

All 6 2014 S.F. Homicides Were Women

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Sioux Falls recorded a higher-than-usual number of homicides in 2014 and all six victims were women, which police said could be a first in the city.

Of the city's 12 total homicides from 2011 to 2013, three were women, *The Argus Leader* reported.

"The fact that we had six (homicides in 2014) is rather shocking, because we hadn't had six since 2011," police Capt. Greg VandeKamp said. "Then you couple that with all the victims being female — that makes for a unique year."

Two of the six homicides in 2014 were drug-related, one was considered random and three were the result of domestic violence, including the killing last weekend of 36-year-old Angel Schroeder, a nurse at Sanford Hospital, police said. Her boyfriend, 39-year-old Timothy Darnell Moses, has pleaded not guilty to murder and manslaughter charges.

Johna Nelson, a counselor at The Compass Center in Sioux Falls, said the killings sadden her, but she's not surprised.

"I think there's just a whole lot more women who suffer from domestic violence abuse than men," Nelson said. "The odds are in favor of women to becoming victims because there are more women who are abused."

Even so, both the victim and the offender need to seek help, she said.

"The victim needs to learn how to be in a healthy relationship, and the offender needs help to learn new ways (to) interact with people and learning relationships are not about power and control," Nelson said.

Zieback County Sheriff Retires

DUPREE (AP) — There's a new sheriff in Ziebach County in northwest South Dakota after more than 20 years.

Robert Menzel, 62, retired Wednesday from his first and only career in law enforcement. Gary Cudmore took over Thursday as sheriff of the area on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation whose county seat is Dupree.

Menzel told KGFX-AM that he was hauling hay when he decided to run for the job in 1991 after a neighbor suggested he give it a try. He said he won the primary election by six votes, survived a runoff and then narrowly defeated a former police chief in the general election.

Menzel said he went through six weeks of basic law enforcement training in Pierre and for the first seven years on the job patrolled the 2,000 square miles of the county himself before hiring a deputy.

"I learned to live on about two hours of sleep a night," he said of the early years.

Menzel, a native of Ziebach County, said he has enjoyed serving and helping his fellow residents over the years.

Hartford To Honor School Counselor

HARTFORD (AP) — Flags east of Sioux Falls in Hartford will fly at half-staff on Friday when family and friends lay to rest a school counselor and firefighter.

Kier Murphy died Saturday from complications of Influenza A.

He was a member of the Hartford Area Fire and Rescue Department and a West Central School District guidance counselor.

Mayor Paul Zimmer asked that all businesses, homes and schools in Hartford fly their flags at half-staff on Friday, the day of Murphy's funeral. Gov. Dennis Daugaard approved the request Wednesday.

Harper, Mason Most Popular Names

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Look for a lot of Harpers and Masons on youth ball fields in the region in the coming years.

Sanford Health has released the most popular names given to babies born at its hospitals in 2014.

After Harper, the most popular girl names were Olivia, Emma, Ava and Nora. Besides Mason, the boy names topping the list were Liam, Oliver, Jackson and Lincoln.

Colder Temps Let S. Falls Ice Rink Open

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Some eastern South Dakota winter sports sites are opening or reopening because of the colder weather.

After a brief closure last week due to the warmer temperatures, skating is allowed again at the outdoor ice rinks in Aberdeen at Manor Park and Lincoln Park. Indoor skating is also available at the Odde Ice Arena.

Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation says its six outdoor ice rinks and two hockey rinks opened for the season on Thursday. And Great Bear Recreation Park east of Sioux Falls has also reopened after the warm spell and rain.

Board Seeks Guidance On Powdered Alcohol

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's liquor regulators will let the Legislature decide whether to bar or order a tight watch over powdered alcohol, if the product ever hits store shelves.

Some states have already barred Palcohol, which is owned by Lipsmark. Palcohol comes in pouches that hold the equivalent of one shot of alcohol in rum or vodka flavor and is added to water or mixers.

Lipsmark must obtain labeling approval from federal regulators before distributing Palcohol to stores. The company doesn't expect that to happen until at least spring.

Robert Rupe, executive director of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission, told the *Lincoln Journal Star* that Palcohol presents several regulatory problems. The commission said in a November letter to lawmakers and Gov. Dave Heineman that "technology advancements will result in an increase of products that are not clearly defined as beverage alcohol but result in the same type of usage."

Former Nebraska commission member Bill Austin said Palcohol's touted portability in pouches is one of its big problems. Palcohol could be smuggled far more easily than bottles of booze into places such as sports stadiums and schools where alcohol is prohibited.

The powder also would make it

easier for underage drinkers to conceal their drinking from adults, adding to the product's appeal to children, Austin said.

Palcohol officials have said they've not been given a chance to address regulatory problems and that prohibition doesn't work. A statement on the company's website said the product should be sold in licensed liquor stores where consumers must show a valid ID, "to keep it out of the hands of underage drinkers."

