

## Omaha Company Scammed Of \$17.2M

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — International scammers have bilked an Omaha commodities company out of more than \$17 million.

The *Omaha World-Herald* reports that an executive with The Scoular Co., which employs 800 and has about \$6.2 billion in annual revenue, wired \$17.2 million last summer to a bank in China after receiving emails instructing him to do so from someone pretending to be Scoular's CEO Chuck Elsea and the company's outside auditing firm.

Court documents say the emails used addresses set up in Germany, France and Israel and computer servers in Moscow.

The FBI says the emails appeared genuine and contained elements of truth, including references to Scoular expanding in China and the company official's work with the auditing company.

## Elder Abuse Task Force Bill Moves On

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A bill that would create a state task force dedicated to studying elder abuse has passed its first committee.

The proposal brought by Sen. David Novstrup would establish an interim committee to study the issue and prevalence of financial, emotional and abuse of elders in the state.

The bill was spurred by Chief Justice of the Supreme Court David Gilertson. Gilertson urged lawmakers to take up the study in his State of the Judiciary speech this year.

He says elder abuse is more common than most people think and that states nationwide are starting to take action on the issue.

The bill to create to the elder abuse task force passed out of the Senate Retirement Laws committee unanimously Wednesday. It now goes to the Senate floor.

## Committee OKs Voter ID Bill For Debate

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Bill LB111, that would require Nebraska voters to show government-issued photo identification at the polls is headed to the full Legislature for debate.

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee voted 7-1 on Wednesday to advance the measure. Opponents have promised to filibuster the bill on the legislative floor and file a lawsuit if the bill becomes law.

The proposal by Sen. Tyson Larson of O'Neill would require voters to show a driver's license, state ID card or other government-issued photo identification.

An amendment backed by the committee would also allow for the use of tribal identification or county-issued voter registration acknowledgements.

## New Deadwood Games Passes To Floor

PIERRE (AP) — A legislative panel has passed a measure that would authorize three new voter-approved games in Deadwood.

The Senate State Affairs Committee on Wednesday approved the proposal to allow keno, craps and roulette in the historic mining town.

Boosters have pushed the measure as a way to keep Deadwood competitive with other gambling hotspots. In November, 57 percent of voters approved constitutional Amendment Q, which gave the Legislature the authority to implement the new games.

Deadwood Mayor Chuck Turbiville says the new games are part of the city's revitalization efforts. He says allowing keno, craps and roulette in Deadwood is the "will of the people."

## Committee Approves Plans To Hike Pay

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota legislative committee has approved several proposals to allow for increases in lawmakers' compensation.

The House State Affairs Committee on Wednesday passed proposals to make legislator pay at least \$6,000 and to allow lawmakers to be eligible for the same pay increases that state workers get when the Legislature passes across-the-board raises for public employees.

Republican Rep. Jim Bolin of Canton has said the measures would help attract candidates to run for office. He says part of the difficulty now is that the pay is so low.

The committee also has passed a measure from House Majority Leader Brian Gosch to allow lawmakers to be reimbursed for attending the inauguration of constitutional officers and the governor's budget address.

## S.F. Police: Only One Unsolved Murder

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The Sioux Falls police department has investigated and solved all but one homicide over the last decade.

The department released its crime statistics for 2014 on Wednesday. Sioux Falls Police solved all six of the homicides committed last year. Nationally, only 64 percent of murder cases are solved.

There have been 48 homicides in the city over the last 10 years.

Captain Blaine Larsen says the death of Daniel Eastman is the only homicide since 2004 to go unsolved. Eastman was a homeless man who was found stabbed in the stomach in August of 2011. He died three months later.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens also says the department's clearance rate of serious crimes — like rape, robbery and aggravated assault — also beat the national average.

## S.D. Legislative Roundup

# The Back Story On Brown's Bill

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Nearly 40 years ago, the Legislature reduced the signatures needed on initiatives and referral petitions.

The requirement previously was 5 percent of the registered voters. The 1976 law set the threshold at 5 percent of the votes cast in the most recent election for governor.

Now Sen. Corey Brown, R-Gettysburg, is attempting in Senate Bill 166 to return to the pre-1976 level of 5 percent of registered voters.

