

### Lawmaker: End Church Tax Exemptions

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Churches and religious groups in Nebraska would lose their property-tax exemptions under a bill introduced by state Sen. Ernie Chambers. Chambers presented the Legislature's Revenue Committee Friday with a measure that would require religious organizations to pay property taxes. State law exempts properties owned by educational, charitable, religious or cemetery organizations. Chambers says everyone should pay their fair share, and argued that religious organizations don't fulfill the same purpose of educational and charitable groups. Jim Cunningham, executive director of the Nebraska Catholic Conference, says churches perform charitable work that benefits the community. Lawmakers took no immediate action on the bill.

### Omaha Police Look Into 6th Man

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Omaha police have arrested a sixth man in connection with a neighborhood shooting tied to the death of a 5-year-old girl. The Omaha Police Department said in a press release Friday that 21-year-old Jacob J. Brown faces a felony charge of theft by receiving. Court records do not list an attorney. Brown is suspected of being involved in the theft of a vehicle in December. Police believe the car was later used in a Jan. 15 shooting in north Omaha involving several people. A stray bullet from the shooting hit 5-year-old Payton Benson about a block away. Authorities have arrested five other men in connection to the stolen vehicle or the neighborhood shooting. They face various theft and gun charges. No arrests have been made in Payton's death.

### RC Jury Convicts Man Of Assault

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City jury convicted a man of beating his girlfriend with a glass candlestick on New Year's Day last year. KOTA-TV reports that Luke Elk Nation was found guilty of aggravated assault. That carries a maximum punishment of 40 years in prison for the beating that left scars that will be visible the rest of her life. She testified that Elk Nation struck her with a glass candlestick holder, broke a lamp over her head and repeatedly kicked and hit her. Jurors also convicted Elk Nation of possession of a controlled substance for the methamphetamine found in the South Dakota Rose Motel room where they were staying. The jury was deadlocked on a kidnapping charge over allegations that he held her in the room against her will.

### Propane Costs Spur Calls For Scrutiny

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Propane prices in the Midwest have soared in recent days, leading consumers, retail suppliers and political leaders to ask whether there is more to play than supply and demand. The spike has been blamed on a supply problem caused by farmers using propane-fueled equipment last fall to dry wet grain, as well as a bitterly cold winter and the temporary shutdown of a major supply pipeline in December. But Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley has asked the Federal Trade Commission for more oversight of the propane market "to prevent possible anti-competitive behavior or illegal manipulation." Terry Davis, owner of Country Propane in Milo, Iowa, says his average residential customer would have paid about \$800 to fill up a 500-gallon tank two weeks ago. On Friday, the cost soared to about \$2,000.

## Medicaid Expansion Talks Continue

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota legislative leaders from both parties said Friday they are discussing the possibility of expanding the Medicaid program to provide medical care for additional poor people, but much depends on how much flexibility federal officials would give the state in designing an expansion. Rep. Bernie Hunhoff, leader of the House Democratic minority, said discussions have focused on expanding Medicaid coverage only to those most in need and providing that an expansion would be halted if the federal government fails to meet its promise to pay most of the cost. "Change never comes easy," said Hunhoff, of Yankton. "I'm still confident we can do something on Medicaid this session." Rep. Justin Cronin, of Gettysburg, assistant leader of the House Republican majority, said federal officials so far have been reluctant to give states flexibility in expanding Medicaid. He said he continues to get a lot of phone calls and emails encouraging Medicaid expansion.

"The discussions are definitely happening. We wouldn't be good stewards of the state if we weren't talking about options for what we can and can't do," Cronin said. Lawmakers doubt the Legislature would expand Medicaid to the full extent envisioned in the federal health care overhaul, but they are talking about seeking federal approval to extend coverage to a smaller group of low-income people. Federal officials last year rejected Gov. Dennis Daugaard's request to expand Medicaid only to a limited group. Daugaard has recommended that South Dakota not expand Medicaid, at least for now. The Republican governor has said the federal government is having trouble putting the health care overhaul into effect and he doubts it can meet its promise to pay the bulk of the Medicaid expansion costs. South Dakota's Medicaid program now covers about 116,000 children, adults and disabled people. The expanded eligibility would add an estimated 48,000 people, mostly adults without children. People earning up to 138 percent of the poverty level — \$15,451 for a single person or \$31,809 for a family of four —

would be covered by an expansion. The federal government would fully cover those added to Medicaid rolls through 2016, and the state's contribution would rise in stages to 10 percent of the costs by 2020. Daugaard last year asked that South Dakota be allowed to expand Medicaid eligibility only up to 100 percent of the poverty level because those above that mark can qualify for subsidized private insurance under the health care overhaul. Federal officials rejected his request. Hunhoff said legislators will begin to draft Medicaid proposals in the next week, probably including requests for a federal waiver to expand only to 100 percent of the poverty level. The Democrat said a full Medicaid expansion would bring \$300 million in federal funding a year into the state, helping many poor people who cannot afford private insurance and saving some rural hospitals and clinics. Cronin said if federal officials want states to expand Medicaid, they should give each state some flexibility in how that is done. "They also need to understand we run our state how we think it should best be run," Cronin said.

