

Nebraska Receives Disaster Declaration

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — President Barack Obama has issued a disaster declaration for parts of Nebraska struck by recent severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding. The declaration announced Thursday makes federal aid available to help with the recovery effort in areas hit by severe weather between May 6 and June 17. State officials have said the storms caused millions of dollars in damage to roads, bridges and other public infrastructure. The counties affected are Cass, Dundy, Gage, Jefferson, Lancaster, Lincoln, Morrill, Nuckolls, Otoe, Saline, Saunders and Thayer.

Baby Run Over By Mom's Pickup

UEHLING, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a 1-year-old eastern Nebraska girl is expected to recover after being run over by a pickup driven by her mother. The accident occurred Wednesday morning in the Dodge County community of Uehling. Matt Schott, who is police chief for Hooper and Uehling, says the infant's mom was backing out of a driveway and didn't see her. The baby was taken to a Fremont hospital and then transferred to the Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. Schott told the *Omaha World-Herald* that he'd talked to the girl's father, who said she didn't have any broken bones and that it looked like she was going to be OK.

Woman Injured In I-29 Vehicle Fire Dies

PEEVER (AP) — A Veblen woman has died of injuries she suffered in a vehicle fire earlier this month. The Highway Patrol says 53-year-old Rebecca Stoughton died Tuesday from injuries she suffered June 9 in the fire on Interstate 29, four miles south of Summit. Stoughton was a passenger in the sport utility vehicle. The 23-year-old driver and an infant passenger in the SUV's back seat also were injured. The patrol says both are recovering at a Minneapolis burn center. The cause of the fire isn't known.

Former Village Clerk Sent To Prison

OAKDALE, Neb. (AP) — A former village clerk convicted of stealing from her village in northeast Nebraska village has been given two to four years in prison. Online court records say 31-year-old Megan Brandt had pleaded no contest and was convicted of theft. Prosecutors dropped a second charge in exchange for Brandt's plea. At her sentencing Wednesday in Antelope County District Court, Brandt also was ordered to make restitution of more than \$25,000. The village has about 320 residents. An arrest affidavit says bank records indicate Brandt signed and forged numerous checks from village of Oakdale accounts in 2013 and 2014 made payable to her or her husband. Brandt also was accused of making unauthorized withdrawals from village accounts using an ATM card.

Brown Co. Deputy Injured During Chase

ABERDEEN (AP) — A Brown County sheriff's deputy needed stitches after being injured during a foot chase with a suspect in Aberdeen. The *American News* reports that deputies responding to a reported fight Tuesday night arrested one man on drug charges at the scene. A second man fled, and a deputy pursued him through a couple of backyards. The officer ran into a tree and suffered cuts to his head. The deputy was not severely injured but was ordered to stay home from work on Wednesday. He wasn't identified. The suspect who fled got away. Authorities know his identity and are searching for him.

Relay

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This year's Relay for Life, themed "Take Back the Future," will be held at Riverside Park, beginning at 6 p.m. to-night and concluding Saturday morning at 5 a.m. The event will kick-off with the survivor's meal from 5-7 p.m. The meal, sponsored by the Beef Council, will include a beef sandwich, carrot sticks, chips, watermelon from Healthy Yankton and a drink. The survivor's meal is free and community members eat for \$5. The relay, led by cancer survivors, will begin at 6 p.m. "The event is a metaphor itself," Schloss said. "You start during the day, like before you had cancer ... Then night begins to fall when we light up our luminary bags on the trail, representing when you begin treatment and begin to see the light. At the end of the walk, you see the light of day again and it implies hope." In addition to the relay being led by survivors, the evening will include other ceremonies honoring those affected by cancer. A luminary ceremony remembering those lost, a "fight back" ceremony focusing on prevention and a caregivers lap are planned throughout the relay. Carla Hummel, Avera Sacred Heart director of volunteer services and a relay organizer, said organizers have planned activities throughout the evening to keep participants active during the 11-hour relay. "I think one of the biggest highlights this year is a glow walk," she said. "We're going to incorporate the (Meridian) bridge into our loop after the luminary ceremony at about 10:30 p.m." Some glow sticks will be available, but participants are encouraged to bring flashlights or glow sticks for this event. Other actives include a Zumba class, laser tag and "Back to the Future" movie marathon and trivia. Proceeds raised from this weekend's Relay for Life event will go to the American Cancer Society in Sioux Falls to fund ongoing cancer research and other programs and services. According to Rebecca Giddens, Relay for Life community manager for American Cancer Society in Sioux Falls, last year's Yankton relay raised a net total of \$46,450 with 217

