

Woman Pleads Guilty In Stabbing Death

COLUMBUS, Neb. (AP) — A Nebraska woman has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the stabbing death of a man.
Attorney General Jon Bruning said in a news release Friday that 32-year-old Kimberly Henderson, of Columbus, entered the plea in connection to the death last May of 51-year-old Steven Jorgensen, also from Columbus. Authorities say he was stabbed to death during a home robbery.
Henderson is one of three people facing charges in the case. Twenty-seven-year-old Quentin Critser, of Lincoln, entered the same guilty plea in December and agreed to testify against his co-defendants. Thirty-one-year-old Eric Henry, of Columbus, is still scheduled to stand trial in April. He has pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder and other charges.

SF Apartment Fire Displaces Residents

SIoux FALLS (AP) — About 50 apartment building residents will need to spend Friday night away from home after a fire in Sioux Falls.
KDLT television reports that Sioux Falls Fire Rescue responded to the call at the Arnold's Park Apartments about 1 p.m. and smoke and flames were coming from the second floor. The fire then spread to the third floor and the roof.
Crews knocked down the fire in about 20 minutes.
All residents were evacuated for the night, and the Red Cross is setting up a warming center for displaced residents.

UNO Plans To Rebuild Damaged Dorm

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The University of Nebraska at Omaha says it will rebuild a student apartment building partially gutted by fire last month.
The Feb. 26 fire destroyed the roof and third floor of the three-story building at UNO's Scott Village. No students were injured. Investigators say the fire was caused by a discarded cigarette on an apartment balcony.
A university news release Friday says it will replace all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems in the building and reconstruct the roof and third floor, and all interior finishes will be replaced.
UNO hopes to have the building ready for students by the 2014 fall semester.
UNO says officials spent weeks working with architects, engineers and insurance adjusters to determine the best course of action for damaged building.

Honey Production Down Slightly In SD

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Honey production in 2013 was unchanged in North Dakota and down slightly in South Dakota.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture says 2013 production from South Dakota producers with five or more colonies totaled 14.8 million pounds, down 9 percent from 2012. There were 265,000 honey producing colonies in South Dakota during 2013, up 2 percent from 2012.
In North Dakota, honey production totaled 33.1 million pounds in 2013. There were 480,000 honey producing colonies in North Dakota during the year, also unchanged from 2012.
Prices for the 2013 crop averaged \$2.06 per pound in South Dakota and two cents less in North Dakota.
North Dakota ranked first in the nation in honey production for the tenth straight year. South Dakota was third, behind North Dakota and Montana.

Nebraska Grain Elevator Worker Killed

TECUMSEH, Neb. (AP) — A grain elevator worker in southeast Nebraska has died in an anhydrous ammonia explosion that injured another worker.
Johnson County Attorney Julie Smith says in a news release that the 63-year-old worker died Thursday night after the explosion at Midwest Farmers Cooperative in Tecumseh.
Smith says the Johnson County Sheriff's Office received a 911 call about the explosion around 6 p.m. Thursday. Rescue crews took two workers to a local hospital, where one of them later died. Officials did not release the names of the men.
Two others, including a sheriff's deputy, were treated for non-life threatening injuries or exposure to anhydrous ammonia.
Anhydrous ammonia is used by farmers as fertilizer. The colorless gas can burn the eyes, throat and damage lung tissue at high exposures.

Neb. Animal Cruelty Bill Advances

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A proposal to strengthen Nebraska's animal cruelty law has won first-round approval from lawmakers.
Senators voted 25-0 on Friday on a bill that would allow longer ownership restrictions for people who have abused animals. The bill was inspired by a Malcolm woman who was convicted of animal cruelty and neglect.
A Lancaster County judge said the puppy mill owner, Julia Hudson, ran an "animal Auschwitz," with dogs in cages that were crusted with feces and urine. Hudson was only prohibited from owning dogs and other animals during her two-year probation period, the maximum allowed by state law.
The bill by Sen. Ernie Chambers would allow judges to restrict ownership in such cases for up to five years in misdemeanor cases and 15 years for felonies.

