

### Official: Future Of High Plains Aquifer Uncertain

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Groundwater levels in the aquifer beneath Nebraska have generally remained healthy, unlike levels in Texas and other Plains states, but officials aren't sure if that will continue as farmers continue to irrigate.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reported that experts at the U.S. Geologic Survey agency that study the vast underground bodies of water stretching beneath eight states say they can't predict how the aquifer will fare.

Steve Peterson, lead hydrologist for the High Plains Groundwater Availability Study, said the aquifer's future will depend on regulations and water-management decisions made by farmers and officials.

Peterson said groundwater levels in Texas and other Southern Plains states have fallen more than 150 feet compared to the era before irrigation.

The High Plains Aquifer is more commonly known as the Ogallala Aquifer. It stretches underneath some 174,000 square miles in parts of South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. The amount of water stored underground in the aquifer varies greatly across the region.

"A lot of people do talk about doom and gloom for the Ogallala," Peterson said, "and I can see why they have that understanding, especially in the southern part."

Water users know they are mining a limited resource, Peterson said, noting further restrictions on irrigation might be necessary.

"It certainly seems like the opportunity for managing the system always comes down in the end to what sorts of choices people are willing to make," Peterson said.

A new report due out this fall will look at groundwater modeling.

Peterson said nearly one-third of all groundwater pumping for irrigation in the United States is done in the High Plains Aquifer.

"So this is important at a national level," he said.

### Contractors Make Money In S. Falls Cleanup

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Private contractors will take in more than \$2 million helping the city of Sioux Falls cleanup from the ice storm that dropped tree limbs in the area earlier this month.

After the ice storm began April 9, the city tapped private arborists and debris haulers to help city crews clear snow, ice and fallen tree limbs.

The *Argus Leader* reports the city had received \$334,000 in invoices from those companies by Friday. More requests for payment are yet to come.

Federal Emergency Management Agency officials will be in southeastern South Dakota this week assessing damage as South Dakota prepares a request for a presidential disaster declaration. The agency will make a recommendation to Gov. Dennis Daugaard on which counties should be included in a request for federal assistance.

### Fugitive Owner Of Collapsed Building Caught

SAVAR, Bangladesh (AP) — The fugitive owner of an illegally constructed building that collapsed and killed at least 377 people was captured Sunday by a commando force as he tried to flee into India. At the disaster site, meanwhile, fire broke out in the wreckage and forced authorities to suspend the search for survivors temporarily.

Mohammed Sohul Rana was arrested in the western Bangladesh border town of Benapole, said Jahangir Kabir Nanak, junior minister for local government. Rana was brought back by helicopter to the capital of Dhaka where he faced charges of negligence.

Rana's capture was announced by loudspeaker at the disaster site, drawing cheers and applause from those awaiting the outcome of a continuing search-and-rescue operation for survivors of Wednesday's collapse.

Many of those killed were workers at clothing factories in the building, known as the Rana Plaza, and the collapse was the deadliest disaster to hit the garment industry in Bangladesh that is worth \$20 billion annually and is a mainstay of the economy.

The fire that broke out late Sunday night sent smoke pouring from the piles of shattered concrete and halted some of the rescue efforts — including a bid to free a woman who was found trapped in the rubble.

### Many Air Shows Canceled After Budget Cuts

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Dozens of air shows that draw tens of thousands of people and generate millions of dollars for local economies have been cancelled this year after the military grounded its jet and demonstration teams because of automatic federal budget cuts.

For years, the biggest draws at air shows have been the military's two elite jet teams, the U.S. Navy's Blue Angels and the U.S. Air Force's Thunderbirds, and their intricate stunts. The armed services also have provided F-16, F-18 and F-22 fighter jets and the U.S. Army Parachute Team, known as the Golden Knights. All the teams were grounded as of April 1 to save money, and the military also dramatically curtailed its help with ground displays of various aircraft.

Those cutbacks have affected more than 200 of the approximately 300 air shows held in the United States each year, said John Cudahy, president of the International Council of Air Shows. About 60 shows have been cancelled, and he expects more cancellations as the season progresses and hope for restoration of the budget cuts fades. He predicted 15 percent to 20 percent of the shows won't return next year, even if the military begins participating again.

