

### Yemen: 7 Militants Killed By Drones

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — At least seven suspected militants from Saudi Arabia were among the alleged al-Qaida members killed in Yemen in a recent wave of U.S. drone strikes, senior Yemeni officials said Friday, suggesting that Saudis are increasingly crossing the border to carry funds or seek terrorist training.

With several U.S. diplomatic posts closed temporarily in Africa and the Middle East this week amid a global alert about terrorism, Washington evacuated most of its personnel from Lahore, Pakistan's second-largest city. The U.S., along with Britain, also flew diplomatic staff out of Yemen's capital of Sanaa this week.

Since July 27, drone attacks in Yemen's southern and central provinces have killed a total of 34 militants suspected of being members of the country's al-Qaida branch, known as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, security officials have said. On Thursday alone, the officials said U.S. drones conducted three airstrikes, killing 12 militants.

The drone strikes occurred in areas where the terrorist group enjoys protection from anti-government tribes or hides in mountainous areas.

### US Seeking Exclusions In Madoff Trial

NEW YORK (AP) — Prosecutors want evidence of romantic and sexual relationships excluded from the upcoming trial of some of Ponzi king Bernard Madoff's subordinates.

Prosecutors say in court papers filed in federal court in New York late Thursday that four of five defendants and several government witnesses were at times seeing each other romantically or were sexually involved with one another. They say one defendant was in a love triangle with Madoff himself.

The government says that over the course of Madoff's multi-decade, multibillion-dollar fraud, a number of his employees and customers were dating or having affairs.

The government says it seeks to exclude the evidence from a fraud trial set to start Oct. 7. All five defendants pleaded not guilty Friday to charges in a rewritten indictment.

### Family Of Missing Calif. Teen Hopeful

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Family members of a California teen who has been missing for nearly a week say they are relieved she was sighted with her possible abductor in the Idaho wilderness.

Hannah Anderson's father, Brett Anderson, said Friday he was cautiously optimistic about the chances of her safe return.

Anderson says he can't explain why his daughter didn't ask the horseback riders for help. He says it is impossible to understand her state of mind.

### More Floods Possible In Central US

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Water-weary residents of Missouri, Kansas and nearby states are girding for more possible floods after a week of intermittent downpours dumped as much as 15 inches of rain and caused several deaths.

The National Weather Service in Springfield, Mo. forecast heavy rainfall and a risk of floods late Friday through early Saturday across southeast Kansas and parts of central and southern Missouri. More rain is expected through Tuesday, said meteorologist Doug Craner.

A storm front that arrived on Aug. 2 and stalled over the Plains has hit Missouri's Ozarks region the hardest, with parts of Arkansas, Tennessee and Oklahoma also experiencing persistent rain and spotty flooding, leading to at least four fatalities.

Authorities in southwest Missouri identified 69-year-old Helen Pendergraft of Noel as the woman who died before dawn Thursday as she attempted to drive across a flooded creek near the town of Jane. Early Tuesday, a 4-year-old boy and his 23-year-old mother died when their car was swept up in a flash flood in the south-central Missouri town of Waynesville.

And in Oklahoma City, a 60-year-old man drowned early Friday while trying to rescue a relative who was stranded by floodwaters. Police say the man was swept into a drainage canal and his body was found several blocks away. The relative, who was stranded in a car, escaped without injury.

The slow-moving storm forced mobile home and campground evacuations and closed parts of Interstate 44 in Missouri. A crew of rescuers were themselves rescued after their boat broke down in McDonald County. Water rescues were also reported in Kansas, Arkansas and Tennessee.

### CNN's Gupta Backpedals On Marijuana

NEW YORK (AP) — CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta says he spoke too soon in opposing the medical use of marijuana in the past and that he now believes the drug can have very real benefits for people with specific health problems.

Gupta, the network's chief medical correspondent and a brain surgeon, detailed his change of heart in an interview Friday and in an article for CNN's website titled, "Why I changed my mind on weed." He will narrate a documentary on the topic that will air on the network Sunday.