registered participants. The money raised also fund programs such as, "Look Good, Feel Better" classes; "Road to Recovery," where volunteers drive patients to their treatments; and "Hope Lodge," which provides patients a hotel room free of charge when receiving treatment, among others, Giddens said. "American Cancer Society has moved cancer research more than any other cancer organization and it's not focused on one type of cancer," Schloss said. "When I was diagnosed, I had to travel to Sioux Falls for chemo and they were able to provide hotels for me every time I needed one." This year's Honorary Survivor is Pat Baxter of Yankton, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008. She has been participating in relays since 2009, the same year she received word of remission. "My journey was a very successful one, because of the people who walked before me," she told the Press & Dakotan. "This year is kind of a somber year, because I recently lost a very good friend. Her journey started the same as mine, but ended very differently." Baxter hopes that community members will contribute both in donations and support during this year's relay. "There needs to be people who continue to walk for the ones who walk with us and then the ones who walk after us, too," she said. "It's an ongoing journey until we've finished the fight." Participants can register by visiting www.relayforlife.org/yanktonsd, but registration is not required for participation. However, survivors receiving a free meal must register prior to the event. Schloss and Baxter hope the community will come to support cancer survivors, those who continue the fight and future cancer battlers. "The whole night is a bunch of different emotions, but overall, it instills hope," Schloss said. "It can be filled with laughter, (occasional) tears, but overall, you walk away feeling hopeful." "Just think: If every person in Yankton County gave just \$1, what a difference we'd make," Baxter said. Visit their Facebook page, Relay for Life of Yankton Area SD. Follow @alyssasobotka on Twitter.

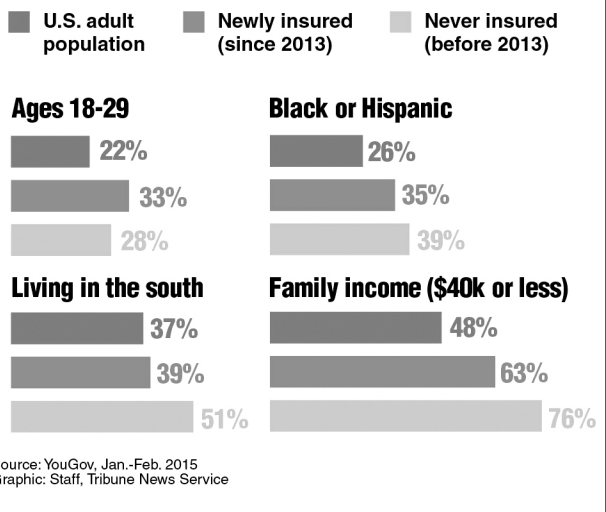
SD Consumers Relieved Health Insurance Subsidies Upheld

BY JAMES NORD
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — South Dakota consumers who get subsidized health coverage under the Affordable Care Act said Thursday they're relieved the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld tax credits that help cover the premiums by thousands of dollars on average per year. The state's congressional leaders reiterated their opposition to the law and promised to keep trying to repeal it. The high court maintained a key provision of the health insurance overhaul that affects thousands of South Dakota residents and others in more than 30 states who shop for coverage using exchanges run by the federal government. It means roughly 16,800 South Dakota consumers who bought coverage through the exchange during the 2015 enrollment period will keep getting an average of \$229 in premium assistance a month. Ruth Slaughter, who credits the subsidized coverage she obtained under the Affordable Care Act in 2014 with saving her life, said she learned about the ruling while still in bed in her camper at the Grand Canyon. She and her husband watched President Barack Obama speak on their television's single channel in grainy black-and-white.

