

Inflatable Room Being Built For Space Station

LAS VEGAS (AP) — NASA is partnering with a commercial space company in a bid to swap out the cumbersome “metal cans” that now serve as astronauts’ homes in space for inflatable bounce-house-like habitats that can be deployed on the cheap.

A \$17.8 million test project will send an inflatable room that can be compressed for delivery into a 7-foot tube to the International Space Station, officials said Wednesday during a news conference at North Las Vegas-based Bigelow Aerospace.

If the module proves durable during two years at the space station, it could open the door to habitats on the moon and missions to Mars, NASA engineer Glen Miller said.

The agency chose Bigelow for the contract because it was the only company working on the inflatable technology, said NASA Deputy Administrator Lori Garver.

Nearly Half Of Boeing’s 787 Jets Grounded

The federal government grounded Boeing’s newest and most technologically advanced jetliner Wednesday, declaring that the 787 cannot fly again until the risk of battery fires is addressed.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it would work with Boeing and U.S. airlines to develop a plan to allow the Dreamliner to “resume operations as quickly and safely as possible.” United Airlines is the only U.S. carrier with 787s. It has six.

The FAA decision was the latest setback for a plane that was supposed to set a new standard for jet travel but has been beset by one mishap after another.

For the second time in two weeks, a smoking or burning battery has been tied to an emergency aboard a 787. Almost half of the 787s that have been delivered have now been grounded for safety checks. And the latest incident raises the risk that the jet’s electrical problems are more dangerous than previously thought.

Group Calls For Raising Retirement Age To 70

WASHINGTON (AP) — An influential group of business CEOs is pushing a plan to gradually increase the full retirement age to 70 for both Social Security and Medicare and to partially privatize the health insurance program for older Americans.

The Business Roundtable’s plan would protect those 55 and older from cuts but younger workers would face significant changes. The plan unveiled Wednesday would result in smaller annual benefit increases for all Social Security recipients. Initial benefits for wealthy retirees would also be smaller.

Medicare recipients would be able to enroll in the traditional program or in private plans that could adjust premiums based on age and health status.

“America can preserve the health and retirement safety net and rein in long-term spending growth by modernizing Medicare and Social Security in a way that addresses America’s new fiscal and demographic realities,” said Gary Loveman, chairman, president and chief executive of casino giant Caesars Entertainment Corp.

Rage Over Tragedy Surpasses 9/11 Levels

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans were angrier about last month’s horrific school shooting in Connecticut than they were about the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, according to a new Associated Press-GfK poll.

Three-quarters of Americans said they reacted to the Connecticut massacre of with deep anger, higher than the 65 percent who said they felt that way in a poll from NORC at the University of Chicago after the 9/11 attacks. A majority, 54 percent, said they felt deeply ashamed that an event like Newtown could happen in the United States, well above the 40 percent who said they felt that way in the wake of the disaster that followed Hurricane Katrina and 35 percent who felt that way after the shootings at Virginia Tech.

The massacre prompted 3 in 10 to give serious thought to whether they could really be safe anywhere these days and 4 in 10 felt strongly that the deaths could have been prevented. Both figures are higher now than after the Virginia Tech shooting deaths.

About a third said that after Newtown, they felt there may be too many guns in this country. A similar share said they worried how the shooting would impact U.S. gun laws.

Mali

French Troops Begin Land Assault

BY RUKMINI CALLIMACHI AND
BABA AHMED
Associated Press

BAMAKO, Mali — French soldiers pressed north in Mali territory occupied by radical Islamists on Wednesday, launching a land assault that was to put them in direct combat with al-Qaida-linked fighters “in one to 72 hours,” military officials said.

Their presumed destination was the town of Diabaly, where fleeing residents said Islamist extremists had taken over their homes and were preventing other people from leaving. They said the militants were melting into the population and moving only in small groups on streets in the mud-walled neighborhoods to avoid being targeted by the French.

“They have beards. And they wear boubous (a flowing robe). No one approaches them. Everyone is afraid,” said Ibrahim Komnotogo, who was out of town when the militants seized Diabaly over the weekend but kept in contact by telephone with other residents.

In apparent retaliation for the French offensive, the same group controlling northern Mali occupied a natural gas complex in neighboring Algeria, taking dozens of people hostage, including Americans. Two foreigners were killed.

French ground operations in Mali began overnight, France’s military chief of staff, Adm. Edouard Guillaud, said on Europe 1 television Wednesday. He stressed that French infantry units “will be fighting directly in the coming hours.”

