

## Convicted Neb. CSI Chief Fired By Sheriff

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Douglas County fired its chief crime scene investigator Wednesday, just over a week after he was convicted of planting evidence during a 2006 murder investigation.

But David Kofoed plans to fight his dismissal and appeal his criminal conviction, so the case may not be settled yet.

Douglas County Sheriff Tim Dunning said Kofoed was allowed to argue to keep his job at Wednesday's hearing. But he said Kofoed's felony conviction is a clear violation of department policy and civil service rules, so he was fired.

Kofoed had been commander of Douglas County's CSI unit since 2000. Before that, he worked for the Omaha Police Department as a crime lab specialist.

Kofoed had been on paid leave since last April when he was indicted on related federal charges. He was acquitted in the federal case last fall, but convicted last week of tampering with evidence in a 2006 Cass County case in which two men were wrongly charged in a double murder.

Kofoed found the only physical evidence that tied those two innocent men to the shotgun slayings of Wayne and Sharon Stock of rural Murdock.

The initial suspects were charged with murder and jailed for several months before being released because prosecutors determined the confession was unreliable and didn't fit the facts of the case. A man and woman from Wisconsin eventually pleaded guilty to murdering the couple and are serving life prison terms.

During his trial, Kofoed blamed accidental contamination for the speck of blood he found in a car linked to the suspects. The judge didn't buy that explanation and convicted him.

Kofoed's attorney, Steve Lefler, said the conviction will be appealed after sentencing in May.

Lefler said Kofoed will also appeal his firing because he maintains his innocence and he passed a polygraph about how he handled evidence during an internal department investigation in 2008.

Kofoed remains free on bond until his sentencing May 10. He faces up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

## OBITUARIES

### Sylvia Loecker

FORDYCE, Neb. — Sylvia C. Loecker, 81, of Fordyce, Neb., died surrounded by family on Tuesday (March 30, 2010) at her residence.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. Monday at St. Boniface Catholic Church, Menominee, Neb., with the Revs. David Fulton and Tim Lange officiating. Burial will be in the parish cemetery.

Visitation is 3-5 p.m. Sunday at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, and resume at 7 p.m. Sunday for a wake service at St. Boniface Catholic Church, Menominee.

Visitation will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

### Christine Patterson

WAGNER — Christine Patterson, 81, of Wagner died Tuesday (March 30, 2010) at Community Memorial Hospital, Wagner.

Funeral services are at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Wagner American Legion Hall. Burial is in the Hill Church Presbyterian Cemetery, rural Dante.

Wake services will begin today (Thursday) at the Legion Hall. Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home, Wagner, is in charge of arrangements.

## Thank You

I wish to thank everyone for the greetings of cards, phone calls, gifts and taking me out for lunches for my 80th birthday. It was greatly appreciated and very uplifting. God Bless.

Nadean Auch

# Killer Of Kansas Abortion Doctor Faces Life Sentence

BY ROXANA HEGEMAN  
Associated Press Writer

WICHITA, Kan. — The man who gunned down one of the few doctors in the U.S. to perform late-term abortions could be sent to prison Thursday for the rest of his life, but he may have gotten what he wanted all along: It is now markedly harder in Kansas to get an abortion.

Dr. George Tiller's clinic is closed, leaving the state with no facility where women can have the procedure after the 21st week of pregnancy. An early vow by one of Tiller's contemporaries to fill the gap hasn't materialized, and state lawmakers are moving to enact tough new rules to dissuade other physicians from taking Tiller's place.

"The national anti-abortion movement has a tremendous victory here," said Dr. Warren Hern, a longtime friend of Tiller who performs late-term abortions in Colorado. "They accomplished exactly what they wanted and they continue to accomplish it."

But even as Scott Roeder faces a mandatory life sentence for killing Tiller, many ponder the conflicting legacies of his actions. Outside Kansas, abortion rights supporters say there's been a surge in late-term abortion practices by doctors emboldened to pick up where Tiller left off.

"What he really did was murder a doctor in church, and the effect on abortion is negligible," said Dr. LeRoy Carhart, a Nebraska doctor who worked part-time for Tiller.

Carhart said Wednesday he had not given up on opening a practice in Kansas where women can have a late-term procedure, even though he admitted his plans were in a state of flux given the rules

passed late Tuesday night by the Kansas Legislature.

Some people on the other side of the abortion debate aren't taking comfort in the fate of Roeder, 52, of Kansas City, Mo., who was convicted in January of first-degree murder for fatally shooting Tiller last May as the doctor served as an usher in his Wichita church. The only question remaining Thursday is whether Roeder's imprisonment will include a mandatory minimum of 25 or 50 years behind bars.

