each beloved creature finds rest.

"On this golden land, they wait and they play, till the Rainbow Bridge they cross over one day.

"No more do they suffer, in pain or in sadness, for here they are whole, their lives filled with gladness.

"Their limbs are restored, their health renewed, their bodies have healed, with strength imbued.

"They romp through the grass, without even a care, until one day they start, and sniff at the air.

"All ears prick forward, eyes dart front and back, then all of a sudden, one breaks from the pack.

"For just at that instant, their eyes have

met; together again, both person and pet.

"So they run to each other, these friends from long past, the time of their parting is over at last.

"The sadness they felt while they were apart, has turned into joy once more in each heart.

"They embrace with a love that will last forever, and then, side-by-side, they cross over... together."

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Send your questions for Annie Lane to [dearannie@creators.com](mailto:dearannie@creators.com). To find out more about Annie Lane and read features by other Creators Syndicate columnists and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).

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A Companion for All Time

**Dear Annie:** Ten years ago, I was transferred to Chicago for work. I didn't know anyone and found myself very lonely the first year. One winter night while I was out picking up Chinese takeout for dinner, I heard barking and saw a little black and white puppy under a tree. I looked around everywhere and saw no signs of an owner. He was very young, and it was very cold,



By Steve Becker

Looking far into the future

East dealer. Neither side vulnerable.  
**NORTH**  
♠ 6 3  
♥ A Q  
♦ K J 10  
♣ A K J 10 5 2  
**WEST**  
♠ 9 7 4  
♥ 10 7 6 5 2  
♦ 8 6 4  
♣ 9 6  
**EAST**  
♠ A Q J 8 2  
♥ K 9 4  
♦ A 5 3  
♣ 8 7  
**SOUTH**  
♠ K 10 5  
♥ J 8 3  
♦ Q 9 7 2  
♣ Q 4 3

The bidding:  
East South West North  
1♠ Pass Pass Dble  
Pass 1NT Pass 3NT  
Opening lead — nine of spades.

The key to success in many deals lies in being able to visualize what the situation will be after, say, nine or 10 tricks have been played.

This is not as difficult as it might seem. To illustrate, consider this deal where South is in three notrump.

Declarer allows East's jack of spades to hold the first trick, and East then exits with the ace and another spade to the king, dummy discarding a diamond. At this point, South can count eight top tricks — six clubs, a heart and the spade already won.

In other circumstances, declarer might try driving out the ace of diamonds or attempt a heart finesse to develop his ninth trick. But either approach would be foolish here because East is virtually certain to hold both the king of hearts and ace of diamonds for his opening bid. A trick for East in either of these suits, plus his remaining spades, would spell immediate defeat for declarer.

However, the fact that East is marked with these cards can be used against him. With three tricks already played, South should try to picture what East's hand will look like after six rounds of clubs have been cashed, reducing everyone to four cards.

Since East has to keep a guard for the king of hearts, his last four cards will be the K-x of hearts, the ace of diamonds and a spade, in which case the contract cannot be defeated.

Declarer therefore cashes all six clubs, on which East discards two diamonds, a heart and a spade. Dummy's remaining cards are the A-Q of hearts and K-J of diamonds. A diamond is now led.

East wins with the ace and cashes his good spade, but must then concede the last two tricks to dummy's ace of hearts and king of diamonds, and the game is home.

Tomorrow: The long-term view.  
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snap out of it. I am so

sudoku

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1		8	9	7	5			
	5				7	6		
6			3	5	8	7		
	2		6		9			
3	8		7	4		2		
8	9				5			
		1		8	7	9	4	
	7		4	9	2			

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# New Congress poised to greet Trump with Russia probes

By ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress' Republican leaders are preparing to greet incoming President Donald Trump with investigations into whether Russia intruded into last month's elections to help him win the White House.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell declined to say Monday whether he agreed with the CIA assertion that Russian hacking and public release of Democrats' emails during the presidential campaign were designed to aid Trump. But in a noteworthy departure from Trump's rejection of that conclusion, the Kentucky Republican said the Senate Intelligence Committee would probe the issue.

"It's an important subject, and we intend to review it on a bipartisan basis," McConnell said.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., endorsed an ongoing investigation by the House Intelligence Committee into cyberthreats from other countries and extremist groups and condemned "any state-sponsored cyberattacks on our democratic process." He said that examination would continue, with his support.

"Any intervention by Russia is especially problematic because under President (Vladimir) Putin, Russia has been an aggressor that consistently undermines American interests," Ryan said in a written statement after McConnell met with reporters.

The remarks by McConnell and Ryan drew a contrast with Trump's oft-repeated praise of Putin and the president-elect's scoffing at the CIA's findings. Trump on Sunday called the CIA's contention "ridiculous" and blamed the disclosures of the agency's assessment on Democrats who he said were embarrassed over losing last month's election.

