

### S.D. Health Official: 9 Flu Deaths This Season

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota health official says nine people have died as a result of the flu so far this year. State Epidemiologist Lon Kightlinger says this year's flu activity is occurring earlier and at higher levels than in the past. All of the people who died from the flu were over the age of 75. The state has reported that 135 people have been hospitalized with the flu so far. There have been 469 confirmed cases in the state. Kightlinger says it's not too late to get a flu shot.

### Bill Would Protect Worker Facebook Passwords

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Bosses who demand access to private information within their employees' Facebook or Twitter accounts could be sued under a legislative bill in Nebraska. State Sen. Tyson Larson of O'Neill introduced a measure Thursday that would make it illegal for employers or potential employers to request the information from workers or job applicants. The bill would prevent employers from ordering a worker to log onto a social media site in the employer's presence. Employers also would be banned from demanding passwords, or accessing an account indirectly through a friend or third party. The law would not apply to information posted by employees that's in the public domain.

### New Charges Filed Against S.D. Murder Suspect

MITCHELL (AP) — New charges have been filed against a man accused of shooting his uncle to death and wounding another relative on the Yankton Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Twenty-three-year-old Dancing Bull Fischer initially was charged with a lone count of second-degree murder in the Nov. 27, 2012, shooting death of 47-year-old Tony Fischer Sr. at a mobile home near Marty. The *Daily Republic* newspaper reports that Fischer now has been indicted on charges of second-degree murder, assault with intent to commit murder and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence. Fischer could face life in prison if convicted on the murder charge. He has been ordered held in custody until trial.

### Dec. Tax Receipts Higher Than Expected In Neb.

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's tax commissioner is reporting that the state collected nearly \$42 million more than expected in December. Tax Commissioner Doug Ewald announced Thursday that the state received a net \$363 million last month, about 13 percent higher than the state's certified forecast. The commissioner's monthly report shows that net sales-and-use and miscellaneous taxes came in below expectations. But those receipts were offset by higher-than-expected individual and corporate income tax collections.

### City Officials In Iowa OK Golf Carts On Streets

EDDYVILLE, Iowa (AP) — Officials in southern Iowa are giving residents the green light to drive golf carts on city streets. The *Ottumwa Courier* reports the Eddyville City Council approved an ordinance this week that will allow residents to drive golf carts on city streets from dawn to dusk. They must be 18 or older and buy an annual \$25 permit. Drivers will still need proof of insurance, as well as brakes, a slow moving vehicle sign and a tall flag. Headlights and taillights will not be required. The newspaper reports the speed limit will be 25 mph.

# Neb. AG Announces Legislative Proposals

BY ALISSA SKELTON  
Associated Press



Bruning

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning unveiled bills Thursday that seek to protect consumers from identity theft, increase penalties for disarming a police officer and keep public money out of companies that support Iran. His proposals come as lawmakers begin to introduce bills for this year's legislative session. "Over the years we've learned that one thing never changes," said Bruning, who noted that legislators have passed 36 of his proposed bills in 10 years. "Criminals evolve and they constantly seek ways to circumvent the law." One measure, supported by Sen. John Murante of Gretna, would require businesses to notify the attorney general's office about data breaches. If passed, Nebraska would join 17 states that have similar laws, which help make sure consumers are notified quickly after their information has been stolen. Last year, the Nebraska Attorney General's Office looked into 14 data breaches, two of which resulted in fraudulent activity under Nebraskans' names and social security numbers. In the same year, the office handled 556 cases related to identity theft. "Identity theft and security breaches are a

major problem, which are only going to increase in the future," Murante said. A second measure would elevate disarming a police officer from a misdemeanor to a felony, punishable by one to 20 years in prison. Sen. Colby Coash of Lincoln, who is sponsoring the bill, said "a misdemeanor charge is not appropriate for this level of threat." Lancaster County Sheriff Terry Wagner said a misdemeanor "diminishes the severity of the offense," and recalled an incident 20 years ago when an inmate escaped the Nebraska Regional Center and almost successfully discharged the gun of Wagner's partner. He said the event rattled him because there's only one reason someone would try to take an officer's gun and "that is to use it against us." State Sen. Bill Avery of Lincoln will sponsor a third measure called the Nebraska Divestment Act, which would prevent state funds from going to companies supporting Iran and its nuclear energy sectors. The federal government, 23 states and Washington, D.C., have similar legislation already in place to "isolate and pressure Iran" to stop human rights abuses, terrorism and from

creating nuclear weapons, Bruning said. Avery said he doesn't know if any Nebraska funds are being used to support such businesses, but plans to look into it. The measure would not apply to social development companies. Omaha Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh introduced a fourth bill that would classify voluntary manslaughter as a felony punishable by up to 50 years in prison. Current law shows no distinction between voluntary and involuntary manslaughter. Also Thursday, Bruning said he had thought about proposing legislation to commute juvenile life sentences, but decided to leave that decision up to Sen. Bill Ashford of Omaha, chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Last month, Bruning requested a court order that would allow the state pardons board to commute the sentences of the prison inmates serving life for crimes they committed as juveniles. An attorney representing 14 inmates in a lawsuit has raised concerns that Nebraska's pardons board wants to bypass a June U.S. Supreme Court ruling that threw out mandatory life sentences without parole for juveniles and commutes sentences to no less than 50 years each. Bruning said he will weigh in on any proposed bill after seeing it. "I hope we see eye to eye," Bruning said.