He wrote in *Time* magazine in 2009 about his opposition to laws that would make the drug available for medical purposes. "Smoking the stuff is not going to do you health any good," he wrote then. But Gupta said Friday he too easily associated marijuana with "malingerers that just wanted to get high."

Now he wants to say he's sorry. Gupta said he didn't look hard enough at research on the topic, and found some new research that had been done since then. He was encouraged to look into the issue further upon meeting a 5-year-old girl in Colorado for whom medical marijuana has sharply cut down on the amount of seizures she had been suffering.

### Baked Alaska: Fairbanks Adds To Record Heat Stretch

FAIRBANKS, Alaska (AP) — The temperature hit 80 degrees for the record 36th time this summer on Thursday in Fairbanks.

And, only 1.44 inches of rain has fallen in Alaska's second-largest city since June 1.

Meteorologist Ed Plumb at the National Weather Service office in Fairbanks told the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* that's 2.25 inches below normal and makes this summer the fourth-driest on record.

# Obama Vows Surveillance Reform, Sees Russian Reset

BY JULIE PACE  
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Responding to critics, President Barack Obama promised on Friday to work with Congress on "appropriate reforms" for the domestic surveillance programs that have stirred criticism at home and abroad. He also said it is time to recalibrate the United States' relationship with Russia, which is harboring NSA secrets leaker Edward Snowden.

"It's not enough for me to have confidence in these programs," the president declared of NSA domestic intelligence-gathering programs at a White House news conference, one day before his scheduled departure on a weeklong vacation. "The American people have to have confidence in them as well."

The president announced a series of changes in a program begun under the anti-terror Patriot Act that was passed in the wake of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. But none of the moves would alter the basic core of the program, the collection of millions of Americans' phone records.

As for Snowden, recently granted temporary asylum by Russia, Obama said he is not a patriot, as some have suggested, and challenged him to return to the United States to face espionage charges.

On Russia, Obama said that given recent differences over Syria, human rights and Snowden, it is "probably appropriate for us to take a pause, reassess where it is that Russia is going ... and recalibrate the relationship."

The hour-long news conference ranged over numerous issues, although the president became especially animated when the questions turned to Republicans in Congress. He said they would risk the wrath of the public if they vote to shut down the government this fall in an attempt to cut off funding for his signature health care law.

And on another congressional issue, he said that while he was open to House Republicans proposing an alternative immigration bill, his preference was for a vote on a Senate-passed measure that would combine border security with a chance at citizenship for millions of immigrants living in the country illegally.

He said he was "absolutely certain" such a bill would pass in the GOP-controlled U.S. House.

He did not mince words about the



President Barack Obama speaks during a news conference in the East Room of the White House on Friday in Washington.

United States' deteriorating relationship with Russia. He said President Vladimir Putin's recent decision to grant asylum to Snowden was merely the latest in a series of differences between the two countries, including a response to the Syrian civil war and to human rights issues.

"I've encouraged Mr. Putin to look forward rather than backward," Obama said, evoking memories of relations between the United States and the former Soviet Union.

The president, who just this week canceled a planned summit meeting with Putin, said he does not want the United States to boycott the upcoming 2014 Olympics scheduled to be held in Sochi, Russia, as a protest against Russian treatment of homosexuals.

"One of the things I'm really looking forward to is maybe some gay and lesbian athletes bringing home the gold or silver or bronze, which I think would go a long way in rejecting the kinds of attitudes that we're seeing here," he said. "And if Russia doesn't have gay or lesbian athletes, then that would probably make their team weaker."

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## Post Offices Losses Drop In 3rd Quarter

BY ANDREW MIGA  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Postal Service has trimmed its losses to \$740 million over the last three months by consolidating processing facilities, cutting hours for workers and post offices and reducing workers' compensation costs, the agency said Friday.

Still, year-to-date, the Postal Service had losses totaling \$3.9 billion, and the agency said that without help from Congress its financial woes will worsen.

The report for the financial quarter ending June 30 comes as Congress considers proposals to fix the agency's finances. The agency lost \$16 billion last year and is trying to restructure its retail, delivery and mail-processing operations.