McConnell said he has "the highest confidence" in U.S. intelligence agencies. He recounted Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, said Baltic nation leaders are nervous about Moscow

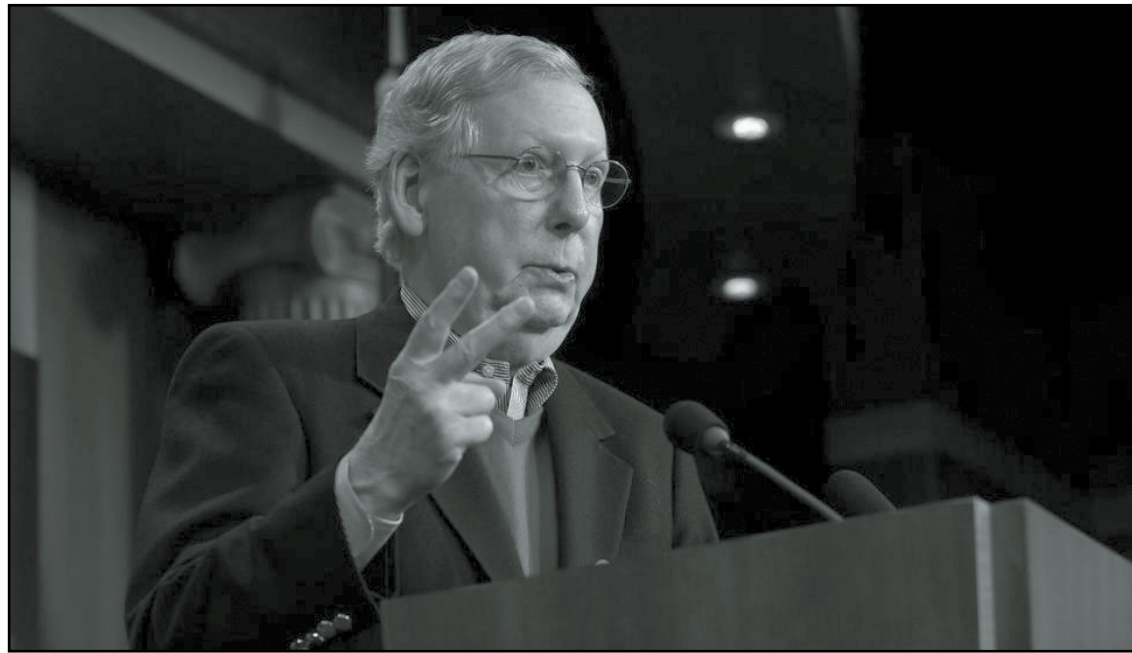
and pointedly praised NATO, the alliance that Trump criticized repeatedly during his campaign.

"I think we ought to approach all of these issues on the assumption that the Russians do not wish us well," McConnell said.

Besides embracing an investigation by the Senate's intelligence panel, led by Richard Burr, R-N.C., McConnell also expressed support for a related probe by the Armed Services Committee, chaired by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. McCain has been calling for such an examination and has long been wary of Russia.

The chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., released a letter Monday to National Intelligence Director James Clapper complaining that recent reports of the CIA's conclusion clashed with Clapper's prior statement to the panel that he lacked "good insight" about the connection between Russian hacking of Democratic campaign documents and their release by Wikileaks. Nunes requested a briefing on the subject for this week.

The GOP leaders expressed their views after a



AP photo

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday, Dec. 12, 2016.

weekend in which Trump also said he would not need daily intelligence briefings, a staple of presidents' days for decades and a flouting of a convention common for presidential transitions.

The campaign chairman for defeated Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton urged the Obama administration Monday to reveal what it knows about any Russian efforts to help Trump win. John Podesta, whose emails were stolen and posted online, said the administration "owes it to the American people" to release details of the intrusions, which included the hacking of Democratic Party files.

Podesta said the Clinton campaign also supports a call by 10 of the 538 members of the Electoral College for Clapper to provide information that intelligence agencies have gathered on the subject.

## Police expect Trump to lift limits on surplus military gear



AP photo

In this Aug. 17, 2014, file photo, a law enforcement officer watches from an armored vehicle after a device was fired to disperse a crowd during a protest for Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Mo. National police organizations said they'll hold Donald Trump to his promise to rescind an executive order restricting local law enforcement access to surplus military equipment.

By DAVID DISHNEAU

Associated Press

HAGERSTOWN, Md. (AP) — If president-elect Donald Trump keeps his promise, surplus military grenade launchers, bayonets, tracked armored vehicles and high-powered firearms and ammunition will once again be available to state and local U.S. police departments.

National police organizations say they'll hold Trump to that promise.

President Barack Obama issued an executive order restricting that access in 2015 amid an outcry over police use of armored vehicles and other war-fighting gear to confront protesters in Ferguson,

Missouri, after the fatal shooting of Michael Brown. Since then, federal officials have recalled more than 1,800 items, which have been destroyed through target practice or otherwise disposed of, officials say.

But state and local police organizations have protested, insisting that military-style vehicles and gear help protect officers' lives and public safety — for example, a privately manufactured, tracked armored vehicle played a key role in the police response to the mass shooting at a county government building in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015.

During his campaign, Trump sided with the police. In September, he promised to rescind the executive order in a written response to a Fraternal Order of Police questionnaire that helped

him win an endorsement from the organization of rank-and-file officers.

"The 1033 program is an excellent program that enhances community safety. I will rescind the current executive order," reads the response posted on the group's website.

"We take him at his word," Executive Director James Pasco said in a recent telephone interview.

The Trump transition team did not respond to questions from The Associated Press about the executive order.

See **GEAR**, Page 9A

## Trump is seen by businesses as key ally

By JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump has lost no chance to bash or threaten individual companies that cross him.

Yet much of corporate America appears to view Trump not as an adversary but as a powerful friend. For all his bullying stance toward some companies, businesses have been cheered by his vows to slash taxes and soften Obama-era rules that were designed to protect workers, the environment and the financial system and by his choices to lead the Labor Department and Environmental Protection Agency. The prospect of a stronger economy and richer profits is appealing enough that most businesses — and stock investors — are downplaying the uncertainties that followed Trump's presidential victory last month. The Dow Jones industrial average has rocketed 8 percent to a record high since Election Day on expectations of faster economic growth.

Many manufacturers, which have been reeling for years from shrinking demand for their goods, say they view Trump as more sympathetic to their interests than President Barack Obama was.

