

Man Sentenced In Death Of Bald Eagle

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A man convicted in the death of a bald eagle in northeast Nebraska in 2014 has been sentenced to probation.
U.S. Attorney Deborah Gilg says 24-year-old Antonio Bertucci, of Macy, received one year of supervised release Monday for his conviction of aiding and abetting the unlawful killing of a bald eagle.
Bertucci will serve nearly three years in prison on a separate conviction of habitual domestic abuse. That also includes three years of supervised release.
Prosecutors say Bertucci was the driver of a car in February 2014 that was involved in the shooting death of a bald eagle. Witnesses say a passenger in Bertucci's car shot at two bald eagles on the Omaha Indian Reservation. One of the birds was found dead in the car trunk.

Man Charged In Rape, Murder Of Infant

RAPID CITY (AP) — Authorities say a 26-year-old Rapid City man who was arrested last week after an infant died of injuries at a local hospital is now facing a murder charge.
The Rapid City Police Department says Kristopher Houchin on Monday was charged with second-degree murder. That charge is in addition to the first-degree rape and child abuse counts that were filed against him Friday in connection with the infant's death.
Authorities say the 6-month-old girl died Friday afternoon. Preliminary results of an autopsy conducted Monday indicate the girl died from a brain bleed sustained as a result of blunt force trauma.
Houchin was arrested and first charged after hospital officials notified authorities that the infant's injuries were suspicious.
It's is unclear if Houchin has an attorney.

Activists Deliver Papers To Block Laws

PIERRE (AP) — Activists attempting to block two state laws from going into effect have turned in signatures collected from thousands of South Dakotans to refer the measures to the voters in the 2016 election.
Organizers on Monday turned in petitions to the secretary of state's office for its review. Activists are attempting to block laws passed by the Legislature in the 2015 session that carve out a \$7.50 youth minimum wage and institute a package of election law changes.
Activists say they secured thousands more than the 13,871 signatures required for each measure to send the laws to the voters.
The secretary of state's office hopes to complete its review before midnight on Tuesday.
If organizers are successful, the laws will be put on hold until after the 2016 election.

Regulators Investigate NE Nuke Plant

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Federal regulators are investigating the failure of a part at the Fort Calhoun nuclear power plant during this spring's maintenance outage.
The Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Monday that it had launched a special inspection at the plant that sits along the Missouri River about 20 miles north of Omaha.
The NRC says workers discovered the problem earlier this month after replacing a seal in a valve that controls cooling water flow into one of the plant's steam generators. The valve wouldn't open because the new seal material couldn't handle the high operating temperatures.
The seal was replaced a second time to resolve the problem, but regulators want to better understand how it happened and whether workers' response was adequate.
Fort Calhoun is owned by the Omaha Public Power District utility.

Outreach Center For Veterans To Close

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A center that offers hot meals and other services to homeless and formerly homeless veterans in Sioux Falls will close in August.
The *Argus Leader* reports the Veteran's Outreach Center will cease operations because of funding problems.
The center allows veterans to do laundry, has showers and provides group therapy for 18 to 20 veterans a day.
Volunteers of America of the Dakotas had a contract to run the facility for \$180,000 a year for up to four years. But the VA Medical Center of Sioux Falls has decided against renewing the contract for a fourth year.
VA spokeswoman Shirley Redmond says the system has "to be fiscally responsible" because of dwindling funding and mounting bills for the care of veterans.
Redmond says case managers will work with veterans who visit the center to connect them with other resources.

Man Injured After Jumping Off Cliff

ROCKERVILLE (AP) — A man seriously injured a leg and foot after jumping off a cliff at a popular swimming area in western South Dakota and failing to clear the rocks below.
Authorities say the man in his early 20s jumped off the cliff at Hippie Hole near Rockerville Sunday afternoon, but hit the rocks below. He was transported in a South Dakota National Guard helicopter to a Rapid City hospital.
Emergency officials did not release the man's identity.
Eight area agencies responded to the accident, including Pennington County Search and Rescue, Rapid City Fire Department and the Hayward Fire Department.