What is the difference? There were 521,017 registered voters in the 2014 election. There were 277,403 votes for governor. The change would nearly double the signatures needed to reach 5 percent.

Brown also has an emergency clause on the bill.

That means he'll need a two-thirds majority in the Senate and in the House of Representatives for his change to pass.

If it can get through both chambers with the emergency clause and if Gov. Dennis Daugaard either signs it into law or lets it become law without his signature, the change couldn't be referred to a public vote.

• KETTLE IS STIRRED: Brown's bill picked up two more opponents Wednesday.

Rick Weiland of Sioux Falls, who was the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, and Gordon Howie, a former Republican legislator from Rapid City who ran as an independent for U.S. Senate, issued a joint statement against it.

The Senate co-sponsors of Brown's Bill are Republicans Dan Lederman of Dakota Dunes and David Novstrup of Aberdeen.

The lead House sponsor is Rep. Jim

Stalzer, R-Sioux Falls. The other House co-sponsors are Republicans Jim Bolin of Canton, Brian Gosch of Rapid City, Don Haggard of Sioux Falls, Tim Rounds of Pierre, Roger Solum of Watertown, Steve Westra of Sioux Falls and Dean Wink of Hawes.

The 1976 change harkens back to the last time that Democrats held the governor's office and controlled the Senate. Republicans held the House.

The change from registered voters to actual voters was part of numerous revisions in South Dakota's election code during that legislative session.

The prime sponsor of Senate Bill 13 that year was Sen. Michael O'Connor, D-Brandon. More than 80 sections of laws were amended, repealed or created.

The Senate voted 34-0 for its version of the bill. The House of Representatives adopted the legislation with some additional amendments 62-5. The Senate then agreed with the House version.

• BIG DAY: Brown's bill is scheduled for hearing Friday morning by the Senate State Affairs Committee.

But it is at the bottom of the agenda, and there are some time-consuming matters above it, such as the \$100 million proposal for additional revenue for highways and bridges.

That measure comes from the Legislature's interim committee on highway needs and financing. Two other bills on the agenda deal with direct shipments of wine from producers to consumers. That was part of another interim study.

Another topic on the agenda is a federal balanced-budget amendment.

There is a resolution calling for a federal constitutional convention and legislation that would limit the actions of South Dakota's delegates to the convention.

The committee's chairman is Senate Republican leader Tim Rave of Baltic. Because of the thick workload, Rave

has scheduled a three-hour meeting. The first hour will be held at 9 a.m. in room 423. The standard two hours will be conducted at 10 a.m. in room 414.

• NO STONE UNTURNED: The House of Representatives approved legislation that would help the Big Stone K-8 school remain open and avoid forced consolidation.

That is despite Big Stone's enrollment falling below the 100 threshold for receiving state aid.

Rep. Fred Deutsch, R-Florence, said the measure allows Big Stone to continue qualifying so long as its enrollment is at least "nine-thirteenths of 100."

House members voted 68-1 to approve the change. House Bill 1097 now heads to the Senate.

Big Stone City and Ortonville, Minn., share a school system. Ortonville provides the high school.

• GRUESOME TOPIC: Rep. Isaac Latreell, R-Tea, introduced legislation that would prohibit the beheading of unborn live children.

A committee hearing hasn't been set yet for House Bill 1230.

• WHITE FLAGS: Legislators have used a special rule to withdraw 11 bills, so far, and eliminated the need for them to be killed in a committee hearing.

The four in the House are 1075 (off-road trails); 1087 (trust protectors); 1109 (legal costs for prisoners who commit crimes); and 1164 (requiring some state Department of Veterans Affairs employees to be veterans).

There are six in the Senate. They are 6 (pension and capital outlay taxes); 7 (pension and capital outlay taxes); 83 (no-maintenance county section-line roads); 96 (prostitution and solicitation of a minor); 105 (legislator access to capitol complex tunnels); 115 (legal expenses while in state's custody); and 143 (group hunting).

## Nebraska

# Winner-Take-All Bill Voted Out Of Committee

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A bill to reinstate Nebraska's winner-take-all system in presidential elections was advanced to the full Legislature on Wednesday with support from the state Republican Party, while Democrats opposed it.