"When he uses the phone, he does it to tell manufacturers that he supports them and wants them to create jobs in the United States," said Jay Timmons, president of the National Association of Manufacturers. "That is a far cry from what we hear in the current administration."

The Obama administration helped bail out General Motors and Chrysler and halted a freefall in factory layoffs. But it also issued a series of environmental and labor rules that were designed to limit damage from climate change and raise pay for workers. Business-backed groups argue that such regulations have instead raised costs and depressed hiring. The manufacturers association hosted Vice President-elect Mike Pence on Thursday and met with members of the Trump transition team on Friday.



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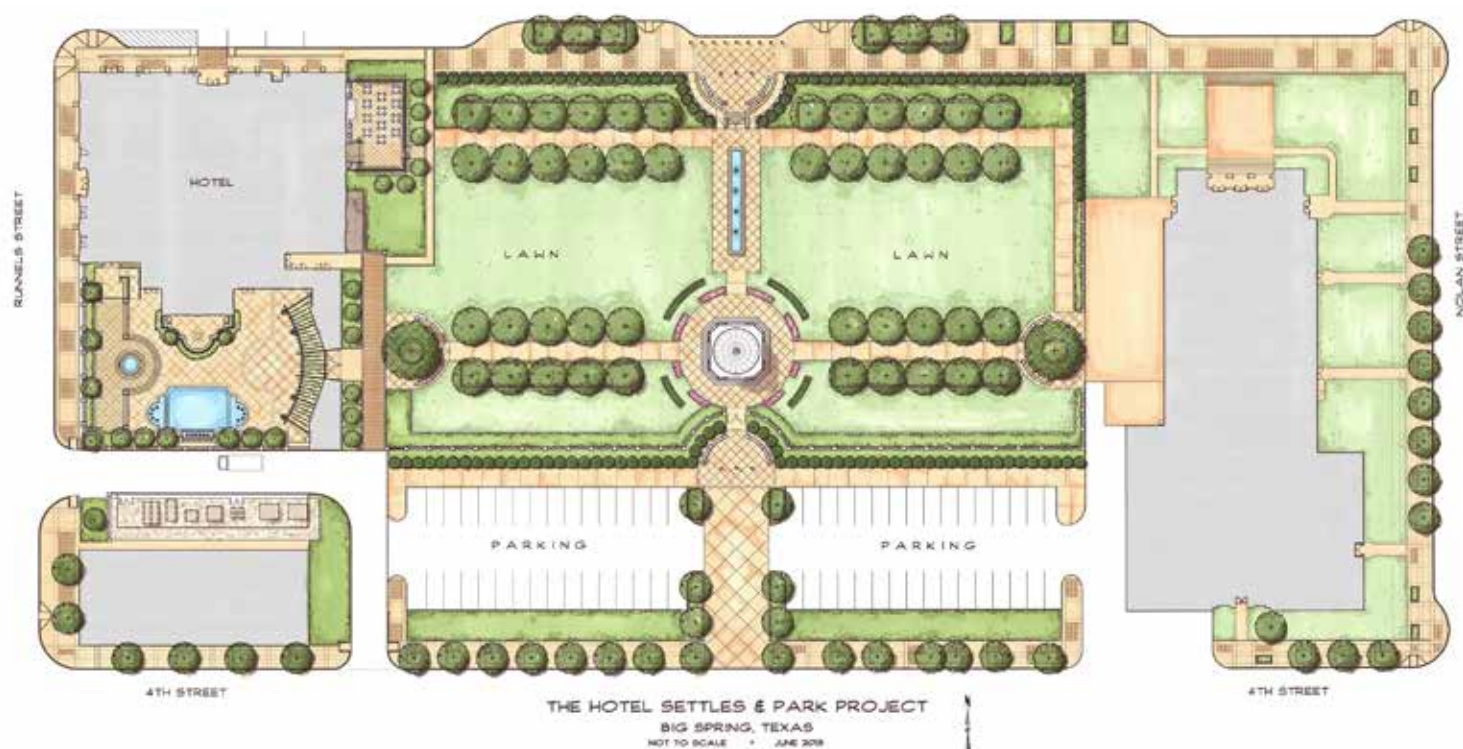


## CENTRAL PLAZA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

To continue the revitalization of downtown Big Spring, Cap Rock Holdings has a plan to develop the area adjacent to the beautifully restored Hotel Settles into an events plaza.

The Central Plaza will be a family-friendly plaza that will bring tourists, attractions, and entertainment to the downtown area. Picture you and your family enjoying the Central Plaza for live music events, movies, arts and crafts festivals, family picnics, and much more!

To hear more, please join us at the scheduled City Council Regular Session on **Tuesday, December 13, 2016**. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located at 307 East 4th Street, Big Spring, Texas.





# News in brief

## Donald Trump picks Rex Tillerson to lead State Department

NEW YORK (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump has tapped ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson to lead the State Department, dismissing concerns about the businessman's close ties to Russia and bringing a long public audition process to a conclusion.

Two people close to Trump's transition team said Monday night that Trump had selected Tillerson. They insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the pick ahead of that announcement.

Trump was set to announce his nomination Tuesday morning. The selection could set him up for a potential fight with Congress over confirming Tillerson, who has connections with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Leading Republicans have already expressed anxieties about Tillerson, as they contend with intelligence assessments saying Russia interfered with the U.S. presidential election to help Trump.

But two meetings with the oil executive impressed Trump, who called Tillerson a "world class player" in an interview on "Fox News Sunday."

In the interview, Trump pointed to Tillerson's deep relations with Moscow as a selling point. As ExxonMobil's head, he maintained close ties with Russia and was awarded by President Vladimir Putin with the Order of Friendship in 2013, an honor for a foreign citizen.