Rupe's office has been asked about Palcohol, but he said he doesn't know of any plans by lawmakers to introduce bills barring powdered alcohol from the state.

GF&P Head Cleared In Ethics Complaint

PIERRE (AP) — The incoming secretary of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks has been cleared of ethics allegations in Alaska, although critics say it was due to a technicality.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard last week announced that South Dakota native Kelly Hepler will replace Jeff Vonk, who is retiring in January after serving as Game and Fish secretary since 2007.

Hepler, who has worked with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game since 1979, was among several public officials in that state accused in August of not reporting gifts from a lobbying organization known as the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, the *Argus Leader* newspaper reported.

The Alaska Public Offices Commission determined last month that Hepler did nothing wrong because his job title did not fall under a category that requires disclosure.

Hepler's title is listed in state directories as "assistant commissioner," and the resume that he used to apply for the South Dakota job also

lists him as "assistant commissioner." The Public Offices Commission, however, determined that the title was not official and that Hepler was officially known as a special project coordinator, a title not required to report gifts to lobbyists.

"It's either black or white — it's not a technicality," Hepler told *The Associated Press* on Wednesday.

Hepler said "assistant commissioner" was one of several "working titles" he has held but that "special project coordinator" is his official state title.

Tony Venhuizen, Daugaard's chief of staff, said the governor's office was aware of the complaint made against Hepler when it approached him about the job.

"He was upfront about this whole matter," Venhuizen said.

Hepler said he mentioned the allegations to South Dakota officials because "I believe in being honest with people and forthright."

Hepler is expected to start his duties in South Dakota in March.

"I'm looking forward to my time as secretary," he said.

Five More Measles Cases Reported In South Dakota

BY REGINA GARCIA CANO
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — Five more people have been diagnosed with measles in South Dakota, bringing the total number of cases to six.

The three adults and three minors are part of a large extended family and none of them had been vaccinated against the virus, state epidemiologist Lon Kightlinger said Wednesday. The six cases — the first in the state since 1997 — have been reported in Davison County.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease that can cause permanent brain damage or even death. It is spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people or, less frequently, by airborne transmission.

Kightlinger said health officials are in the process of tracking down other people who have been in contact

with the six individuals, one of whom does not live in South Dakota resident but traveled there for the holidays. He said the state is not limiting the travels of the ill nonresident.

"We do expect to have more cases because measles is a highly contagious disease," Kightlinger said. "However, the greater population is not at risk, the people who are not vaccinated are the ones who are at risk, especially in Davison County."

Kightlinger said vaccination rates in the state are "quite high." He said records in the affected county show nearly 94 percent of children in the 2-year-old range are vaccinated against the virus. Statewide, 93 percent of children in that age range have been vaccinated.

Kightlinger said that statistic goes up to 97 percent for kindergarteners and 94 percent for teenagers, as the vaccine is required to be admitted into schools.

Neb. Crash Toll Likely To Hit 5-Year High

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The number of people who died in Nebraska crashes in 2014 likely will be the highest number in five years, Nebraska's highway safety administrator says.

As of Wednesday morning, 221 people had died in crashes, the *Lincoln Journal Star* reported. That's the highest toll since the 223 in 2009. Because of the New Year's holiday, officials couldn't provide the final toll for 2014.

However, the rate of fatalities per million miles traveled may be lower than last year, Nebraska highway safety administrator Fred Zwonechek told the newspaper. The miles driven likely will be higher than 2013 because gas prices have dropped below \$2 a gallon in some parts of Nebraska. Relatively mild weather for Christmas, Thanksgiving and Labor Day also led to more travel, he said, and the improving state economy meant more commercial miles were driven.

The more miles driven, Zwonechek said, the more chances people have to crash into other people's vehicles or trees and poles.

Grim statistics aside, he said, more people are driving better and safer. In the 1960s and '70s, crash fatalities in the state regularly topped 400. The worst year on record was 1971, when 489 people died.

Although many more vehicles are on the road today, the number of fatalities has plummeted. Zwonechek in part credited safer cars and cellphones, through which medical help immediately can be summoned.

Seat belts have saved many lives, but usage has plateaued around 80 percent, Zwonechek said, noting that of the people who'd died in Nebraska crashes last year, 131 weren't wearing any restraints.

Hunter

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Investment Council and applied to the Legislature's Executive Board in 2009. He wasn't chosen. He applied again in 2010 — and this time, he was picked.

Now he is in year five of the five-year one-time term that the five legislatively-appointed members of the Investment Council receive. That makes him the chairman until his term ends at the end of June.

Chief investment officer Matt Clark and 27 others comprise the state investment office's staff in Sioux Falls. That team makes the day to day decisions, within the parameters set by the council.