"The worst case is that they either cancel and go out of business, or they don't cancel and they have such poor attendance and they go out of business," he said.

Local economies also will feel the sting of the cancellations without the air shows bringing in crucial tourism dollars.

# Could Syrian Chemical Weapons Menace U.S.?

BY PHILIP ELLIOTT  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons could be a greater threat after that nation's president leaves power and could end up targeting Americans at home, lawmakers warned Sunday as they considered a U.S. response that stops short of sending military forces there.

U.S. officials last week declared that the Syrian government probably had used chemical weapons twice in March, newly provocative acts in the 2-year civil war that has killed more than 70,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands more. The U.S. assessment followed similar conclusions from Britain, France, Israel and Qatar — key allies eager for a more aggressive response to the Syrian conflict.

President Barack Obama has said Syria's likely action — or the transfer of President Bashar Assad's stockpiles to terrorists — would cross a "red line" that would compel the United States to act.

Lawmakers sought to remind viewers on Sunday news programs of Obama's declaration while discouraging a U.S. foothold on the ground there.

"The president has laid down the line, and it can't be a dotted line. It can't be anything other than a red line," said House Intelligence

Committee Chairman Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich. "And more than just Syria, Iran is paying attention to this. North Korea is paying attention to this."

Added Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga.: "For America to sit on the sidelines and do nothing is a huge mistake."

Obama has insisted that any use of chemical weapons would change his thinking about the United States' role in Syria but said he didn't have enough information to order aggressive action.

"For the Syrian government to utilize chemical weapons on its people crosses a line that will change my calculus and how the United States approaches these issues," Obama said Friday.

But Rep. Jan Schakowsky, an Illinois Democrat, said Sunday the United States needs to consider those weapons. She said that when Assad leaves power, his opponents could have access to those weapons or they could fall into the hands of U.S. enemies.

"The day after Assad is the day that these chemical weapons could be at risk ... (and) we could be in bigger, even bigger trouble," she said.

Both sides of the civil war already accuse each other of using the chemical weapons.

The deadliest such alleged attack was in the Khan al-Assal village in the Aleppo province in March. The Syrian government called for the United Nations to investigate alleged chemical

weapons use by rebels in the attack that killed 31 people.

Syria, however, has not allowed a team of experts into the country because it wants the investigation limited to the single Khan al-Assal incident, while U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged "immediate and unfettered access" for an expanded investigation.

One of Obama's chief antagonists on Syria, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the United States should go to Syria as part of an international force to safeguard the chemical weapons. But McCain added that he is not advocating sending ground troops to the nation.

"The worst thing the United States could do right now is put boots on the ground on Syria. That would turn the people against us," McCain said.

His friend, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., also said the United States could safeguard the weapons without a ground force. But he cautioned the weapons must be protected for fear that Americans could be targeted. Raising the specter of the lethal bomb at the finish line of the Boston Marathon, Graham said the next attack on U.S. soil could employ weapons that were once part of Assad's arsenal.

"Chemical weapons — enough to kill millions of people — are going to be compromised and fall into the wrong hands, and the next bomb that goes off in America may not have nails and glass in it," he said.

# Army Says No More Tanks, But Congress Insists

BY RICHARD LARDNER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Built to dominate the enemy in combat, the Army's hulking Abrams tank is proving equally hard to beat in a budget battle.

Lawmakers from both parties have devoted nearly half a billion dollars in taxpayer money over the past two years to build improved versions of the 70-ton Abrams.

But senior Army officials have said repeatedly, "No thanks."

It's the inverse of the federal budget world these days, in which automatic spending cuts are leaving sought-after pet programs struggling or unpaid altogether. Republicans and Democrats for years

have fought so bitterly that law-making in Washington ground to a near-halt.

Yet in the case of the Abrams tank, there's a bipartisan push to spend an extra \$436 million on a weapon the experts explicitly say is not needed.

"If we had our choice, we would use that money in a different way," Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army's chief of staff, told The Associated Press this past week.

Why are the tank dollars still flowing? Politics.

Keeping the Abrams production line rolling protects businesses and good paying jobs in congressional districts where the tank's many suppliers are located.