## Under Islamic State, Mosul's people faced darkness, dread

MOSUL, Iraq (AP) — She survived the first stone that struck her, then the second.

One of the Islamic State group's fighters bent down and pressed his fingers to the side of her neck to check her pulse.

As her horrified neighbors watched, extremists threw a third stone at the young woman, who was accused of adultery. That one killed her.

It was, for those who witnessed it, the cruelest moment in Mosul's two-year descent into fear, hunger and isolation. Before the siege, Iraq's second-largest city was arguably the most multicultural place in Iraq, with a Sunni Muslim Arab majority but also thriving communities of Kurds, Shiites, Christians and Yazidis. Together, they had created Mosul's distinct identity, with its own cuisine, intellectual life and economy.

But the Islamic State group turned Mosul into a place of literal and spiritual darkness. It began with promises of order and a religious utopia that appealed to some, but over the course of 2 1/2 years, the militants turned crueler, the economy crumbled under the weight of war and shortages set in. Those who resisted watched neighbors who joined IS turn prosperous and vindictive. Parents feared for the brainwashing of their children. By the end, as Iraqi troops besieged Mosul, the militants hanged suspected spies from lampposts, and residents were cut off from the world.

## Republican looks to overhaul Social Security

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key Republican lawmaker wants to overhaul Social Security, the decades-old program that provides benefits to some 60 million retirees and disabled, with a plan to gradually increase the retirement age and slow the growth of benefits for higher-income workers.

Rep. Sam Johnson of Texas, the chairman of the House Ways and Means subcommittee on Social Security, introduced legislation just before the end of the congressional session last week that he said would "permanently save" the program. He said the bill would increase benefits for lower-income workers.

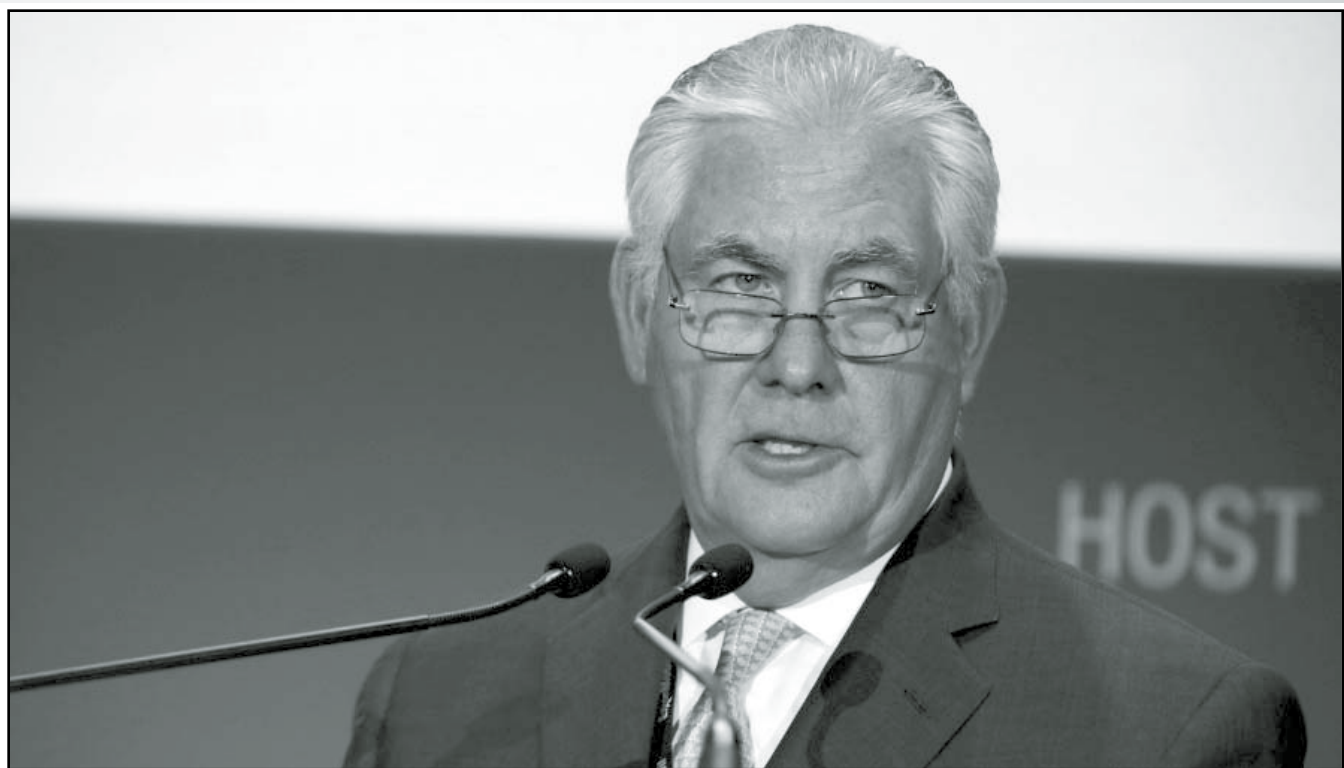
About 168 million people work and pay taxes toward the inevitable monthly Social Security benefits. About 42 million of the beneficiaries are retirees and their families. The trustees who oversee Social Security say it has enough money to pay full benefits until 2034, and then Social Security will collect only enough taxes to pay 79 percent of benefits.

Unless Congress acts, millions of people on fixed incomes would get an automatic 21 percent cut in benefits.

"Americans want, need, and deserve for us to finally come up with a solution to saving this important program," Johnson said.