Over the first nine months of its fiscal year, the Postal Service said 104 mail processing facilities were consolidated, career employee work hours were reduced by about 41 million and operating hours at 7,397 post offices were reduced.

The service wants to end most Saturday and door-to-door mail delivery. It also is seeking to reduce its congressionally mandated \$5.6 billion annual payment for future retiree health benefits.

The agency says ending Saturday mail delivery would save \$2 billion each year.

Joe Corbett, the agency's chief financial officer, said in a statement that "without comprehensive postal reform legislation signed into law, our hands are tied and we expect multibillion dollar annual losses to continue."

The third-quarter loss was far less than its \$5.2 billion loss for the same period last year. Postal officials said its cost-cutting and efficiency moves helped lower losses, along with a \$918 million decrease to its workers' compensation expenses due to interest rates.

Shipping and package revenue continued to be a bright spot for the agency, increasing 8.8 percent compared to the same period last year. That helped operating revenue rise 3.6 percent to \$16.2 billion in the third quarter, compared to last year's third quarter.

First-class mail revenue, the Postal Service's most profitable category, declined by 0.9 percent compared to the same period last year. Total mail volume was 37.9 billion pieces, down from 38.3 billion pieces for the third quarter last year.

The Postal Service for years has been wrestling with declining mail volume and a 2006 congressional requirement that it

make advance payments to cover expected health care costs for future retirees for 75 years in advance, something no federal agency does. The agency expects to miss a \$5.6 billion health care payment next month at the end of its fiscal year. It defaulted on two similar payments last year.

The pre-funding requirement for future retiree health benefits accounts for the brunt of the agency's red ink and underscores the urgency for Congress to end the mandate, postal officials say. About \$11.1 billion of last year's \$16 billion agency losses were due to the annual health care payments.

### Nebraska

# Lawsuit Dismissal Upheld

BY MARGERY A. BECK  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The Nebraska Supreme Court on Friday upheld the dismissal of a racial discrimination lawsuit by a state employee who said the state offered her inferior health insurance because she lives in Omaha.

Sandra Cartwright, a black woman, argued in her lawsuit that employees living in Omaha and Lincoln ZIP code areas that begin with either 680, 681 or 685 — where some 96 percent of the state's black employees reside — were given a choice between two health insurance plans that offered inferior coverage to what employees in other areas of the state could get.

Cartwright, who has since retired, had sought damages for pain, suffering, humiliation, inconvenience and emotional distress.

On Friday, Nebraska's high court said Cartwright failed to show that the health plans offered to those in Omaha and Lincoln were inferior to plans offered to others, citing state attorneys'

evidence that the plans for those living in the Lincoln and Omaha ZIP codes were nearly identical to the plans offered for those living outside those areas.

The only difference found in evidence presented by the state was that "across the board, the premiums paid in ZIP codes starting with 680, 681, and 685 were cheaper than the ... counterparts," the high court said.

Cartwright also failed to show that any alleged differences in the plans adversely affected her, it said.

"Cartwright alleged that her post-2006 health insurance did not cover her mammogram or Pap smear, did not allow access to some specialists, did not cover her insulin prescriptions and classified the doctor treating her back condition as an 'out-of-network provider,'" Nebraska Supreme Court Judge Michael McCormack wrote for the high court. "Cartwright's allegations fail because she never provided evidence that the plans she was excluded from would have provided these services. Rather, she repeatedly referenced

that these were covered under her previous Blue Cross Blue Shield policy, which is irrelevant."

Shannon Kingery, a spokeswoman for the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, said Friday that the office is "pleased with today's decision that affirms the State's insurance plan was not discriminatory."

The state ended its insurance strategy based on ZIP codes in 2009, but said it did so for cost savings, not allegations of discrimination.

An attorney for Cartwright, Kathleen Neary of Lincoln, doubted that explanation and credited Cartwright for "having the courage to file that lawsuit. If she hadn't, my guess is that the state would still be using this plan still today."

Neary scoffed at the idea that Friday's ruling might prompt state officials to reinstate a health insurance plan based on employees' ZIP codes.

"If the state implements another plan like they did based on ZIP codes in the future, I will be there to assist any state employee who is adversely affected by that plan," Neary said.