Demographics of Obamacare

YouGov's data shows that certain groups are especially likely to have gained health insurance coverage since the ACA came into effect.



"I was just in tears, actually in tears," said Slaughter, 64, grateful for her coverage after several years without insurance and because she believes the Affordable Care Act benefits the country. Having insurance — which she said she would never be able to afford without a subsidy — prompted her to schedule a doctor's appointment, where she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Slaughter, who lives mostly in Spearfish, said her plan has allowed her to get treatment. "Otherwise, it would have been a choice of death or

medical bankruptcy," Slaughter said. Opponents of the health overhaul had argued to the court that the subsidies could be given only in states that had established their own marketplaces, not in places that used the marketplaces run by the federal government. A spokeswoman for Gov. Dennis Daugaard, a Republican, said the state doesn't have to change its approach to the federal health law since the court upheld the subsidies. Kelsey Pritchard declined to comment on whether Daugaard is glad

that South Dakota consumers who get subsidized coverage can keep doing so. South Dakota's all-Republican congressional delegation — U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem and U.S. Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds — said in statements Thursday that the Affordable Care Act is a flawed disaster for consumers. They said they'll keep trying to replace it with a "patient-centered" alternative. Jeff Sandene, interim president of Sanford Health Plan — which offers coverage in South Dakota through the federal marketplace — said he's not surprised the high court kept the health care law intact and said the news is good for consumers and patients. "It's kind of made my day, to really tell you the truth," he said. As of early June, Sanford had about 2,200 members covered through the exchange, with more than 1,800 getting subsidies. Avera Health Plans Chief Administrative Officer Deb Muller said many consumers who had secured coverage with tax credits would have walked away without the subsidies because they couldn't have afforded the plans on their own. Of the roughly 10,000 people who have bought Avera health plans through the exchange, about 8,500 receive subsidies, according to Avera.

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nearly 57,000 Nebraska residents will continue to receive tax subsidies for federal health care insurance plans now that the U.S. Supreme Court has rejected conservatives' challenge to the Affordable Care Act. The 6-3 ruling on Thursday helps avoid a situation in which premiums could have soared for Nebraska's entire individual insurance market, possibly forcing many recipients to drop their coverage. Here are some key things to know about the ruling and its impact on Nebraska: **HOW DID NEBRASKA BECOME INVOLVED?** All states were required to have a health care marketplace where consumers could comparison shop for insurance. The law gave states the option of creating and running their own marketplace, defaulting to one set up by the federal government or taking a hybrid approach. Nebraska was one of 34 mostly conservative states that defaulted to the

federal marketplace rather than creating its own. At issue in the court case was whether states with the federal marketplace should qualify for tax credits to help with the cost of health insurance. Challengers to the law argued that its literal wording only allowed subsidies for marketplaces "established by the state," while the Obama administration said the law's intent was to provide subsidies to all qualified enrollees. **WHY DID NEBRASKA OPT AGAINST A STATE-RUN MARKETPLACE?** Former Gov. Dave Heineman announced in 2012 that Nebraska would join a marketplace set up by the federal government. The Republican vehemently opposed the federal health care law, said that the federal option was cheaper for the state and argued that state-run models were still heavily controlled by the federal government. A new state oversight commission agreed in December. The Nebraska Exchange Stakeholder Commission said building a state-run marketplace would prove "difficult at best," given the lack of

federal funding and problems some other states experienced with their systems. Some advocacy groups that support the law say Nebraska should have chosen a state-run marketplace to provide more local control. Proponents point to states like Kentucky, whose state marketplace has been touted as a success. **WHY ARE THE TAX CREDITS SO IMPORTANT?** The tax credits were created to help cover the cost of insurance for low- and middle-income Americans, including in Nebraska. Had the court struck them down, premiums in Nebraska could have soared by an average of 265 percent. Nebraska receives an average of \$14.6 million a month — about \$257 per enrollee — to help pay for premiums, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Eliminating the tax credits likely would have raised prices for the entire individual marketplace, and not just for those who receive them, because younger and healthier people who help subsidize the pool would have been more likely to drop their plans.