## Gorbachev says US was short-sighted on Soviets

MOSCOW (AP) — As the Soviet Union was breaking up 25 years ago, Mikhail Gorbachev expected the United States and its Western allies to provide vital aid. The former Soviet president thinks their



Rex Tillerson, CEO of ExxonMobil, is President-elect Donald Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Secretary of State.

failure to offer significant help wasted a chance to build a safer world and resulted from short-sighted gloating at a Cold War rival's demise.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press, the 85-year-old Gorbachev voiced hope that Russia and the United States would do better and ease current tensions during Donald Trump's presidency.

"The relations between us are so important and concern everyone else, so we must take the interests of others into account," said the leader credited with helping to end the Cold War.

Gorbachev said he had expected Hillary Clinton to win the U.S. presidential race and was surprised by Trump's victory. He declined to offer an assessment of Trump, saying it remains to be seen what policies the new U.S. administration will pursue.

"He has little political experience, but, maybe, it's good," he said.

## Dramatic appeals as Syrian forces poised to take Aleppo

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian government forces poised for the final sweep to take the last rebel holdouts in eastern Aleppo on Tuesday as the international community and aid agencies appealed that the lives of thousands of civilians who have "nowhere safe to run" be spared and that those fighting to capture the rebel enclave refrain from atrocities.

The dramatic appeals came a day after the Syrian military announced it now holds 99 percent of the former rebel neighborhoods of Aleppo, signaling an impending end to the rebels' four-year hold over parts of the city as the final hours of the battle play out.

Retaking Aleppo, which has been divided between rebel- and government-controlled zones since 2012, would be President Bashar Assad's biggest victory yet in the country's civil war. Aleppo has long been regarded as a major gateway between Turkey and Syria.

But a government win in Aleppo does not end the conflict — significant parts of Syria are still outside government control and huge swaths of the country are a devastated waste-land. More than a quarter of a million people have been killed.

The International Committee of the Red Cross in a statement on Tuesday urged all fighting in Aleppo to spare civilian lives. It said thousands of people with no part in the violence "have literally nowhere safe to run."

## Obama: President without briefings 'flying blind'

NEW YORK (AP) — President Barack Obama has criticized Donald Trump for saying he plans to shun daily intelligence briefings once inaugurated, saying that would be akin to "flying blind" in managing national security affairs.

Appearing Monday evening on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," Obama said fit would be a mistake for a president to pass on regular briefings from the intelligence community.

Trump had said on "Fox News Sunday" he is not interested in getting daily intelligence briefings, a practice that's been a fixture for chief executives of both parties for several

years. Asked whether he's actually rejecting valuable intelligence, Trump was defiant.

"I get it when I need it," he said of the top-secret briefings sessions, adding that he's leaving it up to the briefers to decide when a development represents a "change" big enough to notify him.

"I'm, like, a smart person. I don't have to be told the same thing in the same words every single day for the next eight years," Trump said.

## AP News Guide: Trump's far-flung business empire

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump says his business is "great," and you'll have to trust him on that. One of the few things an outsider can know for sure is that it's a complex and opaque hodgepodge of an empire scattered around the globe.

Trump in May disclosed holdings in about 500 companies in at least 25 countries. But many of the 500 have no business operations, they're shells set up to hold stakes in other companies, possibly to provide legal and tax protection. The disclosure document ran 104 pages, but revealed precious few details about how much each entity has borrowed, their profits, or purposes.

The details matter because government ethics experts note the possibility that Trump might be tempted to shape regulations, taxes and foreign policy to enrich himself or those of his partners. Foreign governments could create plenty of trouble, too. They could seek to influence him by rewarding or punishing his business interests in their countries.

Trump had planned a news conference for Thursday on the future of his business but announced Monday he would postpone it until next month. Trump transition team spokesman Sean Spicer said the legal team needs more time to work out a plan so "proper protocols are in place."

## Nearly 7 years after quake, 50,000 in Haiti still in camps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Nearly seven years ago, Adrienne St. Fume and her family fled their home as the earth shook and their city crumbled around them. They ended up in what was then a vacant lot overlooking a cluster of shops along a busy street in the Haitian capital — and they've been there ever since.

The mother of three said she figured their plywood shack would be temporary as they and the rest of Port-au-Prince recovered from the magnitude 7.0 earthquake on Jan. 12, 2010. But St. Fume has yet to find a way out.

"It's been hard but we've tried our best to make a kind of life here," she said.



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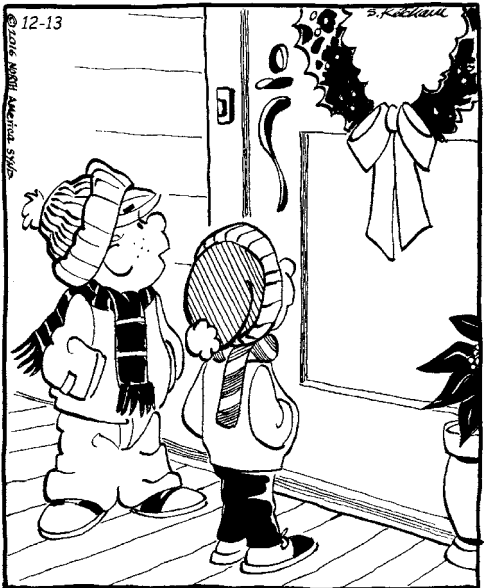


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5 :PM	Local 2	Hotel	The List	News	Tele	News	Justice	Focus	Mama's	American	Seinfeld	Movie: The	SportsCenter	Around	LSU	Mod Fam	The First 48	Moonshiners
5 :30	ABC	Notic.	Mod Fam	CBS	Noticiero	News	Called	Business	Mama's	American	Seinfeld	Hunger	Pardon	SportsCenter	XTERRA	Mod Fam	Intervention	Moonshiners
6 :PM	Jeopardy!	Rosa de	Big Bang	News	Caso Cer-	News	J. McGee	PBS News-	M*A*S*H	Fam. Guy	Seinfeld	Games, Liam	NBA Count-	SportsCenter	Under	Mod Fam	Intervention	Moonshiners
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This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 13, the 348th day of 2016. There are 18 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 13, 1981, authorities in Poland imposed martial law in a crackdown on the Solidarity labor movement. (Martial law formally ended in 1983.)