# Neb. Lawmakers Target Taxes In First Wave Of Bills

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska lawmakers took aim at taxes on Thursday in the first wave of bills introduced during this year's session. Lawmakers submitted proposals that would exempt Social Security and military retirement benefits from state income taxes, create a deduction for corporate dividends, and make it more difficult for the Legislature to approve future tax increases. One senator introduced a bill that would allow Nebraskans to pay more taxes up-front, in exchange for an inflation-adjusted tax credit in the future that would return the same interest as a 10-year Treasury bill. "You get a little bit bigger credit

than what you paid in," said Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher, the bill's sponsor. The tax measures were among 114 bills and two constitutional amendments submitted on the session's first day of bill introductions. Lawmakers have a 10-day window in which to introduce bills. Taxes will fall into a larger debate this year over the state's spending priorities. Lawmakers are expected to present measures that would expand Medicaid coverage as part of the federal health care law, increase mental health services for children, and overhaul services for juveniles in detention facilities and foster care. Lawmakers also have to craft a new, two-year state budget and adjust the funding formula for K-12 public schools.

Gov. Dave Heineman has signaled that he, too, will introduce tax reform measures in his State of the State address next week. Schumacher said his proposal would allow the state to generate more up-front cash for road construction, where costs are constantly rising. The state could then use those savings to pay interest on the tax credit, he said. Schumacher said the bill is aimed at taxpayers who aren't satisfied with low-interest savings accounts, the stock market, or farmland. The bill wouldn't allow taxpayers to claim the credit for at least five years, unless they're at least 62 years old. Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch introduced a constitutional amendment that would require at least 29 lawmakers to approve a state tax increase. The Nebraska Constitution

currently requires a simple majority in the 49-member Legislature. Pirsch said the additional four votes would require supporters to make a more compelling case, but would not create an insurmountable obstacle. "It requires that you have a very clear and convincing reason for a tax increase," Pirsch said. "It will ensure that meaningful debate occurs." Pirsch said he also introduced the amendment because the Legislature doesn't have a second house that can serve as a check on state senators. The amendment would require voter approval if lawmakers pass it. Lawmakers also introduced four new measures that would provide varying exemptions for Social Security income and military retirement benefits.

## South Dakota Beef Plant Clears Final Financial Hurdle

ABERDEEN (AP) — A beef processing plant in northern South Dakota that has been operating on a limited basis since last fall has raised enough money to enter into full production. Land for the \$109 million Northern Beef Packers plant in Aberdeen was secured in 2006, but numerous problems including financial issues, lawsuits and flooding repeatedly pushed back the opening date. Northern Beef, which is largely financed by Korean investors, has now raised more than \$150 million, an amount that includes working capital, according to the *American News*. "This is important because this is the amount we need to run the plant and move forward," spokeswoman Laure Swanson said. "It includes working capital. In the past, we have had some financial delays. Now with this last phase, it will take us to where we really need for our operation." The plant eventually will process 1,500 cattle a day from the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota, producing more than 1 million pounds of boxed beef and beef byproducts daily. The company is not saying how many cattle it currently is processing. "We have had plenty of cattle, and so far it has been good," Swanson said. "As production increases, the plant will need more cattle. We encourage cattle producers to contact our cattle buyer." Northern Beef has hired more than 350 workers and eventually will employ 500. It also is continuing to add customers.

## Buffett: U.S. Banks Won't Cause Problems For Economy

BY JOSH FUNK  
AP Business Writer

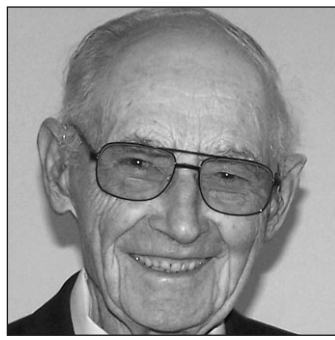
OMAHA, Neb. — Billionaire Warren Buffett says that American banks are stronger than they've been in years, and won't derail the economy. Buffett, who is the chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., told Bloomberg television that nation's biggest banks have improved their financial position considerably. "The banks will not get this country in trouble, I guarantee it," Buffett told Bloomberg television in an interview that aired Thursday. Berkshire Hathaway has large investments in Wells Fargo & Co., U.S. Bancorp and Bank of America Corp., and Buffett pays close attention to their condition. Berkshire also holds warrants to buy \$5 billion in Goldman Sachs shares. Buffett said the banks have largely cleared out the bad assets that hurt their balance sheets. And the current low interest rates have helped them. "Our banking system is in the best shape in recent memory," Buffett said. The country's 19 biggest banks are about to undergo the Federal Reserve's "stress tests" to see if they could with-