GI Airport Operator Plans New Service

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — The fixed-base operator at the Grand Island airport is planning a service and product expansion that officials say could land business from the owners of thousands of planes.
The Grand Island Independent says Trego-Dugan Aviation at the Central Nebraska Regional Airport plans to boost the capability of its avionics division to sell and install a new tracking system that uses satellite data links.
Trego-Dugan's Aaron Hall told the Hall County Airport Authority board on Wednesday that the company is partnering with Garmin, Avidyne and FreeFlight to develop the tracking system. The system would help the aircraft owners comply with the federal government's mandate that planes upgrade by 2020 to what's called an automatic dependent surveillance broadcast system.

SD Primes For Texting And Driving Ban

BY NORA HERTEL
Associated Press

PIERRE — A law that would make texting while driving illegal in South Dakota still awaits the governor's signature, but the state Department of Public Safety is already talking about a public awareness campaign.
Lee Axdahl, the director of the office of highway safety, says the state already has some materials to warn against texting and driving. He has been in touch with an advertising agency in Sioux Falls to discuss a campaign on the pending ban.
"We recognize in our office that cell-phones and texting are a piece of the distracted driving equation," Axdahl said. "The ban will put into statute something that we have been doing out of this office for several years."
Gov. Dennis Daugaard has expressed general support for a texting while driving ban. The Legislature already approved the proposal.
It would make texting while driving a

secondary offense. People pulled over for other traffic infractions could be charged an additional \$100 if they were also texting.
The state spends about \$1 million a year on safety campaigns, including announcements that air on television and radio. The ads target seat belt compliance, as well as drunken and distracted driving.
"The main safety concern about any distraction is your hands, your eyes, your mind," Axdahl said. That's a theme beneath all of the distracted driving outreach, although the department has not settled on a specific message for a possible texting and driving campaign.
Kathy Askew teaches driver's education at the Capital University Center in Pierre, and she shows that kind of anti-texting public service announcement to her students every day.
"Of course they all say they're not going to, but I know better than that," Askew said.
Askew said the texting ban is a good

idea, and she'll be interested to see how it plays out.
John Sterling, the manager of Wireless World in Pierre, agreed. He primarily uses hands free technology to access his cellphone in the car. The proposed texting ban protects people using their phones with voice activation.
"They're not going to catch everyone who does it," Sterling said. "Therefore, it's probably going to be overlooked by some. But others, once they hear it's a law, they may not do it."
The bill specifically calls on the state to educate people about the change in law, which would take effect July 1. Axdahl and other Public Safety Department staff will do just that with their campaign.
"We're prepared to sit down and see what it's going to take," Axdahl said. "If it does get signed into law, we would talk about the fact that it would be illegal."

Minn. Tribe Helps Fellow Tribes Buy Propane

BY BLAKE NICHOLSON
Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Donations from an American Indian tribe in Minnesota totaling nearly \$1.4 million have helped Great Plains tribes weather this winter's propane crisis.
The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community provided grants to the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota and South Dakota; the Yankton, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Sioux in South Dakota; and the Santee Sioux in Nebraska.
"The propane shortage this year has been particularly hard on American Indian communities," Shakopee Chairman Charlie Vig said in a statement. "We are compelled to help our fellow tribes get through the remaining days of winter."
A nationwide propane shortage caused by supply disruptions, a late harvest and a winter cold snap made