"Mr. Roeder was a setback to the pro-life movement — and to give him any sort of credit for reducing or stopping abortion is well beyond reason," said Troy Newman, president of Operation Rescue.

Roeder's militant sympathizers disagree. "He went ahead and laid down his life to save unborn children and to me that is the definition of a hero — he gave up his life to save someone else," said Rev. Don Spitz, of Chesapeake, Va., who runs the Army of God Web site supporting violence against abortion providers.

In Kansas, Tiller's killing has practically erased late-term procedures and forced women to Albuquerque, N.M., and Boulder, Colo., among other places, to have them.

Just three clinics in the state — all located in or near the Kansas City metro area — offer limited abortion services for women up to their 21st week of pregnancy.

"People were coming from all over the world to have abortions in Kansas," said Karl Ann Rinker, a lobbyist for the National Organization for Women's Kansas chapter. "Now they don't come here because Dr. Tiller has been killed."

Beyond the state, however, abortion rights advocates say doctors are increasingly offering the procedure to ensure women have access.

# Seniors Still Wary Of Health Overhaul Impact On Medicare

WASHINGTON (AP) — Seniors aren't celebrating President Barack Obama's health care overhaul.

While Democrats hail the sweeping legislation as the greatest expansion of the social safety net since Medicare, they also fear that seniors won't see it that way for this fall's elections. Indeed, Republicans have portrayed the overhaul as a raid on Medicare — a bedrock of retirement security — to provide money to pay for covering younger, uninsured workers and their families.

An Associated Press-Gfk survey in March found that 54 percent of seniors opposed the legislation that was then taking final shape in Congress, compared with 36 percent of people age 18-50. And last week a USA Today/Gallup Poll found that a majority of seniors said passing the bill was a bad thing — while younger people were positive about it.

There's no doubt that broad cuts in projected Medicare payments to insurance plans, hospitals, nursing homes and other service providers will sting. What hasn't sunk in yet is that the new law also improves the lot of many Medicare beneficiaries. Obama is hoping that most will eventually conclude the pluses outweigh the minuses.

Keenly aware that this is a congressional election year, Democrats structured the law so virtually all the cuts start next

year and take effect only gradually. For this year, the law provides a sweetener. More than 3 million seniors who have been falling into a Medicare prescription coverage gap will get a \$250 rebate, a down payment on closing the "doughnut hole."

Nonetheless, seniors are anxious.

It's going to take a while before the verdict is in. Change will come slowly to Medicare, which covers 46 million seniors and disabled people. There will be winners and losers.

—Gross cuts in projected payments to insurers, hospitals and other providers total \$533 billion over 10 years, according to a preliminary analysis by the Kaiser Family Foundation. About \$100 billion will be plowed back into Medicare, leaving a net cut of \$428 billion. Medicare spending will continue to grow under the law, just not as fast. The reductions are smaller (about 6 percent) than Democratic President Bill Clinton and a Republican Congress came up with in 1997 (12 percent). Still, they're deep enough that some experts believe a future Congress will reconsider them.

—The law strengthens traditional Medicare, which covers about three-fourths of seniors, by improving preventive care and increasing payments to frontline primary care doctors and nurses serving as medical coordinators.

But it gradually reduces generous government subsidies to private insurance plans, Medicare alternatives that have lately gained popularity. That could lead to an exodus from the private plans.

—The most significant new benefit — closing Medicare's prescription coverage gap — won't be fully phased in until 2020. That's a long time if you're old and frail. The coverage gap starts after the first \$2,830 spent on medications in a year. Seniors then pay entirely out of their pocket until they have spent \$4,550, when the government starts picking up 95 percent of the tab. After the rebate this year, seniors in the gap will get a 50 percent discount on brand name drugs in 2011, and a smaller break on generics. The discounts gradually ramp up until the "doughnut hole" is closed.

—One change has received little attention but could have major consequences. The law authorizes a variety of experiments to provide better care for seniors struggling with multiple chronic illnesses — about half the program's beneficiaries. Prominent voices in the medical community have been clamoring for the government to use Medicare as a laboratory for change. If the approach succeeds, fewer people may end up in the hospital for bad drug reactions and other common problems.

## NATION/STATE DIGEST

### Ag Dept Reveals S.D., Neb. Planting Reports

By The Associated Press

The Agriculture Department says South Dakota farmers this year are expected to plant more acres of soybeans, while corn acres will remain unchanged from last year.