On this date:

- In 1642, Dutch navigator Abel Tasman sighted present-day New Zealand.
- In 1769, Dartmouth College in New Hampshire received its charter.
- In 1862, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside launched futile attacks against entrenched Confederate soldiers during the Civil War Battle of Fredericksburg; the soundly defeated Northern troops withdrew two days later.
- In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson arrived in France, becoming the first chief executive to visit Europe while in office.
- In 1928, George Gershwin's "An American in Paris" had its premiere at Carnegie Hall in New York.
- In 1937, the Chinese city of Nanjing fell to Japanese forces; what followed was a massacre

of war prisoners, soldiers and citizens. (China maintains as many as 300,000 people were killed; Japan says the toll was far less.)

In 1944, during World War II, the light cruiser USS Nashville was badly damaged in a Japanese kamikaze attack off Negros Island in the Philippines that claimed 133 lives.

In 1962, the United States launched Relay 1, a communications satellite which retransmitted television, telephone and digital signals.

In 1974, Malta became a republic. George Harrison visited the White House, where he met President Gerald R. Ford.

In 1994, an American Eagle commuter plane crashed short of Raleigh-Durham International Airport in North Carolina, killing 15 of the 20 people on board.

In 1996, the U.N. Security Council chose Kofi Annan (KOH'-fee AN'-nan) of Ghana to become the world body's seventh secretary-general.

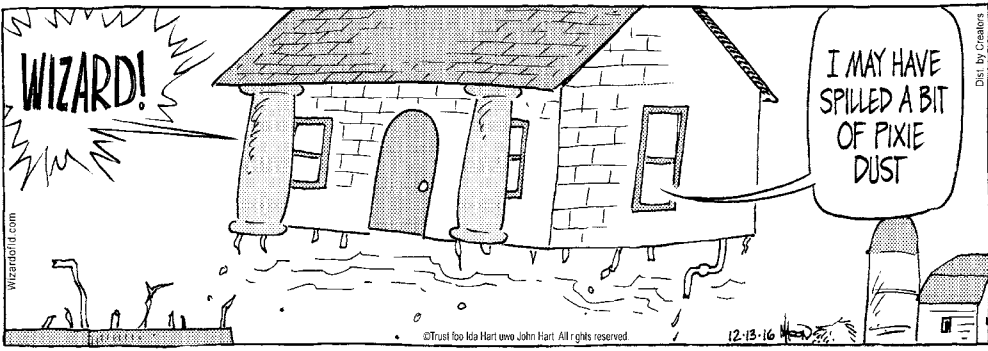
In 2003, Saddam Hussein was captured by U.S. forces while hiding in a hole under a farmhouse in Adwar, Iraq, near his hometown of Tikrit.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush held high-level talks at the Pentagon, after which he said he would "not be rushed" into a decision on a strategy change for Iraq. Sen.

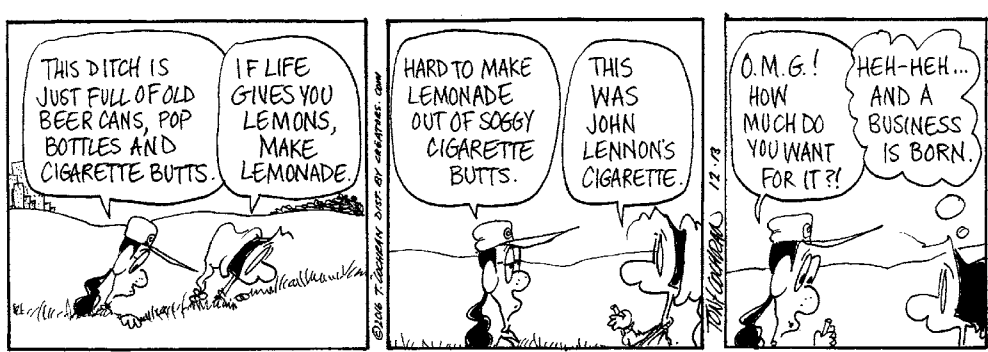
Tim Johnson, D-S.D., underwent emergency surgery after suffering bleeding in his brain. (Johnson later resumed his Senate duties.) Lamar Hunt, 74, the owner of football's Kansas City Chiefs who coined the term "Super Bowl," died in Dallas.

Five years ago: Early sound recordings by Alexander Graham Bell that were packed away at the Smithsonian Institution for more than a century were played publicly for the first time using new technology that read the sound with light and a 3D camera. (In one recording, a man recites part of Hamlet's Soliloquy; on another, a voice recites the numbers 1 through 6.) In the Penn State child sex abuse scandal, ex-assistant coach Jerry Sandusky waived a preliminary hearing on the charges, which he denied.

