

Nebraska

'Jack's Run' Voted Year's Top Story

BY NELSON LAMPE
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — A touchdown run by a 7-year-old boy with cancer has been voted by Associated Press newspaper and broadcaster members as the top Nebraska news story for 2013.

The 69-yard scamper by little Jack Hoffman occurred during the spring intrasquad game. Jack's pluck and the players' aid captured the hearts of Nebraska football fans and people who saw a YouTube video that's received nearly 8.4 million viewings. The video was played over and over on national television and it won an ESPY award as the "Best Moment."

In October Jack's father, Andy Hoffman, said an MRI test showed that the cancer was in remission. The encouraging news was tempered by warnings from the boy's doctors, his dad said: More than half of all kids in Jack's situation have relapses.

Finishing second in the voting was the resignation of Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy after revelations that he made thousands of calls to women other than his wife on a state-issued cellphone. The calls were revealed after the *Omaha World-Herald* reviewed his phone records.

University of Nebraska Regent Lavon

Heidemann was sworn into office as the state's 39th lieutenant governor less than two weeks after Sheehy resigned. The former state senator had to vacate his seat on the university's governing board.

U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns' decision to not seek a second term finished third in the voting. He announced Feb. 18 that he would not run for re-election in 2014, saying he wanted a "quieter time" to focus on his family following a busy political career that included stints as governor and President George W. Bush's agriculture secretary. Republican candidates to replace him include Omaha banker Sid Dinsdale, Omaha attorney Bart McLeay, former Nebraska State Treasurer Shane Osborn and Midland University President Ben Sasse.

Fourth place in the AP members' voting was the October blizzard that decimated cattle herds in western Nebraska ranching country.

Finishing fifth was the confirmation of former Nebraska U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel to become secretary of defense in the Democratic administration of President Barack Obama.

The tornado that struck the northeast Nebraska community of Wayne in early October finished sixth in the voting. The twister caused millions of dollars in damage and several dozen jobs at a mattress pad company that has chosen not to reopen its damaged plant. No one died in the storm,

and the injuries reported were minor.

Two stories tied for seventh in the AP voting: The decision to build a new Central Nebraska Veterans Home in Kearney got the same number of votes as the arrest of an Indiana doctor in the slayings of four Omaha people tied to a Creighton University medical school program.

In eighth place on the AP members' list was the Keystone XL pipeline. In January the governor approved a pipeline route through the state. The Obama administration is still considering whether to approve the project.

No. 9 in the balloting was the looming governor's race. Gov. Dave Heineman must step down after next year because of term limits. The race has taken a series of surprising turns. Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy and Falls City businessman Charles Herbst withdrew from the Republican race, following former Speaker Mike Flood, who bowed out last year. State Sen. Annette Dubas dropped out of the Democratic primary. Remaining in the primary contests are six Republican candidates and one Democrat.

The fate of the Nebraska football team finished 10th in the voting. The Huskers finished a disappointing regular season at 8-4, plagued by injuries and miscues. Head coach Bo Pelini kept his job, though, with a vote of confidence from the athletic director.

Neb. Population Shows Gradual Growth

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Newly released U.S. Census figures show Nebraska is continuing its moderate population growth at roughly the same rate as the nation.

The state had an estimated population of 1,868,516 as of July, for a net gain of about 13,000 people. The estimated growth was 0.7 percent higher than the estimated population in July 2012.

Jerry Deichert of the University of Nebraska Omaha's Center for Public Affairs Research says the state's population grew 2.3 percent since the last U.S. Census in 2010. The nation's population grew by 2.4 percent in the same period.

Deichert says Nebraska is likely continuing a trend of population growth around Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island and Kearney, while most other parts of the state see declines. Nebraska's population ranks 38th nationally.

RC Mayor: Developers Want Him Gagged

RAPID CITY (AP) — Developers of a planned \$50 million downtown revitalization project in Rapid City want the mayor to stop talking to potential funding sources.

Mayor Sam Kooiker has publicly raised questions about the developer's efforts to secure up to \$25 million in tax credits to help finance President's Plaza, a 15-story mixed development of retail shops, condos, a parking garage, convention center and hotel.

The development team, which includes Dream Design International President Hani Shafai and local developer Pat Hall, has sent a letter to the city attorney demanding that Kooiker "cease and desist" from probing further into the project's financial ventures. The City Council's legal and finance committee plans to review the letter on Tuesday, the *Rapid City Journal* reported.

Neb. Entities To Offer Same-Sex Benefits

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Nearly all Nebraska school districts and some cities and counties will soon begin offering insurance benefits to legally married same-sex couples.

The changes are being made in response to last June's U.S. Supreme Court ruling that negated part of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

Blue Cross Blue Shield decided to change its policy effective Jan. 1 because of the high court's ruling, and that company insurers all but three of the state's 249 school districts.

It wasn't immediately clear how many people would be affected by the change because Nebraska doesn't recognize same-sex marriage.

The Human Rights Campaign, which advocates for gays and lesbians, says Nebraska lags behind other states in offering benefits to same-sex couples.

That group says 67 percent of Fortune 500 companies offer same-sex partner benefits.

SD State Senator Resigns After Hip Surgery

RAPID CITY (AP) — South Dakota state Sen. Stan Adelstein announced Monday that he's resigning from his legislative seat due to complications from recent hip replacement surgery.

Adelstein, 82, said he had the surgery on Oct. 4 and should have returned to full mobility within 30 days, but continuing infection led to three additional operations.

Adelstein, chief executive officer for Northwestern Engi-



Adelstein

neering Co., said his latest medical schedule led him to conclude that he would not be able to give 100 percent to the job when the legislative session begins in January.

"I am hoping to have a new hip replacement completed in early January and am opti-

mistic about my prospects thereafter," the Rapid City Republican said in a statement.

Adelstein, who served four years in the House and seven years in the Senate, said he makes the decision with great reluctance because he loves representing the people of District 32.

In his letter to Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Adelstein said he knows the governor has many capable people to fill the re-

mainder of Adelstein's term.

"I hope that you will select someone who represents the mainstream of Republican thinking, someone who is devoted to improving our schools and universities and someone who is committed to protecting the civil liberties of all Americans," Adelstein said.

Daugaard has not announced who will be appointed to fill the District 32 seat.

Driving under the influence remains one of America's most committed crimes, not to mention deadliest. Drinking and Driving during the holidays can do more than just ruin your holiday fun. Consider these other pitfalls:

- financial penalties • loss of your driver's license
- destruction of your vehicle • injury, or even **DEATH**

Follow These Friendly Tips When You Go Out:

- Designate a sober driver before going out and give that person your keys;
- If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;
- If available, use your community's Sober Rides program;
- Promptly report drunk drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement;
- Wearing your safety belt while in a car or using a helmet and protective gear when on a motorcycle is your best defense against an impaired driver;
- And remember, Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going.

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