## Backers: Report On Rail Risks Boosts Keystone XL

BY MATTHEW DALY  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A government warning about the dangers of increased use of trains to transport crude oil is giving a boost to supporters of the long-delayed Keystone XL pipeline. U.S. and Canadian accident investigators urged their governments Thursday to impose new safety rules on so-called oil trains, warning that a "major loss of life" could result from an accident involving the increasing use of trains to transport large amounts of crude oil. Pipeline supporters said the unusual joint warning by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and the Transportation Safety Board of Canada highlights the need for Keystone XL, which would carry oil derived from tar sands in western Canada to refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast. Oil started flowing Wednesday through a southern leg of the pipeline from Oklahoma to the Houston region. Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., said the yearslong review of Keystone has forced oil companies to look for alternatives to transport oil from the booming Bakken region of North Dakota and Montana to

refineries in the U.S. and Canada. A planned spur connecting Keystone to the Bakken region would carry as much as 100,000 barrels of oil a day. "Clearly because this project has been held up, that is creating more (oil) traffic by rail," Hoeven said Thursday. "Those companies are being forced to deliver their product by rail because they don't have the pipelines." A pipeline opponent said Hoeven's argument is based on a false choice between moving oil by rail or pipeline. "It's disingenuous for supporters of Keystone XL to suggest that if we build Keystone, we won't have safety risks posed by crude-by-rail, and if we don't build the pipeline we will" have those risks, said Anthony Swift, an attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council who has studied the Canadian tar sands. Shipment of oil by train is likely to continue, whether or not Keystone XL is approved, Swift and others said, as companies seek to capitalize on an oil boom that has pushed North Dakota to become the second-largest oil producing state after Texas. Both rail and pipelines have good overall safety records, although several high-profile accidents

involving crude oil shipments — including a fiery explosion in North Dakota last month and an explosion that killed 47 people in Canada last year — have raised alarms. Spills from rail cars occur more frequently than from pipelines but tend to be smaller. Pipelines also can be built to avoid population centers and fragile ecosystems, while crude-carrying trains frequently travel through large cities such as Detroit and Philadelphia. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel on Thursday called for new steps to protect communities from accidents involving oil trains and other hazardous materials, including fees on companies that ship crude oil by rail and on industries that use oil. The money would go into a fund to rebuild rail lines, Emanuel told a meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington. Chicago is a major freight rail hub. Emanuel's proposal was endorsed by the mayors of Philadelphia, Madison and Milwaukee, Wis., Kansas City, Kan., and Peoria, Ill. Rail industry officials bristled at the notion of a tax on their customers. "Freight railroads each year invest roughly \$25 billion of their own funds into the

nationwide rail network so taxpayers don't have to, and the result is rail infrastructure that is the envy of the world," said Edward Hamberger, president of the Association of American Railroads. "As we've seen with other federal tax and fee proposals, the end result is unfortunately that consumers often end up footing the bill." Most of the crude currently being moved by rail is light crude from the Bakken region, not heavy tar sands oil from Canada, said Swift of the Natural Resources Defense Council. Oil from tar sands is heavier and more expensive to move by rail, Swift said, making trains less desirable than pipelines for such oil. By contrast, energy companies in the Bakken region embrace rail, since it is more flexible than pipelines. North Dakota produces nearly a million barrels of oil a day, a majority of it shipped by rail. "Expansion of tar sands depends very much" on Keystone's approval, Swift said. A spokesman for Calgary-based TransCanada, which has been seeking approval for Keystone XL since 2008, said it is in everyone's interest to ensure that oil shipments are as safe as possible — whatever the method.

### OBITUARIES



Opal Soberg (Christopherson)

### Opal Soberg (Christopherson)

Opal Lavina Solberg, 92, of Ellensburg, Washington, passed away on January 20, 2014 at Royal Vista Care Center. Opal was born July 1, 1921, in Yankton, SD, to Harry and Opal (Brandt) Christopherson. She graduated as valedictorian from Irene High School in 1939 and received an RN degree from Fairview Nursing School in Minneapolis in 1943. On July 18, 1944, she married Kristen B. Solberg who was serving in the Navy in Corpus Christi, Texas. After the war, they returned to Centerville, South Dakota, then later moved to Laramie, WY, and eventually settled in Tacoma, Washington. Opal worked as an obstetrical nurse at McChord AFB and Madigan Army Hospital, as a clinic nurse at Pacific Lutheran University, and later as a psychiatric nurse at St. Joseph Hospital in Tacoma. Upon retirement Kris and Opal moved to Ellensburg, Washington, where they engaged in a private practice, Valley Psychological Services, for 15 years. After their final retirement, they enjoyed traveling and spending the winters in Arizona.