If there's a home of the Abrams,

it's politically important Ohio. The nation's only tank plant is in Lima. So it's no coincidence that the champions for more tanks are Rep. Jim Jordan and Sen. Rob Portman, two of Capitol's Hill most prominent deficit hawks, as well as Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown. They said their support is rooted in protecting national security, not in pork-barrel politics.

The Abrams dilemma underscores the challenge that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel faces as he seeks to purge programs that the military considers unnecessary or too expensive in order to ensure there's enough money for essential operations, training and equipment.

Hagel, a former Republican sen-

ator from Nebraska, faces a daunting task in persuading members of Congress to eliminate or scale back projects favored by constituents.

Federal budgets are always peppered with money for pet projects. What sets the Abrams example apart is the certainty of the Army's position.

Sean Kennedy, director of research for the nonpartisan Citizens Against Government Waste, said Congress should listen when one of the military services says no to more equipment.

"When an institution as risk averse as the Defense Department says they have enough tanks, we can probably believe them," Kennedy said.

# Activists Plan Protest If Wounded Knee Land Sold

RAPID CITY (AP) — Native American activists have vowed to protest if someone buys and tries to develop a piece of land at the Wounded Knee National Historic landmark in western South Dakota.

James Czywczynski has announced that he plans to sell the 40-acre parcel, which sits next to where about 150 of the 300 Lakota men, women and children killed by the 7th Cavalry in 1890 are buried. Czywczynski has given the Oglala Sioux Tribe until Wednesday to make an offer on the land. He has said he has received offers from West Coast-based investment groups that are willing to pay the \$3.9 million asking price.

Czywczynski also is trying to sell another 40-acre piece of nearby land for \$1 million. He told the *Rapid City Journal* he would only sell the Wounded Knee parcel and the other land, located at Porcupine Butte, as a package deal for no less than \$4.9 million.

Tribal officials have scorned the price and the Wednesday deadline to make an offer. Many Lakota oppose commercial development there because they see it as an exploitation of a tragedy.

"This is our backyard; this is our homeland," said Garfield Steele, a tribal representative. "This has historical value for our people, not to any non-Indian. We will fight to keep it, as is, by all means."

Steele said opposition could include protests to stop the land from being converted into a tourist attraction.

The Wounded Knee National Historical landmark comprises 870 acres. Along with its proximity to the burial grounds, the land for sale includes the site of a former trading post that burned down during the 1973 Wounded Knee uprising, in which hundreds of American Indian Movement protesters were involved in a 71-day standoff. Two tribal members died and a federal agent was seriously wounded.

The uprising is credited with raising awareness of Native American struggles and giving rise to a wider protest movement that lasted the rest of the decade. Don Cuny, 61, a member of the American Indian Movement who protested in 1973, pledged to stage a sit-in if the land is developed.

Czywczynski said he is not worried about protests.

"Let them protest," he said. "I don't care."

Czywczynski said he believes the tribe has ample money to meet his \$4.9 million price, which he said is fair given the potential for the tribe to turn it into a commercial venture.

Nathan Blindman, a descendant of one of the survivors of the 1890 massacre, said he wants to fight the sale in court. He said the

Bureau of Indian Affairs made a mistake when it approved the original sale of land from its Lakota owners to a non-Indian couple in 1930. That couple sold the property to Czywczynski in 1968.

Blindman said the agency, which is required to approve sales of Indian land to private buyers, neglected to consider the property's historical value and did not consult tribal leaders. He said the

federal government should step in to return the land to the Lakota.

Frank Pommersheim, a law professor at the University of South Dakota, said the courts are unlikely to be convinced by that argument.

### OBITUARIES

#### Francis Christensen

Chris Christensen, 75, of Yankton died Sunday, April 28, 2013, at Saint Mary's Hospital, Rochester, Minn.

Arrangements are pending under the care of the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton.

2013, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 2, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home, Yankton, with the Rev. David Gunderson officiating. Burial will be in the Sacred Heart Cemetery, Yankton.

Visitation is 5-8 p.m. Wednesday, May 1, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home, Yankton, with a prayer service at 7:30 p.m. Visitation resumes one hour prior to the funeral.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the Gift of Life Transplant House, 705 Second St. SW, Rochester, MN 55902.

To post an online sympathy message, visit [www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com).

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