### Regents: Dean Of UC-RC Subject To Formal Hearing

RAPID CITY (AP) — The suspended dean of University Center-Rapid City will be subject to a formal hearing, the director of the South Dakota Board of Regents said.

The decision to suspend Craig Johnson was made by his employer, Black Hills State University, in conjunction with the board, Regents Executive Director Jack Warner told the *Rapid City Journal* for a story published Friday. A hearing date has not been set.

"It will be sooner rather than later," Warner said.

Kay Schallenkamp, Black Hills State's president, would not comment on the matter saying it's a "personnel issue."

Johnson took over as dean in October 2011, replacing the retiring dean, Dean Myers. Johnson previously worked as vice president for community engagement at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, N.Y.

Warner said officials are looking for an interim dean to make sure the center continues to run as smoothly as possible.

"We're looking at making sure the operations continue and we have taken steps to do that," he said. "We're in the process of identifying somebody who would step in on an interim basis."

The 60,000-square-foot University Center-Rapid City opened in April 2011, centralizing satellite courses from Black Hills State University in Spearfish, the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, Dakota State University in Madison and Northern State University in Aberdeen.

# Jewish Households In SD Open Up To 'Roving Rabbis'

BY DALTON WALKER  
Argus Leader

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Thursday's in-home visit by two young rabbis from Brooklyn left Sioux Falls resident Aloma Graham with a sense of connection to her Jewish roots.

Rabbis Shmuel Lefkowitz and

Yosef Sharfstein, both 23, are part of a

global community outreach training program called

"The Roving Rabbis." The men are in

Sioux Falls visiting with members of the city's small

Jewish community to increase awareness of and passion for Judaism, the

*Argus Leader* reported.

They are among hundreds of rabbinical students and young rabbis who spend their summer on the road across the world with a goal of making Judaism accessible and relevant to every Jew.

The rabbis have been knocking on doors across eastern South Dakota as part of a four-week visit sponsored by the group Chabad-Lubavitch. They flew into the Twin Cities late last month and drove to Aberdeen to begin their community outreach training. Most visits are one-on-one home visits.

Graham welcomed Lefkowitz and Sharfstein into her home Thursday. Graham said she has hosted roving rabbis each summer since 2008 and keeps in touch with some of her past visitors.

The rabbis said a prayer and shared their love for Judaism with Graham.

"It's a connection and making a connection to a community of Jews," she said. "That's the connection we try to keep."

Sharfstein blew Graham's Shofar — a ceremonial horn — in honor of the coming Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. Before leaving, the rabbis placed a small Mezuzah displaying

Hebrew verses on the doorway.

"The Mezuzah reminds us as we go in that everything we do that

God is with us," Sharfstein said.

"It also serves as a protection

for the person living in the home."

The two rabbis are in the city until Tuesday before driving to Black Hills with multiple stops in communities along the way. The two head back to Brooklyn Aug. 21.

The 2012 American Jewish Year Book estimated there were 345 Jews living in South Dakota, the fewest in the nation both in raw numbers and as a percentage of the state's population.

Lefkowitz said the challenge is finding those who do identify as Jewish and teaching them about Judaism and its history.

"To experience South Dakota is very, very unique in this aspect that you really get a feel for the needs of smallish Jewish communities," Graham said.

Rabbis Shmuel Lefkowitz and Yosef Sharfstein want to visit with other Jews in South Dakota. Both will be in Sioux Falls until Tuesday. Other stops include Mitchell, Pierre, Rapid City, Sturgis and Spearfish.

### Prosecutors To Seek Death Penalty In Beating Death

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Douglas County prosecutors will seek the death penalty for a 19-year-old man charged in the death of a 93-year-old woman who was beaten and raped last month in her home.

Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine said Friday that he filed documents earlier in the week to seek the death penalty for Sergio Martinez-Perez. The documents outlined two aggravating circumstances in the case: that the murder was committed in an effort to conceal the commission of a crime or Martinez-Perez's identity, and that the murder was especially heinous, cruel or "manifested exceptional depravity."

