

Woman Charged In Slaying Cites Mental Illness

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A Texas woman charged with killing a South Dakota man a year and a half ago says she has psychiatric problems and has been victimized by a life of crime and drugs.

Letisha Morgan, 34, is jailed in Dallas in the death of her boyfriend in Texas and in the October 2010 death of Howard Allen, 52, in the Sioux Falls apartment where he lived alone. She told KSFY-TV in an on-camera interview that she has been diagnosed with depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

"I blank out and I can't remember anything," she said. "And you know, I don't know what goes on. But when I come to I'm in jail, I'm in trouble."

Morgan said she was working as a prostitute in Sioux Falls when she met Allen at a soup kitchen.

"I had a relapse there and I stabbed him about 13 or 14 times," she said.

Authorities allege that Morgan stabbed Allen 37 times in the chest, back and groin, using three knives because they kept bending and breaking. They have charged her with murder but say she might not face prosecution in South Dakota if she is convicted in Texas and receives a life sentence.

Forum In Madison Will Focus On Flooding

MADISON (AP) — The Madison City Commission has scheduled a public forum next week to talk about flooding.

The eastern South Dakota city of about 6,500 people was hit by heavy rains and flash flooding earlier this month. About 100 homes and businesses were damaged, and an Alabama man visiting family drowned in a creek.

The city has a history of flooding problems. Mayor Gene Hexom tells the *Madison Daily Leader* that the public meeting on May 31 will give officials and residents a chance to provide ideas for preparing for future flood threats.

Man Accused Of Using Cord To Whip Kids

SOUTH SIOUX CITY, Neb. (AP) — A South Sioux City man is accused of whipping two children with a power cord.

The *Sioux City Journal* says 44-year-old Maximino Rivera-Nieto faces two felony counts of child abuse.

A court affidavit says a 13-year-old girl told a teacher last Friday that she couldn't go to soccer practice because she was too sore from being whipped by her stepfather. The affidavit says an officer sent to the girl's home found that her 12-year-old brother had been beaten, too.

Rivera-Nieto was arrested that evening. The Dakota County sheriff's office says he remains in custody on \$25,000 bond on Thursday. Online court records don't list his attorney.

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Visitors to Nebraska's state parks this Memorial Day weekend will have to pay a little more to get past the front gates, but sales figures released Thursday show the number of permits purchased has surged.

Nebraska Game and Parks division administrator Roger Kuhn told The Associated Press that sales have increased 26 percent between January and April of this year and the same time period in 2011. Lawmakers approved the increases last year and overturned Gov. Dave Heineman's veto. The measure went into effect in January.

"All of our parks have been busier than normal," Kuhn said. "At this point, the park permit fee increase has been very, very well received. I haven't heard any complaints — and that's very unusual."

Kuhn attributed the increase to this year's

mild winter and spring, as well as the opening of the new Lake Wanhoo recreational area on the northern edge of Wahoo — a roughly 30-minute drive from both Omaha and Lincoln.

The increases — from \$20 to \$25 for annual entry fee for residents, \$25 to \$30 for non-resident annual entry fee and \$4 to \$5 for a daily park pass — were intended to help state park administrators cover maintenance and upkeep costs. Heineman said the increased fees would discourage Nebraskans from visiting parks at a time when higher fuel prices were keeping many closer to home.

The law's sponsor, former Louisville Sen. Dave Pankonin, has said the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission reduced costs through staff cuts and privatizing some park services before it requested the fee increase.

Pankonin said Thursday that, even with the increase, Nebraska's park fees are the most affordable nationwide. Of the 36 states that sell permits to help pay for their parks, Nebraska's

\$25 annual fee is the lowest, along with Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

"It's still a very good bargain," Pankonin said. "That was our hope — that it wouldn't affect the sales, but would still help Game and Parks maintain what it has."

Kuhn said the fee increase helps pay for garbage service at the parks, tree-trimming, lawn maintenance, building and vehicle repairs and other needs.

Last year, the parks reported \$34 million in deferred maintenance costs. The Legislative Fiscal Office has estimated that the law will raise an additional \$1.2 million a year for park services.

The Game and Parks Commission sold 115,325 permits between January and April of this year, according to state data. In the same period last year, state officials sold 91,515 entry permits. Permits sold online or through a private vendor also include a \$1 issuance fee, under the new law.

Nebraska Crash Deaths Are On The Rise This Year

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Fatal crashes in Nebraska are on the rise after a two-year streak in which the number of traffic-related deaths fell, state officials said Thursday during a campaign to increase seat belt usage.