DMV's Goal: Your Vehicle Title Will Be Processed In Two Weeks

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — After a period last winter when processing vehicle titles in South Dakota took as long as five weeks, the state Division of Motor Vehicles is getting them done in two weeks again, director Peggy Laurenz said Monday.
Laurenz, who became director two years ago, answered questions from members of the Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee.
She said other states take longer: North Dakota six weeks; Nebraska six weeks; and Minnesota eight weeks.
"In comparison our goal of two weeks is ambitious," Laurenz said. "We feel we have a success story to tell today."
The two weeks applies to title applications where the division doesn't need to contact the owner for additional

information.
The division handles more titles every year, she said, but the staff hadn't been expanded to keep pace.
The slowdown in title applications that normally occurs during the winter months didn't happen this past winter, she said, while turnover was higher than normal among the processors because of retirements and employees finding other jobs that paid more.
The division raised wages and has taken internal steps to reduce steps and at times focus solely on title work.
The division handles an average of 1,800 title applications per day and as many as 2,500 on some days, according to Laurenz.
Most of the work involves processing actual paper, such as odometer readings, damage disclosures, liens and bills of sale, and checking signatures.
Sen. Deb Peters, R-Hartford, asked

why the information isn't in a digital format. She said vehicle dealers type information into a system and county courthouse officials add information on-line.
Replied Laurenz: "While we have part of the system electronic, at this point it is not all electronic. There is still required physical paper (that is) part of the process."
Peters wasn't satisfied. "That absolutely baffles me in this day and age," she responded. "What's holding us back?"
Laurenz said she too is puzzled in some ways by the volume of paper. "I think it is something we will continue looking at, going forward," she said.
Some documents haven't been able to be converted to digital, she said.

Report Gives Harrowing Detail Of Prison 'Rampage'

By The Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A deadly rampage by several hundred inmates at an understaffed Nebraska maximum security prison in May started when too many prisoners were allowed to leave their cells at once to get medication, according to an investigative report released on Monday.
Multiple inmates at Tecumseh State Correctional Institution were allowed to leave their cells simultaneously on May 10 to get in line for the distribution of over-the-counter medication and the staff were unable to manage them, according to the review released by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.
The 37-page report is the most detailed public accounting yet of the revolt, and it sets out in harrowing detail how the prison staffed with the minimum number of officers lost control of the situation in less than 20 minutes.
"The uncontrolled inmates assaulted two staff, seemingly ignored warning shots and actual use of deadly force, and essentially entrapped and taunted numerous staff members in buildings overrun by inmates," the report says. It describes the ordeal as a "destructive 10+ hour rampage."
There were only 57 staff members at the facility to manage 1,024 inmates when the riot began, the minimum number allowed, and several were working overtime, it said.
The report said the incident began at 2:32 p.m. with release of inmates from their cells to get medicine and within 10 minutes inmates were becoming violent, prompting an officer to fire a warning shot. Seven minutes later the entire facility was ordered to lock down, and inmates began trying to break down doors and windows and move to other parts of the facility.
An inmate kicked an officer on the ground in the head and another officer was

assaulted in the back of the head, the report said.
At one point, the report says prisoners became so threatening that staff evacuated substantial parts of the facility.
"Numerous other inmates throughout the courtyard area were beginning to circle around staff, in what appears to be an attempt to purposely block escape routes, effectively trapping staff in the courtyard," the report said.
An officer in the tower shot one inmate in the leg to try to get the attention of prisoners but was mostly ignored.
Prisoners began chanting "Hands Up – Don't Shoot," a slogan that protesters frequently used after unarmed 18-year-old Michael Brown was fatally shot by police in Ferguson, Missouri, last August, setting off nationwide protests over police treatment of African-Americans.
The inmates started fires that filled control centers with smoke, forcing staff hiding there to retreat further.
After more than 10 hours, authorities were able to restore order. But the report says that they had to rescue 19 staff and one volunteer trapped at various locations including the gym, two housing units, the tower and an area where religious services are held.
Two sex offenders serving sentences at the prison were found dead once order was restored. Additional information about the inmate deaths was not released in the report, but the Nebraska State Patrol is expected to issue its own independent investigation.
The rampaging inmates caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to the facility.
The report commends the staff, some of whom were injured and trapped for hours in various areas of the prison. One female staffer barricaded herself in the gym office.

"They endured situations that one cannot always prepare for, yet continued to stay alert and aware," according to the report.
The report makes dozens of recommendation for corrections personnel, including adding more rules for dispensing inmate medication, better organizing to maintain control of inmates and limiting materials that allowed inmates to start destructive fires.
Scott Frakes, the director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, said the report provides a realistic assessment.
"In addition to identifying needed improvements, the report also highlights the courageous actions of staff and in the dedication shown since the disturbance," he said in a statement.
The report was led by an administrator for the Washington state corrections department.



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