the fuel so expensive that many reservation residents couldn't afford it. The problem was particularly acute on Standing Rock, where about 5,000 homes on the 3,600-square-mile reservation rely on the fuel for heat.
Authorities are still investigating whether cold was a factor in the death of Debbie Dogskin, 61, who died in a mobile home with an empty propane tank. Sioux County Sheriff Frank Landeis said he is still awaiting the autopsy results.
The situation on Standing Rock has eased as propane prices have fallen with the onset of spring, Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II said. Residential propane prices have fallen from about \$4 a gallon in late January to \$3.08 this week, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. That is below the \$3.50 mark at which Archambault said the fuel starts becoming unaffordable for reservation

residents. The tribe lifted an emergency declaration earlier this month.
"We don't think there's an emergency anymore," Archambault said. "People have propane, it's starting to warm up, and prices are dropping. It's all good."
Standing Rock received \$500,000 from the Shakopee tribe in early February to help buy propane for tribal members who didn't qualify for help through the federal government's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The Minnesota tribe gave \$300,000 to the Yankton Sioux Tribe and \$70,000 to the Santee Sioux at the same time.
This month, the Shakopee tribe has given \$250,000 each to the Rosebud and Cheyenne River tribes.
The Cheyenne River Sioux operates its own propane company, supplying about 1,000 homes.
"It has definitely been a challenge this year," General

Manager Mona Thompson said
Rosebud Chairman Cyril Scott wrote in his request to the Shakopee tribe that some tribal members were in "dire need" of propane and called it a "crisis situation."
Wizipan Little Elk, CEO of the tribe's economic development corporation, said about 2,000 homes on the reservation rely on propane. Tribal officials went into communities several times over the winter to check on residents, he said.
The tribe last fall started its own propane supply company and stocked up on the fuel before the winter, so it was able to keep prices lower than other suppliers. However, the company ran out of propane for three days earlier this month, and residents had to turn to other suppliers.
"It wasn't a fun time to start a propane business, with the national crisis going on," Little Elk said. "But we managed."

Nebraska High Court Denies Man's DNA Test Request

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The Nebraska Supreme Court on Friday nixed a request for DNA testing of evidence gathered in the case of a man serving life in prison for shooting another man to death at an Omaha restaurant drive-thru.
Antoine Young, 40, was convicted in 2008 of first-degree murder and a weapons count for the death of 33-year-old Ray Webb, who was shot in August 2007 as he sat in his car in a Taco Bell drive-thru.
Young appealed last year after a Douglas County District Court in 2012 denied his request to conduct DNA testing on a black sweat shirt found at the scene. The court also denied Young's request for a new forensic testing technique called Cartridge Electrostatic Recovery and Analysis (CERA), which tests the body oils that make up fingerprints left on spent shell casings.

Young maintains that the testing will show that any genetic material on those items did not come from him.
Young has maintained his innocence, saying he was not present at the shooting and had spent the day at a family gathering. He was convicted based on testimony from several eyewitnesses who said Young walked up to Webb's car and shot him.
Young's request for DNA testing hinges on a 2001 Nebraska law that requires the state to test DNA evidence if it is likely to produce evidence that someone else committed the crime.
On Friday, the Nebraska Supreme Court said Young did not meet the requirements of the state's DNA testing law. Those requirements include that the defendant must show that such testing was effectively not available at the time of trial and that the biological material has been retained in such a way to safeguard its physical integrity.
Young did not request DNA testing of the sweat shirt at his 2008 trial and of-

ferred no evidence that such testing was not available at the time of his trial, the high court said.
As for testing of the shell casings, "there is no evidence that the proposed CERA test is in fact a DNA test," Nebraska Supreme Court Justice Michael McCormack wrote for the court. Young also failed to present evidence that the test was not available at the time of his trial, the high court said.
"The DNA Testing Act gives inmates access to evolving scientific technology, but it was not intended to allow an inmate a second chance to perform DNA testing which was available at trial," McCormack wrote.
Tracy Hightower-Henne, an attorney for Young, said Friday's decision did not come as a shock.
"DNA cases, in general, are tough to win," she said.
The Nebraska Attorney General's Office did not immediately respond to a request Friday for comment.

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