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generally applauded — or at least anticipated — by South Dakota health care organizations. Dr. Tim Ridgway, president of the South Dakota State Medical Association (SDSMA), expressed a positive reaction to the high court's ruling. "The South Dakota State Medical Association is relieved that the Supreme Court decision will allow South Dakota patients and millions of other patients across the United States to continue accessing the health care they need," he said. "Physicians know that the uninsured live sicker and die younger, and we support options that create access to health insurance to ensure patients can get the care they require." The court ruling will mean more of an emphasis on wellness and the prevention of disease, Ridgway said. "The subsidies upheld will help patients afford health insurance so they can see a doctor when they need one and not have to wait until a small health problem becomes a crisis," he said. "Access to health insurance provides patients with peace of mind that they will not risk bankruptcy should they become seriously ill or injured and experience catastrophic health care costs." Ridgway hopes Thursday's decision will mean continued improvement of national health care. "With this case now behind us, we hope our country can move forward and continue strengthening our nation's health care system," he said. One way of doing so would be through the expansion of Medicaid eligibility in South Dakota, he said. "We cannot forget about

those in our state who still do not have health care coverage. If South Dakota does not expand Medicaid eligibility, we leave those with incomes below the poverty level without coverage," he said. "Expanding Medicaid will provide much needed coverage to our low-income patients, improve access to care, and improve health care for South Dakota's low-income families and remains a top priority for the SDSMA." Avera Health spokeswoman Lindsey Meyers likewise viewed the Supreme Court decision as a positive development. "We applaud today's Supreme Court ruling that will allow millions of people to keep their health coverage," she said. Those relying on the subsidies gained a victory with Thursday's ruling, Meyers said. "As a federally-run marketplace in South Dakota, the court has granted a victory for the almost 17,000 South Dakotans who have chosen to shop on the marketplace," she said. "Avera has consistently supported efforts to expand access to health care coverage to residents in our service area." Another South Dakota health care official had planned for such an outcome. "The current upholding of the law was anticipated,"

Interim president of Sanford Health Plan Jeff Sandene said. "It was the ultimate decision for the Supreme Court to continue the affordable care act." Sanford Health had planned for either scenario, Sandene said. "If it was reversed, we wanted to be prepared by working with our current legislators to provide the best possible care for our patients," he said. "We planned for this kind of health care to continue, but this decision definitely helps clear up some of the uncertainty." Sandene sees Thursday's decision as providing a sense of stability and continuity for the nation's health care industry. He also sees it promoting wellness rather than waiting for an emergency. "Having insurance coverage and having access to procedures is good for the individual," he said. "They are staying well and staying healthy without waiting for a crisis to happen that requires the added cost of emergency room visits." "Today's decision is really anticipating what we have already been doing the last year," Sandene added. For the most part, District 18 Sen. Jean Hunhoff (R-Yankton) — also an administrator at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton along with being

a registered nurse — saw the Supreme Court ruling as maintaining business as usual for South Dakota. "It doesn't change what we're doing in the state," she said. "There was a concern out there that people would be losing their insurance in this way. But again, we have the status quo now that the subsidies (will) continue." Now, South Dakota faces the challenge of helping those not covered presently under the system, Hunhoff said. "We need to figure out how we can get coverage to those people that need to get coverage who do not have it currently," she said. "We have to go back and see again where we've got some of these gaps, and what we can do with the healthcare that the president put into effect." The full impact of Thursday's high court ruling may remain to be seen, Hunhoff said. "Whether it's going to change anything is a question," she said. District 18 Reps. Bernie Hunhoff (D-Yankton) and Mike Stevens (R-Yankton) couldn't be reached for comment by Thursday's news deadline.

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