stand a severe U.S. recession and a global downturn at the same time. Buffett said Bank of America may soon try to repurchase the preferred shares he bought for \$5 billion in the summer of 2011. Buffett would like to keep the shares because they come with \$300 million in annual dividend payments, but he told Bloomberg that he expects the bank to pay Berkshire \$5.25 billion to end the dividend payments whenever it makes sense for Bank of America. But the Fed can stop banks from paying stock dividends or buying back their own stock if they fail the stress test. And regardless of what happens to Berkshire's preferred shares of Bank of America, the company will retain warrants to buy 700 million shares at \$7.14 apiece until 2021. Bank of America shares were trading at \$11.70 at midday, up 27 cents. Besides bank investments, Berkshire Hathaway owns more than 80 businesses, including BNSF railroad, Geico insurance, General Reinsurance, MidAmerican Energy, Helzberg Diamonds and Acme Brick. The conglomerate is based in Omaha, Neb.

### OBITUARIES

#### Rev. Henry B. Roemer

Funeral services for Rev. Henry B. Roemer, 94, of Tripp, South Dakota, will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, January 12, 2013 at Frieden's Reformed Church in Tripp. Interment will follow in Frieden's Cemetery, Tripp. Visitation will be held on Friday from 3:00 p.m. until a 7:00 p.m. prayer service at the Goglin Funeral Home in Tripp. Henry passed away on Monday, January 7 at the Good Samaritan Society of Tripp. Online condolences may be sent at [www.goglinfh.com](http://www.goglinfh.com). Grateful for having shared his life are his three children: Phyllis (Dennis) Schaefer of Platte, Harold John Roemer of Calgary, AB, Canada, and Carolyn (Rev. Albert) Goldammer of Corsica; seven grandchildren: Brenden (Suzy) Schaefer, Tanielle (Joel) Sylvester, Kylee (Nicholas) Shoemaker, Josiah (Lindsey) Goldammer, Talitha Goldammer, Hannah Goldammer and Keleah Goldammer; and four great-grandchildren.



Rev. Henry B. Roemer

Henry was preceded in death by his wife of almost 66 years, Lydia (Giebelhaus) Roemer.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
January 11, 2013

Goglin  
Funeral Home

Tyndall - Scotland - Tripp



[www.goglinfh.com](http://www.goglinfh.com)

#### Jim Cisar

Funeral services for Jim Cisar, 66, of Scotland will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, January 14 at St. George Catholic Church in Scotland with Fr. Mathew Vazhappilly as Celebrant. Interment will follow in St. George Catholic Cemetery, Scotland. Visitation will be held on Sunday from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the Goglin Funeral Home in Scotland. There will be a wake service on Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Jim passed away on Thurs-

day, January 10, 2013 at the Good Samaritan Society of Scotland. Online condolences may be sent at [www.goglinfh.com](http://www.goglinfh.com).

Goglin  
Funeral Home

Tyndall - Scotland - Tripp



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## Medicaid

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"It isn't that I have this boss that's this coldhearted person and he made the decision based on that," Bowman said. "He made the best decision he could, given the information and facts we have right now and the uncertainty of the future we face." House Democratic Leader Bernie Hunhoff of Yankton, who favors expanding Medicaid, said lawmakers routinely have to make decisions amid uncertainty. "If the only concern is we're uncertain about the future, we should all just stay in bed," Hunhoff said after the meeting. Other lawmakers asked state officials for more detailed information on the Medicaid program and the possible expansion. State Social Services Secretary Kim Malsam-Ryson said the state's share of Medicaid is now about \$294 million a year, or nearly 27 percent of total state spending from general tax revenue. One-third of all South Dakota children younger than 19 are covered by Medicaid or related programs, and half the children born in the state are on Medicaid or related programs during their first year of life, she said.

Rep. Jim Bolin, R-Canton, asked whether the governor has the final say on the issue. Bowman said the Legislature could decide to expand Medicaid by amending the state budget. Several lawmakers said they favor expanding Medicaid because uninsured people now delay getting medical care until they are very sick and go to hospital emergency rooms. Since they cannot afford expensive emergency care, hospitals and clinics have to charge insured pa-

tients more to offset losses in charity care. "Their health care costs will be paid somewhere, and it will be paid out of South Dakotans' pockets," said Sen. Stan Adelsstein, R-Rapid City.

#### Virginia Cummins

Virginia Cummins, 86, of Hartington, Neb., died Thursday, Jan. 10, 2013, at the Golden Living Center, Hartington. Her services are pending at Wintz Funeral Home, Hartington.

#### Mildred Ishmael

Mildred Ishmael, 82 of Springfield died Thursday, Jan. 10, 2013, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton. Her funeral services are pending with Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home, Springfield.

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