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee voted 7-1 Wednesday to advance the proposal, which would award all five of Nebraska's electoral votes to the winner of the statewide vote.

The party-line vote sets up a contentious debate in the officially nonpartisan Legislature, which is dominated by Republicans. The bill's prospects are unclear, but GOP senators expanded their advantage in the November elections and now hold 35 of the Legislature's 49 seats.

Nebraska and Maine are the only states where it's possible to split electoral votes between opposing presidential candidates, though other states have considered the practice. Two of Nebraska's electoral votes are awarded to the statewide winner, while the remaining three are distributed by congressional district.

Nebraska split its electoral votes for the first time in 2008, when Democrat Barack Obama captured one from the

2nd congressional district in Omaha on his way to the presidency. Republican Mitt Romney won the district along with the rest of the state in 2012.

The bill's Republican sponsor, Sen. Beau McCoy of Omaha, said the current system allows presidential candidates to only speak to districts that are competitive, while ignoring the state as a whole. Obama and Republican vice presidential hopeful Sarah Palin made brief appearances in Omaha in 2008, but rural Nebraska hasn't seen a candidate in decades. Nebraska hasn't voted for a Democratic presidential candidate since 1964.

Senators have introduced similar measures a dozen times since 1991, when former Democratic Gov. Ben Nelson signed the current system into law. All but three of those bills were introduced before the 2008 election.

"The robust diversity of viewpoints existed long before 2008," McCoy said. "... This is not, in my opinion, any sort of a sour grapes argument."

Secretary of State John Gale, a Republican, said Nebraska was at the leading edge of an experiment that never gained traction in other states.

If all states had joined, he said, third-party candidates could gain a foothold in individual districts and prevent major party candidates from reaching the 270 electoral votes they need to win the presidency. In that scenario, the U.S. House of Representatives would pick the winner.

"It's not that this kills the Democratic Party in any degree at all," he said. "Only having won one electoral vote in 24 years can't be claimed as a great victory for the Democratic Party."

Bob Evnen, an attorney for the Nebraska Republican Party, said congressional districts can be manipulated by politicians, and a winner-take-all system avoids that problem. Nebraska's boundaries were last redrawn in 2011 — with Democrats accusing Republicans of gerrymandering.

Former state Sen. DiAnna Schimek, a Democrat whose bill created the current system, said Nebraska's practice encourages more grass-roots

activity. Schimek pointed to the state's independent streak, which includes a non-partisan Legislature and publicly owned utility system.

"It is critical that citizens know their voices count," she said. "... Nebraska does things its own way."

William Forsee, a Democratic activist who cast the 2008 electoral vote for Obama, said Republicans are still sore after losing former U.S. Rep. Lee Terry, of Omaha. Terry, Republican, was unseated by Democrat Brad Ashford in November despite last year's GOP surge nationally.

Forsee said presidential candidate visits to Omaha help the business community, and the winner-take-all system would deprive the city.

"I thought the Republicans ... were a party of small business," he said. "To me, this takes money away from the business community. And what does Omaha get in return? Nothing."

## OBITUARIES

### Kenneth Feilmeier

Kenneth Feilmeier, 66, of Hartington, Nebraska, died on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015, at his residence after a lengthy illness.

Mass of Christian Burial will be on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 10:30 a.m. at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Hartington with the Rev. Jeffery Loseke and the Rev. Jim Keiter officiating. Burial will be in St. John the Baptist Cemetery in

Fordyce with military honors provided by the Hartington VFW Post 5283 and the Legion Riders.

Visitation will be on Friday from 5-8 p.m. with a Vigil Service at 7 p.m. at the Wintz Funeral Home in Hartington. Visitation will begin one hour prior to services on Saturday at the church.

To view the video tribute, or to send online condolences, visit [www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com).

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### FEBRUARY EVENTS

#### Kids in the Kitchen >>



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#### Menu:

Banana & Nutella roll-up  
Rainbow Toast  
Cucumber Dip Cups

**Feb. 12, 6pm & Feb. 21, 10am**  
**\$5 per child**  
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- **February 9, 5:30pm:** Heart Healthy Eating Class
- **February 11, 5:30pm:** Heart Healthy Eating Tour
- **February 18, 10am & 1pm:** Heart Healthy Eating Tour



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