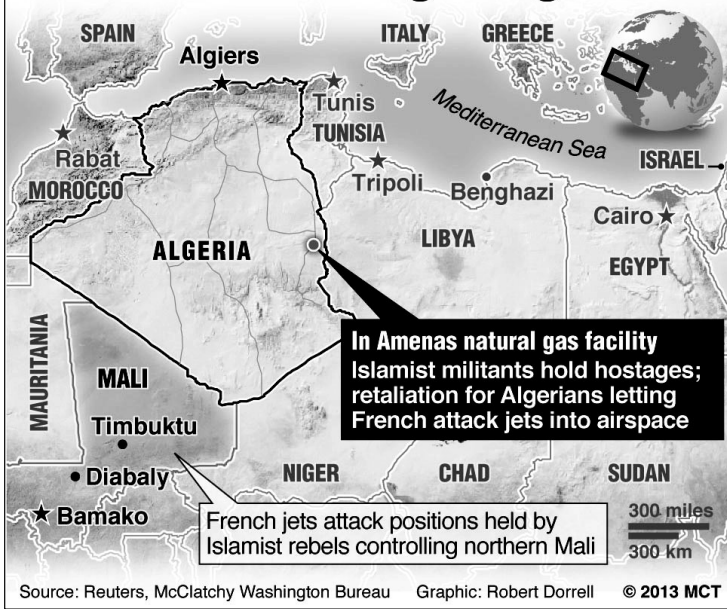
Armored vehicles loaded with French troops were seen heading toward Niono, a town 340 kilometers (210 miles) northeast of the capital, Bamako. Some 70 kilometers (45 miles) northeast of Niono lies Diabaly, with a population of 35,000.

Over the weekend, dozens of rebel vehicles cut off the road to Diabaly, seizing the town and its strategic military camp. French warplanes have since carried out airstrikes on the camp.

Oumar Ould Hamaha, whose fighters are believed to be among those who seized Diabaly, said that a convoy of armored French vehicles attempted to enter the town to take it back. He said the Islamists repelled the French after an intense and close combat.

“I confirm that France came in by land, but they failed. ... There was a combat that was (extremely

Militants seize Algeria gas site



close). Between 200 and 500 meters away,” Hamaha said.

His version of events could not be verified.

Col. Thierry Burkhard, a spokesman for the French military in Paris, denied that French troops were in Diabaly or that they were 500 meters from rebel lines.

“The French army did not deploy units in the region of Diabaly,” Burkhard said. Troops were dozens of kilometers from Diabaly, he said, refusing to provide a location.

Hamaha is a leader of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, one of the rebel groups controlling Mali’s northern half. He is also a close associate of Moktar Belmokar, a leader of a local al-Qaida cell who claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of foreigners in Algeria.

Speaking to The Associated Press by telephone from an undisclosed location, Hamaha said the kidnapping was retribution for the French-led attack on the Islamists in Mali.

“We have a struck a blow to the heart (of the international community),” he said. “It’s the United Nations that gave the green light to this intervention and all Western countries are now going to pay a price. We are now globalizing our conflict.”

A former French colony, Mali once enjoyed a reputation as one of West Africa’s most stable democracies with majority of its 15

million people practicing a moderate form of Islam. That changed in April 2012, when Islamist extremists took over the main cities in the country’s north amid disarray following a military coup, and began enforcing strict Shariah law.

Hamaha’s boast comes amid warnings from security experts that the extremists, including al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and other groups which share al-Qaida’s goals, are carving out their own territory in northern Mali from where they can plot terror attacks in Africa and Europe. Estimates of how many fighters the Islamists have range from less than 1,000 to several thousand; the militants are well-armed and funded and include recruits from other countries.

Despite training from U.S. and other Western advisers, the Mali army has been ineffective in fighting the militants.

Last December, the U.N. Security Council passed a cautious resolution, outlining steps that needed to be taken before an international military intervention, one which diplomats said would not occur before at least September.

But in a surprise move last week, French President Francois Hollande authorized airstrikes in Mali to stop a sudden southward push by three Islamist rebel groups, including Hamaha’s. The Islamists warned that France had “opened the doors of hell” and that all French nationals would pay, as

would any country that helped the military intervention.

France’s allies have offered vocal support for the country’s military operation in Mali, but when it comes to sending troops or weapons, they are agreeing to the bare minimum: a transport plane here and there, a handful of support staff and a lot of promises to think about it.

France has upwards of 800 troops in Mali, and expects to ramp up to a total of 2,500 that will include French Foreign Legionnaires. It has committed helicopter gunships, fighter jets, surveillance planes and refueling tankers.

As the French moved north, some terrified Malians were fleeing south. A trickle of refugees have left Diabaly on foot over the past few days and went to Niono, according to residents there.

It apparently was no easy task.

Komnotogo, who heads a USAID-financed rice agriculture project, said Qaida-linked rebels sealed off Diabaly’s roads and were preventing people from leaving.