The goal of the council and the staff is earning as much as possible on assets that totaled \$13 billion as of June 30, 2014, including \$10.6 billion for the South Dakota Retirement System.

Not many people in South Dakota political circles knew Jon Hunter's background when he was appointed to the council, other than two decades as a newspaper publisher. He actually began professionally in finance rather than publishing.

He left Madison at age 17 for Arizona State University in 1977. In spring semester of his second year, he took a 300-level finance class.

"I fell in love," he said Tuesday in an interview at his office, where the bookcases are crammed with books about finance and business. The journalism books are in a smaller conference room next door. "It was like a girl. It was a weird experience. I was smitten."

After graduation he worked for Clorox in the corporation's Oakland, California, offices, where he served

AT A GLANCE	
The South Dakota Investment Council has eight members. Three serve because they hold offices as state treasurer, state school and public lands commissioner and South Dakota Retirement System administrator. Five serve at the pleasure of the Legislature's Executive Board.	Jim Means, Yankton, senior vice president and trust officer, First Dakota National Bank. Appointed 2011.
Those five serve single five-year terms. The legislative board chooses a new member for the council each June. The choice is made from a pool of applicants. The senior-most of the five serves as chairman during the final year of his or her term.	David Hillard, Rapid City, senior vice president and branch manager, RBC Wealth Management. Appointed 2012.
The current five appointed by the legislators are: Jon Hunter, Madison, president of Hunter Publishing Inc. Appointed 2010.	Steve Kirby, Sioux Falls, president and founding partner, Bluestem Capital Co. Appointed 2013.
	Lorin Brass, Lennox, Shell Oil retiree. Appointed 2014.
	The three other members are lands commissioner Vern Larson, state treasurer Rich Sattgast and SDRS administrator Rob Wylie.

in a five-year financial training program, rising from cost accountant to forecast analyst and getting two years of experience on staff for the company's pension system.

His next step was forming an investment partnership where he managed money for individuals and small pension plans. He and Mary decided returning to South Dakota would be best for their family.

The interest in finance stayed strong within him. "That was really my first love, probably still is, career-wise," he said.

So when he had the chance, more than 20 years later, he pursued the Investment Council appointment.

He recalls legislators asking him in a closed-door interview how he felt about retire-rehire. Public employees eligible for retirement would temporarily quit their jobs, start collecting retirement from SDRS and then return to work, getting both a retirement check and a paycheck.

Hunter said he opposed it — and previously had come out against it on the newspaper's editorial page.

Legislators put restrictions on retire-rehire that dampened its use. They did so with support of the SDRS board of trustees, who had come to understand the additional costs of retire-rehire threw the system's long-term finances out of balance.

The council and staff need to produce annual earnings for several state trust funds and add to the wealth of the retirement system, which has some 80,000 members including some 24,000 receiving benefits. Of \$475 million paid in benefits in the past year, about \$225 million came from employee and employer contributions; the remainder was earned from the investments.

Over four decades the South Dakota system earned respect for its strong returns on investments and prudent management. That attracted Hunter.

"I wanted to serve the state in some manner and didn't want to be a legislator," he said. "I thought I could help. I like to be associated with successful organizations."

Hunter was appointed to the council in the wake of the plunge of 2008-2009 when most investments plummeted in value. He feels fortunate to have been part of the rebuilding and says only good things about the people and practices on the council and the staff.

Asked whether the experience has been what he expected, Hunter said it's "even better."

"This is the best organization I've ever been associated with," he said. "You take things from it. A lot of it is the discipline to do things in the right way. It's not

flavor of the month. It's not something we do just for a while.

"It's always, 'Let's build off successes and make things a little better.' We don't have these big tides going in and out," he said.

According to Hunter the council members and staff understand they are serving 90-year-olds who are retired and 22-year-olds who eventually will be 90 and retired.

"Every single month checks are sent to every corner of every county," he said. "You have a real impact in South Dakota."

The Legislature and the executive branch don't interfere in investment policies and decisions, Hunter said. He described this as "the freedom to do what's right without influence." Much of

the portfolio is managed internally, which reduces costs and adds to the bottom line.

One change Hunter has led is stronger cyber-security. He said the fear isn't that someone will use the research but that 40 years of work could be lost. Cyber-security happens to be an emphasis at Dakota State University in Madison.

Jon Hunter's service on the council is rare. Newspaper editors and publishers seldom serve on state boards and commissions.

Only a few come to mind from recent decades, such as

Mark Roby of Watertown currently on the Judicial Qualifications Commission, and Noel Hamiel of Mitchell and Larry Atkinson of Moberidge on other panels.

George Hunter was president for the South Dakota Newspaper Association in 1964-65, one year before his death. Jon Hunter was SDNA president in 1996-97.

His term on the Investment Council runs until the end of June. "I'll be tremendously sad when I leave," Jon Hunter said. "Best five years of my life."

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