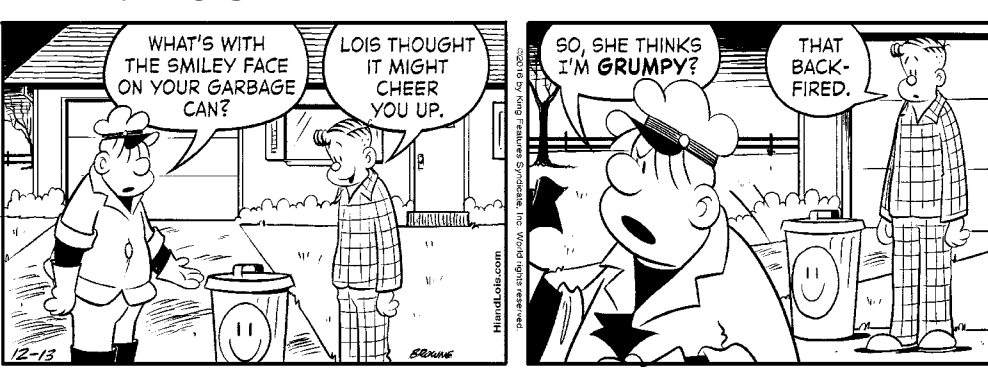
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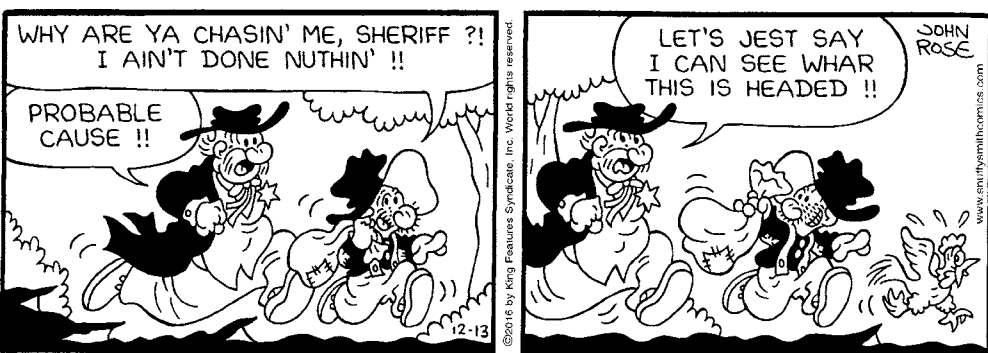
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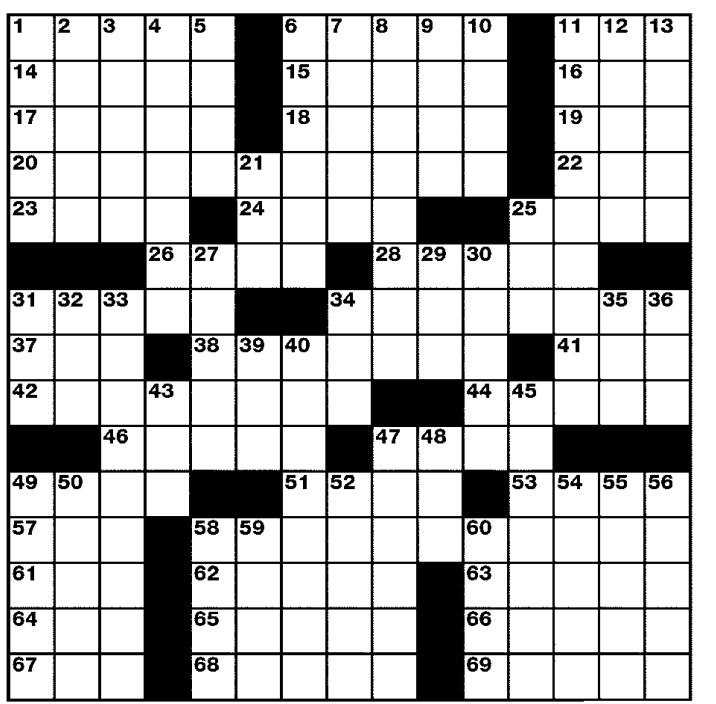
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Newsday Crossword

SPACE COLORS by Sally R. Stein Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

- ACROSS
- 1 Herb in pesto sauce
- 6 Cloud over
- 11 "It's cold!"
- 14 Any online magazine
- 15 Ringlike coral island
- 16 Gymnast Mary \_\_\_ Retton
- 17 Make a dash for
- 18 Half a sextet
- 19 S&L convenience
- 20 The moon's makeup, supposedly
- 22 Corn eater's discard
- 23 Stitched up
- 24 Capital of Switzerland
- 25 Cajun veggie
- 26 Backtalk
- 28 Physician's order
- 31 More angry
- 34 Gilbert and Sullivan ship
- 37 Amaze
- 38 Dual-purpose, as lenses
- 41 Grassy field
- 42 Europe, Asia and Africa
- 44 Construct, as a building
- 46 Hooded coat
- 47 Big \_\_\_ marble (Earth, as seen from space)
- 49 Depend (on)
- 51 Stubborn equine
- 53 Sentence in a script
- 57 Historical period
- 58 Certain small stars
- 61 Make illegal
- 62 Busybody
- 63 Whitish gems
- 64 Take off the shelf
- 65 Raring to go
- 66 Lauder of cosmetics
- 67 All ready
- 68 Newspaper article
- 69 Clairvoyants
- 9 Spanish cheers
- 10 Great delight
- 11 Dark spot in space
- 12 Machine part that spins
- 13 Cuban dance
- 21 Network with an eye logo
- 25 Clumsy one
- 27 \_\_\_ Day (tree-planting time)
- 29 Santa \_\_\_, CA
- 30 New Haven sch.
- 31 \_\_\_ Paulo, Brazil
- 32 Hooting bird
- 33 Nickname for Mars
- 34 Place for peas
- 35 Camcorder button
- 36 Have a meal
- 39 Annoy
- 40 Long-legged shore bird
- 43 By the \_\_\_ (incidentally)
- 45 Fall back
- 47 Blurred, as vision
- 48 Was in first place
- 49 Puzzle with pictures
- 50 Rub off
- 52 Speak
- 54 Extremely upset
- 55 Any Super Bowl athlete, for short
- 56 Double-curve shapes
- 58 Road-fork shapes
- 59 Make warmer
- 60 Misfortunes





# Colorado internet-tax case could change online shopping

By KRISTEN WYATT

Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Buying things online could get pricier after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a case Monday that could ultimately lead to states collecting billions of dollars in sales taxes lost to increasingly popular internet retailers.