“The jihadists have split up. They don’t move around in big groups. ... They are out in the streets, in fours, and fives and sixes, and they are living inside the most populated neighborhoods,” he said, explaining that they had taken over the homes of people who managed to flee before the road was cut off.

French warplanes bombarded the military camp, but there have been no airstrikes inside the actual town, which begins at the eastern wall of the garrison. Residents have evacuated the Diabaly neighborhood called Bordeaux, after its sister city in France, which is only 500 meters (yards) from the camp, Komnotogo said. They have moved mostly into a quarter called Berlin, about 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) from the military installation.

The head of France’s military said it is plausible that the extremists would be willing to hide behind civilians. Guillaud said the militant groups have a history of taking human shields and that France would do its utmost to make sure civilians are not wrongly targeted.

“When in doubt, we will not fire,” he said. He added that the French continued their airstrikes overnight on Tuesday to Wednesday. Targets destroyed so far include training camps, logistical depots, command centers and armored vehicles that the jihadists had seized from Mali’s government forces.

Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE



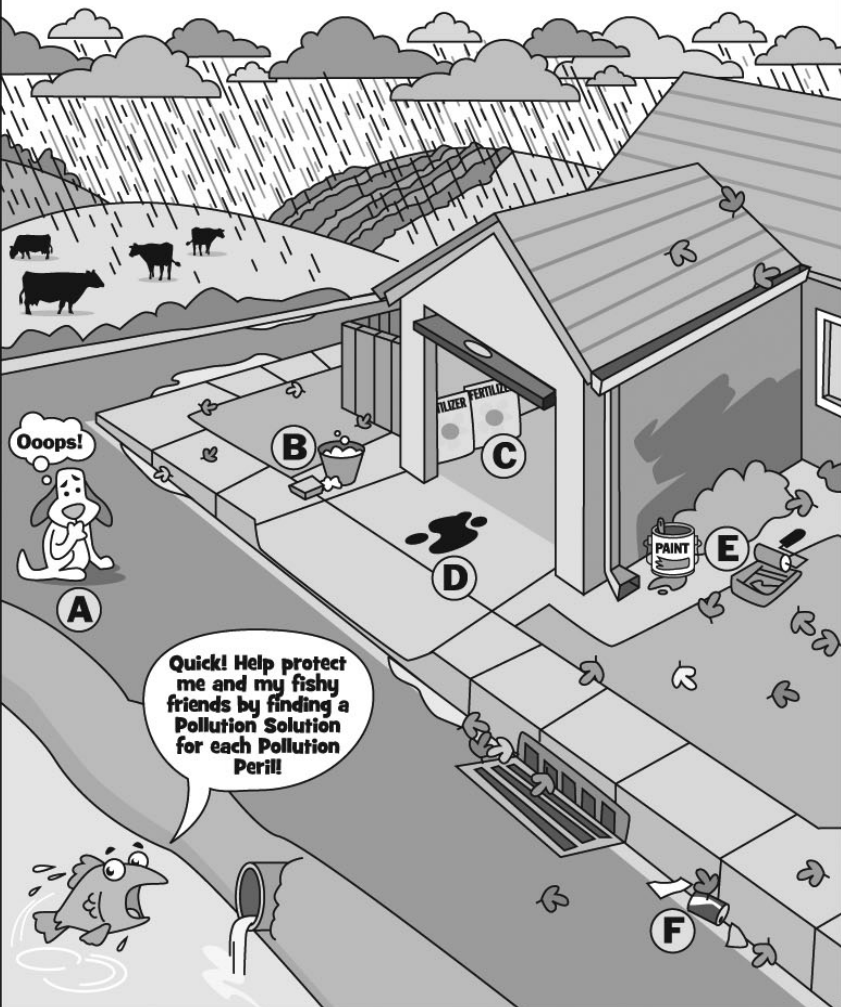
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Storm Water Starts Clean But Can End Up Polluted

When it rains or snows, most of that water seeps into the ground. But what if the ground is covered with a paved surface like a sidewalk or parking lot? In that case, the water flows into gutters or storm drains.

Water picks up **pollutants** as it runs through city streets, gutters and storm drains. These pollutants can make water in our creeks unsafe for humans, plants and animals. This pollution is called *non-point source pollution*.



Draw a line to match a solution with each problem.

POLLUTION PERIL

- Pet waste on streets and sidewalks can end up in storm drains. Gross!
- Soapy water from car washing travels to storm drains.
- Fertilizer, pesticides and other garden chemicals can wash into storm water.
- When it rains, oil and gas that has dripped from cars washes into storm drains.
- Paint enters drains when brushes are cleaned outside.
- Trash in gutters and sidewalks.