South Dakota soybean acres this year are expected to total 4.4 million, up 4 percent from last year, while corn acres are pegged at a stable 5 million.

The Agriculture Department says a drop in acres is expected for winter wheat, durum wheat and barley in South Dakota. Acres of spring wheat, sunflowers, sorghum, oats and dry edible beans are expected to be up. Hay and flax acres are expected to be unchanged in the state.

Following a record harvest last year, Nebraska farmers are planning to plant 9.2 million acres of corn this year.

U.S. Department of Agriculture says that would be an acreage increase of 1 percent over 2009.

The final USDA survey for 2009 says Nebraska's record corn crop was an estimated 1.58 billion bushels. That beat the 2007 record by 8 percent.

The USDA also says its survey earlier this month suggests that Nebraska farmers will plant 4.9 million acres of soybeans, 2 percent more than 2009.

A separate USDA report issued Wednesday says 906 million bushels of corn were being stored in Nebraska as of March 1 — 12 percent more than was on hand a year earlier.

The soybean storage was 91 million bushels, down 8 percent from 2009.

### S.D. Regents Target Programs For Cuts

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota's Board of Regents has targeted 37 programs and 109 specializations within majors at the state's six public universities for cuts.

Officials view the effort more as a housecleaning exercise. University of South Dakota provost Chuck Staben says he thinks financial savings will be minimal.

Some programs are to be eliminated because of low enrollment. In many cases, schools offer a bachelor of arts degree and a bachelor of science in a program, and are to eliminate one or the other.

South Dakota State is to drop numerous specialization designations in programs. For example, journalism students' diplomas no longer would say they specialized in a certain area such as broadcasting.

Regents CEO Jack Warner says officials will make sure that students enrolled in targeted programs can complete their degree work.

### Texting, Driving Secondary Offense In Neb.

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Don't worry about getting pulled over for texting while driving in Nebraska.

Lawmakers passed an amendment Wednesday to make texting while driving a so-called secondary offense, much like the state's seat-belt law.

Drivers would have to be pulled over for primary offenses, like speeding, before they could be ticketed for texting.

The amended bill (LB945) got second-round approval.

Already in Nebraska, people under 18 can't use cell phones or text while driving, and they are secondary offenses.

### Penalty For Pot On Par With Booze In Neb.

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers have decided that teen pot smokers should face the same penalty as teen drinkers.

On Wednesday, they amended a bill to give judges the option of suspending the driver's licenses of people 18 and younger who are convicted of possessing marijuana.

Originally, the bill only contained that same potential penalty for teens convicted of illegally possessing alcohol.

Sen. Russ Karpisek of Wilber proposed the pot amendment, saying use of that drug is just as dangerous as alcohol.

The bill got second-round approval on Wednesday after being amended.

Under the bill, licenses could be suspended anywhere from a month to a year, depending on how many minor-in-possession or pot possession convictions teenagers had.

■ Get Updates At Yankton Online (www.yankton.net)

## IN REMEMBRANCE

**Thomas Beam**

10:00 AM, Thursday  
First Baptist Church  
Wayne NE

**Alfreda Lien**

2:00 PM, Thursday  
Faith United Lutheran Church  
Volin

**WINTZ & RAY**  
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and Cremation Service, Inc.  
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**WINTZ**  
FUNERAL HOME INC.  
Hartington, Coleridge, Crofton  
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to the...  
**YANKTON MALL**  
**Easter Egg Hunt**  
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Ages 1-3 use north entrance  
(by Godfather's)  
Ages 4-6 Use south entrance  
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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31 - SATURDAY, APRIL 3, ONLY!  
\$15 or \$10 savings coupon is valid for one-time use on a single purchase of \$75 or \$50 or more respectively, excluding taxes and shipping charges Wednesday, March 31 - Saturday, April 3, 2010. One coupon per customer; must be presented at time of purchase. Discount does not apply to: "2 for more prices," Cosmetics & Fragrances, Cookware, Electronics, Floor Care, Furniture & Mattresses, Kitchen Electronics, Personal Care, Sephora, Levi's, Outlet Stores, Services, Salon Service & Service Contracts or Gift Cards-Gift Cards, current orders or prior purchases, and the following additional jcp.com & catalog purchases: Value Right, Combo prices and Top. Discounts cannot be combined with any other discount coupon. Discount applied to all qualifying items on prorated basis; any refunds will be given in the prorated amount. No Cash Value.  
ASSOCIATE PROCEDURES: 1. Verify offer dates. 2. Verify minimum purchase amount. 3. Scan barcode. 4. Place coupon in media bag.  
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