The court would not hear a challenge to a Colorado law requiring online sellers such as Amazon.com to notify customers and the state how much they owe in taxes. State officials have estimated that Colorado alone has been missing out on as much as \$172.7 million a year.

At least three other states — Louisiana, Oklahoma and Vermont — have passed similar laws that could take effect given the resolution of the Colorado case.

Though the court didn't endorse Colorado's law and could even weigh in against it if given a different case, other states are likely to see Monday's move as a green light to step up collection efforts. That comes despite a 1992 Supreme Court decision saying retailers must have a physical presence in a state before officials can make them collect sales tax.

Online shoppers always have owed state sales taxes on their purchases, but the rule has been widely ignored. States have spent years examining ways to capture those lost tax dollars, but their options are limited when the retailers are not based in the state.

So-called Amazon taxes that started in New York have not been adequate to fill the widening gap, said Mark Behlke, director of budget and tax policy for the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Sales taxes account for about a third of revenue in many states, more in those with no income taxes, such as Texas and Florida. And with online sales going up about 15 percent a year, states are increasingly

feeling the effects of those taxes going unpaid.

The Colorado Legislature found a possible solution in 2010 when it passed a law requiring online retailers to notify customers to pay sales tax and report purchases to the state. That's not the same as demanding tax payments from out-of-state retailers.

The Data and Marketing Association sued, and a federal judge put the law on hold in 2012. A year later, a federal appeals court sided with Colorado. The association appealed to the nation's highest court, arguing that the law would meddle in interstate commerce.

The marketing group said the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the case could have far-reaching implications for online shoppers.

"It will only encourage other states to adopt similar laws and regulations that are designed to put arbitrary burdens on out-of-state sellers," association spokesman Mike Uehlein said in a statement.

Supporters of Colorado's law agreed it sends a strong signal that reporting requirements don't infringe on constitutional protections for interstate commerce.

"This settles the issue, once and for all, that the 2010 law is constitutional, it was not an undue burden on business," said Tim Hoover, spokesman for the Colorado Fiscal Institute, which supported the law.

George S. Isaacson, who represented the marketing group and teaches constitutional law at Bowdoin College, said the high court may simply be waiting to see more states copy Colorado.

"Colorado was the first state to pass such a law, and the Supreme Court may be waiting to see how other state legislatures and lower courts deal with this type of highly controversial state legislation before addressing the constitutional issues," Isaacson said in a statement.

# GEAR

Continued from Page 6A

National Sheriffs' Association Executive Director Jonathan F. Thompson said his group has pressed the topic in discussions with Trump's transition team. And William J. Johnson, executive director of the National Association of Police Organizations, said he was encouraged by his conversations with Trump representatives before the Nov. 8 election.

"The feeling that we got is they absolutely hear us and they share our concerns," he said.

Obama's order was triggered partly by police use of military-style gear and vehicles in response to the 2014 unrest in Ferguson. The order prohibited the federal government from providing grenade launchers, bayonets, tracked armored vehicles, weaponized aircraft and vehicles, and firearms and ammunition of .50-caliber or greater to state and local police agencies.

Since then, the Defense Logistics Agency has recalled 138 grenade launchers, more than 1,600 bayonets and 126 tracked vehicles — those that run on continuous, tank-like tracks instead of wheels — that were provided through the military's 1033 program, agency spokeswoman Michelle McCaskill said.

Peter Kraska, a professor at Eastern Kentucky University's School of Justice Studies who has studied the militarization of police, said Obama's executive order has had little effect because there was relatively little demand for the prohibited items to begin with.

"It was more symbolic politics than anything substantive," he said.

The order also added requirements for record-keeping, local oversight and training for the acquisition or use of other surplus military equipment such as wheeled armored vehicles, but those hurdles apparently have not deterred agencies from obtaining the gear. McCaskill said 183 law enforcement agencies have received mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles or MRAPs, through the 1033 program so far

this year. That's more than the 165 MRAPs that were distributed in 2013.

Nevertheless, Kraska said, there's nothing to justify most police departments having such equipment.

"It just ramps up the probability that this kind of kind of high-end military hardware is going to be misapplied," he said.

But Cass County, North Dakota, Sheriff Paul Laney said the executive order is aimed at urban areas and ignores the usefulness of tracked vehicles in rugged terrain.

"They fail to realize the dilemma it puts sheriffs in who live in the rural areas, the desert areas, the mountain areas," he said.

Oakland County, Michigan, Sheriff Michael Bouchard, whose tracked vehicle was recalled, said rescinding the order would restore police access to equipment they've been denied for what he called "purely optic" reasons.

Groups on both ends of the political spectrum have expressed concern about police militarization, from civil-rights organizations such as the NAACP and ACLU to the libertarian Cato Institute.

Raed Jarrar, government relations manager for the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker group committed to peace and social justice, said the executive order wasn't effective but rescinding it would send a message that "rather than attempting to curb militarism, the president-elect is planning to continue on that path."

The Charles Koch Institute, founded by its conservative billionaire namesake, considers the restrictions under Obama's executive order "a decent start," said William Ruger, vice president of policy and research.

"We don't want local police departments to be incentivized to get the types of equipment that in most cases are a better fit for the war zone," he said.

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