The Nebraska State Patrol has recorded 65 traffic deaths so far this year, an increase of eight over the same period one year ago.

"While we remain dedicated to

reducing traffic fatalities, we have experienced a slight increase in roadway deaths in 2012," Gov. Dave Heineman said in prepared remarks. "Many of these deaths can be attributed to the lack of seat belts. It is critical that all motorists and their passengers buckle up every time on every trip."

Nebraska State Patrol spokeswoman Deb Collins said 53 of the victims were killed in motor vehicles that include seat belts. But she said 42 of them — nearly 80 percent — were not buckled up

when they crashed.

Collins said seven of the victims were killed on motorcycles, and four were pedestrians. One died while riding an all-terrain vehicle.

The increase follows two straight years of reduced traffic deaths. The State Patrol reported 181 fatalities in 2011, an all-time low that broke the previous year's record.

"The unfortunate reality is too many people are dying on our roadways because they aren't

buckling up," said Col. David Sankey, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol.

The warning came in advance of the Memorial Day weekend, widely viewed as the start of the summer travel season. Nebraska is also participating in the national "Click It or Ticket" seat belt safety campaign, which started on Monday and runs through June 3.

Nebraska Department of Roads Director Monty Fredrickson said drivers should also stay vigilant in construction zones.

Pool

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maintenance," Garvey said. "There have been about six or seven of us out there the last few weeks working with the crew. Cleaning is one of the biggest jobs."

Snook said getting the pool ready has been a team effort.

"It takes a lot of work," Snook said. "We've been working on this project for a little over a month and it takes a lot of patience."

Orr said she has also been working on staffing since the middle of March to make sure everyone is ready for the opening.

It's important to get people hired not only for lifeguard positions, but also for pool manage-

ment positions, concession workers and cashiers, Orr said.

Once the pool is open, Garvey said it is vital for everyone to stay on the same page.

"It's important to keep on top of all the lifeguards for consistency as well as cleaning procedures while the pool is open during the summer," Garvey said. "We all have to make sure the floors are clean and all the garbage is picked up as part of our job."

Re-training the lifeguards is also a top priority for Orr, she said. Many college students come back for the summer to work and they need to go through training every year.

"We just completed all of our CPR certifications and our lifeguard certifications this week so that everybody is up to par on what needs to be done for certification

in order to be a guard," Orr said.

Once the outdoor pool is open, the Summit Activities Center pool will not be open as often during the summer, Orr said.

The outdoor pool is utilized all day during the summer, Garvey said. "There are always various activities going on," she said.

Public swimming lessons are popular, as well as family nights and teen nights, Garvey said.

"The kids get pizza and pop on teen nights and they get to listen to music they like," Garvey said. "They also get to go off the boards and swim in the deep end, and it's just for them. They really like getting to swim out in the dark, too, because we are open until 10 p.m. for them."

Garvey said the Fourth of July swim carnival has also been popular for the past few years.

"They have a ring toss, relays, a coin toss, lots of contests and we offer free watermelon," Garvey said. "The event is free and people have really enjoyed it in the past."

Orr is also excited to bring back the Pooch Plunge this August, she said.

"It's been really popular in the past so we want to bring it back and let the dogs go swimming before we dump the pool for the year," Orr said.

Garvey is expecting a busy opening day, especially because the weather forecast has predicted hot temperatures, she said.

The outdoor pool will be a popular place this summer, Orr said.

"I know people want to have the pool open especially because it's been such a mild spring - it's been so warm," she said. "People really are excited to get outside."

County

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public. On the other hand, it would create a storage facility, more jobs and grain for ethanol products for South Dakota. The project would be an economic boost to the businesses within the county.

3. What are the biggest challenges facing the county in the next four years, and how will you work to address them?

I believe financial responsibility, business growth, the TransCanada pipeline and the flooding will be problems in the forefront for Yankton County for several years. Separating the city and the county needs without inappropriate regulations and spending would allow funding for specific, targeted problems. Progress across the state that trickles down to specific counties, bringing in new businesses without overtaxing ... is important to Yankton's future. All options that promote business movement into the Yankton area, including such businesses as farms and confinements, need to be researched and promoted at all times. Finding a solution equitable to all promoting the pipeline construction

would be beneficial to the entire state. The flooding caused extensive damage, and reconstruction will require extensive funding and community-wide support. Preparations must occur to prevent future re-occurrences of the same problem during moist years.