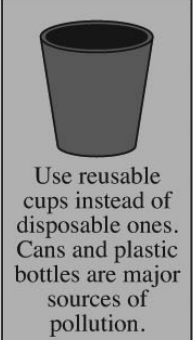
POLLUTION SOLUTION

- Purchase household detergents low in phosphorous. Reduce run-off by washing your car on a lawn or other permeable (able to absorb liquids) surface.
- Clean up after pets. Dispose of waste in the trash.
- Keep litter, leaves and debris out of the street gutters and storm drains. These drain directly to lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands.
- Keep a drip pan under parked cars and dispose of used motor oil at an official recycling center.
- Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and according to directions.
- Brushes and painting equipment soiled with water-based paint may be rinsed in a sink.

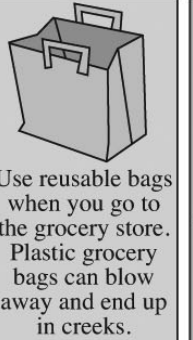
ANSWERS: A-2, B-1, C-5, D-4, E-6, F-3

Kids Can Help!

Here are three simple ways to help keep pollution out of our waterways and eliminate waste. Create a fourth tip. Post these in your classroom.



Use reusable cups instead of disposable ones. Cans and plastic bottles are major sources of pollution.



Use reusable bags when you go to the grocery store. Plastic grocery bags can blow away and end up in creeks.



Always pack your lunch in a reusable container. Bring it home, wash it and use it again to help prevent lunchbag litter.

Standards Link: Environmental Science: Know how people affect the environment in negative and positive ways.

Weather Report

Most newspapers and newspaper websites contain some form of weather report. Design your own symbols for different kinds of weather conditions including frost, snow, wind, clouds, fog, thunder and lightning.

Standards Link: Visual Arts: Use a variety of media to convey meaning.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Draw the fish that should come next to continue the pattern in each row.



Standards Link: Mathematical Reasoning: Extend simple patterns.



Try these online games that teach you how to take care of the environment. Go to: www.kidscoop.com/kids/

Double Double Word Search

POLLUTION
RECYCLING
SOLUTION
WETLANDS
GUTTERS
DISPOSE
PROTECT
DRAINS
STORM
TRASH
PAINT
SOAPY
WATER
WASTE
LAWN

Find the words in the puzzle. Then look for each word in this week’s Kid Scoop stories and activities.

P C G Y P A O S N W
R O E U L A E O E A
O A L T T H I T N T
T M N L S T L N A E
E R T A U A E A T R
C O R L N T W R W E
T T O D R A I N S N
R S S D I S P O S E
S R E C Y C L I N G

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

www.kidscoop.com

Water Journal

Clip and collect articles about creeks, rivers, lakes and all kinds of water. Make lists of people, agencies and places that appear in the articles. What are the main topics of discussion or issues about water in your newspaper?

Standards Link: History/Social Science: Understand environmental issues in your local community.

Write On!

I Care!

Write about a way you care for the planet.

Send your story to:

Press & Dakotan
C/o Noelle Schlechter
319 Walnut Street
Yankton, SD 57078
605-665-7811, ext 112

Deadline: February 10 Published: Week of Mar. 10
Please include your school and grade.

Weekly Writing Corner

The Clean Water Team

Rain brings lots of debris into storm drains. Students explain how they will keep rivers and creeks clean.

Here is something you could do to help. First, don’t litter because the wind can put trash in the rivers and creeks. Next, don’t throw your old tires or broken furniture into rivers. Don’t throw plastic or glass or cans. All those items can hurt people and creatures that swim in the rivers and creeks. Lastly, I will help keep rivers and creeks clean but if I see somebody throwing any items that are bad, I will say, “Give it to me. I will throw it away properly if you don’t want to.”

Izabella, 3rd grade
I would start by not throwing trash, old toys and any kind of oil in the river.

Jenny, 4th grade
I would tell people that the creek is where a lot of animals are and they depend on the water. They might think the trash is food and eat it. If an animal eats plastic or other trash, they would die. So, if someone is leaving trash on the ground, tell them to pick it up because we don’t want any animals to die.

Tania, 3rd grade
We can do many things to help keep rivers and creeks clean. First, you could recycle and not litter. Next, do not use rivers and creeks as an oil-spill zone. In addition, don’t throw beer cans or any kinds of bottles or anything except rocks in our rivers. Never, ever, throw anything in our rivers and creeks. That’s why we have trash cans!

Brian, 4th grade
I would put up a poster in my school asking for kids to volunteer to help clean up the creeks. We would pick one day and wear old clothes and gloves and boots. With help from our parents, we could drag old trash out of the creeks and then get our parents to take it to the dump or get rid of it the proper way. I want to help keep our rivers and creeks clean.

Jocelyn, 5th grade