Nebraska law requires at least one aggravating circumstance in a case for a killer to be sentenced to death.

Martinez-Perez's attorney, Assistant Douglas County Public Defender Allyson Mendoza, did not immediately return a phone message left Friday seeking comment.

Martinez-Perez is being held without bond on charges of first-degree murder, first-degree sexual assault and burglary in the death of Louise Sollowin, who died from her injuries three days after the attack.

Investigators have said Sollowin's daughter called police after finding Martinez-Perez naked and passed out on top of her mother on the morning of July 21. Police arrived and arrested Martinez-Perez, determining that he entered the home through an unlocked door.

Prosecutors have said Martinez-Perez acknowledged assaulting and raping Sollowin, saying he was "angry with women" after a night of drinking.

Federal authorities have said Martinez-Perez is in the country illegally. Omaha police have said he was in the city working as a roofer at the time of the attack and has no known ties to Omaha.

Court records show that his next court hearing in Douglas County District Court is set for Sept. 13.

### Columbus Man Dies In Traffic Accident

COLUMBUS, Neb. (AP) — A 21-year-old Columbus man has died in a traffic accident on a rural road in eastern Nebraska's Colfax County.

The *Columbus Telegram* reports that Cody Black was pronounced dead at the scene on Thursday afternoon.

The Colfax County Attorney's Office says Black was ejected from his sport utility vehicle after he lost control of it and it rolled down an embankment. Twenty-two-year-old Rico Chavez was a passenger in the SUV. He was taken to Columbus Community Hospital for treatment and then released.

The accident is being investigated.

### Man Sentenced On Sex Abuse Charge

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A 62-year-old Martin man has been sentenced to five years in prison for having a sex with a 15-year-old girl more than 50 times in Bennett County in 2010 and 2011.

U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says that Chief Judge Jeffrey Viken sentenced Edwin Johnson in federal court for sexual abuse of a minor. Johnson was indicted by a federal grand jury in November and pleaded guilty in April.

He was turned over to the custody of the U.S. Marshal. The case was investigated by the Martin Police Department, the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### \$1M Powerball Ticket Sold In Nebraska

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Someone who bought a ticket at a convenience store in the eastern Nebraska town of Genoa has won a \$1 million Powerball prize.

The Nebraska Lottery says the ticket matched the first five numbers in Wednesday's drawing but not the Powerball number. The numbers were 5, 25, 30, 58 and 59, with the Powerball number of 32.

The ticket was sold at a Pump & Pantry on Willard Avenue. Three jackpot-winning tickets for Wednesday's \$448 million drawing were sold. Two were sold in New Jersey and one in Minnesota.

Nebraska Lottery spokesman Neil Watson says the \$1 million prize hadn't been claimed as of Friday afternoon.

### Audit Shows Voting Machine Accuracy

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's Secretary of State says a recent audit has shown the accuracy of voting machines in the state.

John Gale said in a news release Friday that the audit confirmed results from the November 2012 general election. The audit examined ballots from 29 randomly selected precincts in 19 counties across the state.

The ballots, which represent two percent of the state's total, were compared to results from the optical scanning equipment. More than 14,000 ballots were hand counted.

In 25 of the precincts, there were no differences between the voting machine and the hand count. The audit showed a few instances of poll worker error, where workers tried to rerun damaged ballots.

### Heating Pad Sparked Watertown Blaze

WATERTOWN (AP) — Investigators have concluded that frayed wires on a heating pad sparked a fire that destroyed a 41-unit senior housing complex in Watertown.

Fire Rescue Chief Doug Kranz tells KXLG radio that officials with the state fire marshal's office and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms helped determine the cause of the blaze late Tuesday and early Wednesday at the Sunchase Apartments.

### Unprotective Lincoln Mom Gets Jail

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A 25-year-old Lincoln mother who didn't protect her young daughter from her boyfriend has been given 100 days in jail and a severe scolding by county judge.

Online court records say Jessica Moton was sentenced on Thursday.

Authorities said Moton did nothing while her boyfriend broke her 14-month-old daughter's wrists and burned her at least 15 times with cigarettes.

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