Opal was active in the Lutheran Church wherever they lived, always singing in the church choir. She was committed to volunteer work including managing a food bank, Beta Sigma Phi, PEO, and hospice visitation. She also enjoyed reading, gardening, crocheting, sewing, baking, and preparing traditional Norwegian delicacies at Christmas time. She was famous for her cinnamon rolls, and the endless supply of chocolate chip cookies in the ceramic hen in the kitchen. Opal was happiest when she was surrounded by her children, grandchildren, adopted children, family, and friends. Her hands were rarely at rest, filled with daily tasks of love and service to her community, her church and her family. She touched many lives both professionally and personally. She was a loving wife, mother, friend, nurse, mentor, advisor, encourager, and a shining model to follow. Know Mother, that your life was well lived, and trust your love will shine on in all those you leave behind. May your next journey be gentle and swift, and like your life, in the grace of God.

Opal is survived by her two sons, Ken and his wife Jacque of Minnetonka, MN, Don and his wife Joy, of Ellensburg, WA, and a daughter, Ona of Ellensburg, WA; her brother Kenneth Christopherson (Polly) of Tacoma, WA; her sister-in law Anne Christopherson, her sister Borgia Bonthuis (Dave) of Anoka, MN; four grandchildren, Jessica Solberg of Kirkland, WA, Kristin Solberg-McClelland of

Chugiak, AK, Kevin Ehrman-Solberg of Minnetonka, MN, and Bridget Ehrman-Solberg of Los Angeles, CA, and step-grandchildren Raffy and Jacob Wilson. She also is survived by many adopted sons and daughters. She was preceded in death by her father, Harry, her mother Opal, her stepmother Clara, and her brother Gerry, and her beloved husband Kris. A celebration of life service will be held at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, February 16th at First Lutheran Church, 512 N. Ruby St., Ellensburg, WA, 98926. Internment will occur at a later date at the Bang Cemetery, in rural Freeman, SD.

To leave a message for the family and to view photos of Opal, go to the CaringBridge website and search for Opal Solberg (or go directly to [www.caringbridge.org/visit/opalsolberg](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/opalsolberg)).

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January 25, 2014

**Bernice Cvrk**  
Bernice R. Cvrk died of natural causes on Tuesday, January 21, 2014, in Freeman, SD. She was 87 years old.

Bernice Ruth Farmer was born on a farm near Pomona, Missouri, on August 15, 1926, to Charles Nelson Farmer and Flora (White) Farmer. She was the seventh of nine children. After her family moved to a farm near Lennox, she attended country school and graduated from Lennox High School. She worked at Cargill, Inc., in Scotland where she met and married Charles G. Cvrk on December 3, 1950, at West Prairie Lutheran Church near Lennox. They had four sons, including one from her husband's prior marriage. A teacher for many years in rural Lesterville schools and eventually in the Scotland school system, she was a life-long student herself, graduating summa cum laude from the University of South Dakota/Springfield and earning a Master's Degree from USD/Vermillion. She was a founding member of the South Dakota VFW auxiliary and was very active in the organization, as well as Chapter AE PEO, for many years. She was a long-time member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Scotland and, later, St. Paul Lutheran Church in Freeman.

She was predeceased by her husband in 1998 and is survived by step-son Robert (Kay) of Manning, Iowa, and sons Stuart (Judy) of Henderson, Nevada, Charles (Janet) of Falls Church, Virginia, and Jon (Deb) of Rapid City, South Dakota, as well as nine grandchildren and nine step-great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, January 27 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Freeman followed by interment at West Prairie Lutheran Church on Tuesday at 2 p.m. Visitation with the family present will be from 4-6 pm at the Walter Funeral Home in Freeman Sunday, January 26.

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**Beverly Christensen**  
Beverly Y. Christensen,

87, of Yankton died Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014, at Avera Creighton Care Centre in Creighton, Neb. Arrangements are pending with the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Yankton.

**Royce Michael**  
Royce Michael, 66, of Crofton, Neb., died Friday, Jan. 24, 2014, at his residence. Funeral services are pending at the Wintz Funeral Home, Hartington, Neb.

**Elisabeth 'Ely' Sudbeck**  
Elisabeth "Ely" Sudbeck, 80, of Bow Valley, Neb., died Friday, Jan. 24, 2014, at the Golden Living Center, Hartington, Neb. Funeral services are pending at the Wintz Funeral Home, Hartington.

### IN REMEMBRANCE

**Morris Nelson**  
10:30 AM, Saturday  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
Yankton



**All-U-Can-Eat FISH FRY**  
Saturday, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>  
5:30-8pm  
Serving Fish, Fries, Coleslaw and Baked Beans. Free Will Donation  
Proceeds will go to our building fund. Everyone Welcome!  
**VFW Post 791** 209 Cedar, Yankton

*Thank You*  
The family of **Janet Shuff** would like to thank you for the caring, love and support shown to us at the passing of our dear Janet. We are deeply touched and humbled by the outpouring of prayers and memorials. A special thank you to Pastor Dave Gunderson and Pastor Steve Weispenfennig, St. John's Lutheran Church, Yankton. What a wonderful honor to the life of our beloved wife, mom and Gramma Janet; she will be greatly missed.  
*J. Ross Shuff and Family*

A very special thank you to Paul Wintz and all his staff at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home. When our loved one **Alan Oarr** passed away in November it proved to be a very difficult situation both emotionally and legally. The time spent communicating with us and comforting us was well above and beyond. Jesus works through people like you.  
**James and Heather Fillaus**  
**Vickie Lammers**