4. What is Yankton County's biggest strength/weakness?

Yankton County possesses numerous strengths. It is geographically and strategically located to generate business growth. The construction of the new bridge is critical to interstate movement of livestock and merchandise. It supports both businesses and rural communities. Yankton County is comprised of generally self-supporting residents that desire fiscal responsibility, which generates longevity. Yankton County's weaknesses involve the general populous often forgetting this is a rural community. The towns are often small with insufficient budgets requiring county assistance. Yankton County appears, at times, to struggle with equally dividing the budget between rural and city issues. I am available at the following numbers, and welcome comments and concerns. Home (605) 327-3200 and cell (605) 760-0318. Email address is rock-inkg7@hotmail.com. Don't forget to vote June 5th!

JRWDD

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cluded internal controls over the authorization, monitoring and reporting of consultant contracts; internal controls over travel expense reimbursements and rates used; proper supporting documentation for restaurant expenses charged to motel rooms; proper supporting documentation for credit card usage; compliance with public agency procurement statutes; and financial reporting for the board of directors.

Bartel said the JRWDD board vowed to have changes made in response to the audit implemented by July 1. He believes they will be completed ahead of schedule.

"We're making those changes and documenting them," he stated. "It's a slow process."

Bartel said he expects to be the interim manager until the end of the year.

"I don't think the board wanted to make a rash decision as far as hiring someone," he stated. "They wanted time to think. They wanted to get the JRWDD back on track, and faith and trust restored in the organization."

The reason Bartel came to speak with the County Commission is a desire to do more proj-

ects on this lower stretch of the river.

Recently, the JRWDD agreed to jointly fund the operation and maintenance of three stream flow gauging stations along the James River near Redfield, Stratford and Yankton. The costs will be split with the United States Geological Survey. The total annual costs of operating and maintaining the gauges is \$43,800, and each entity will pay half.

In January, the JRWDD awarded \$10,960.50 in funding assistance for help with a dike repair in the western part of Yankton County. The project will prevent waste material from running into the James River and affecting water quality.

"We haven't had many projects (in Yankton County) in a while," Bartel said. "The people here pay taxes just like those who live up and down the river. I just wanted (the commission) to know we are here to help and do what we can."

Commissioners asked Bartel if the JRWDD would be able to assist in rebuilding a bridge over the James River. That was an area he said the organization could not provide help.

"There are obviously a lot of things they would like help with where we can't help," Bartel said. "Building bridges was brought up. We don't have that kind of funding. You can spend \$3 million on a bridge without blinking an eye. We can maybe help remove an old bridge or remove debris

so we don't lose a bridge."

One interest Bartel has in building or fixing earth dams that can slow drainage along the flat James River valley.

"That's all we can do, is try to feed the drainage into the main stem as slowly as possible," he said. "A lot of the dams weren't put in correctly. They don't have drain tubes in them. Because of the high amount of runoff we've had, they've washed out. So we're re-building two right now and a third one is being considered. A couple more are probably going to show up, too."

Bartel hopes that by working together with its constituents, the JRWDD board and he can dispel the mistrust surrounding the organization.

"It's all about respect," he said. "If you respect people, it comes back to you."

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage

Cases

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tions were inadequate. The newly compiled list includes names and outcomes from the 2000 report that tribal leaders say are questionable.

"When you take a close look at it, some of the conclusions are quite preposterous in my point of view," said Lisa Shellenberger, a Colorado-based attorney working with the Oglala Sioux.

In addition to names from the 1970s, the list includes three names from the 1990s, including Poor Bear's brother, Wilson Black Elk, and cousin, Ron Hard Heart. Their bodies were found in 1999 on reservation land, just across the border from Whiteclay, Neb.

"My lack of trust in the FBI, I would like to see a special team of investigators other than the FBI come down and investigate these deaths," Poor Bear told the AP last week.

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Meier-Bollich

Jennifer Lynn Meier and Robert Daniel Bollich are planning to be married June 23, 2012.

Parents of the couple are Mr. Kenneth and Phyllis Meier of Hartington, Nebraska

and Mrs. Renee Bollich of Vermillion and the late Mr. Gary Bollich.

The bride is a 2002 graduate Hartington Public School and a 2006 graduate of Mount Marty College. She is currently employed as by the Knox County Sheriff Department and North Star Services in Bloomfield, Nebraska.

The groom is a 1997 graduate of Crofton High School and is currently engaged in farming south of Crofton.