

Watertown Man Acquitted In Killing

WATERTOWN (AP) — Jurors in Watertown have acquitted a man of killing his former girlfriend's daughter. KELO-TV reports 26-year-old Jay Barse was found not guilty Monday of second-degree murder and the lesser offenses of first- and second-degree manslaughter. His trial started a week ago and prosecutors say Barse admitted to hitting 14-month-old Serenity Seaboy in the head. She was treated for head trauma but later died. But his defense says Barse acknowledged hitting the girl four days before she went to the hospital, so his confession didn't connect him with the death. The jury got the case late Monday morning and reached a verdict by mid-afternoon. Serenity was the daughter of Barse's ex-girlfriend, Sherry Scherer. They lived together at the time.

S. Falls Airport Adds 2 Nonstop Flights

SIoux FALLS (AP) — More people are apparently opting to fly out of the Sioux Falls Regional Airport than in recent years. A yearlong market study found that 80 percent of passengers within 60 miles are going through Sioux Falls. Two to three years ago, the number was around 60 percent. The *Argus Leader* reports Sioux Falls has added two nonstop flights, and airport managers are looking for more. Allegiant Air's service to Tampa, Fla., and the expansion of Delta's round-trip service to Atlanta are part of the airport's push to attract passengers who otherwise might fly out of Omaha, Neb., or Minneapolis.

Jury Finds Man Guilty In Fatal House Fire

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A jury has found a man guilty of first-degree murder in connection with a house fire in Omaha that killed an elderly man and injured his wife. A Douglas County jury returned the verdict Monday in the case of 30-year-old Terrance Hale. Hale was accused of setting the house on fire in February. Eighty-three-year-old Raymond Vasholz was killed, and 76-year-old Elizabeth Vasholz was injured. Prosecutors say Hale broke into the couple's home before attacking them and setting several fires throughout the house. Defense attorneys say Hale helped the woman escape the fire and went back inside to save her husband.

S.D. Claims \$2.9M Drug Settlement

PIERRE (AP) — The state of South Dakota will receive a share of the \$2.2 billion drugmaker Johnson & Johnson has agreed to pay to resolve criminal and civil allegations. Attorney General Marty Jackley says the state's share of the global settlement will be nearly \$2.9 million. The U.S. government will keep \$1.9 million as the federal Medicaid share and just under \$1 million will go to the state general fund to offset Medicaid damages. The agreement is the third-largest settlement with a drugmaker in U.S. history. The Department of Justice says Johnson & Johnson promoted the powerful psychiatric drugs Risperdal and Invega for unapproved uses in children, seniors and disabled patients.

Neb. Patrol Seizes 120 Pounds Of Pot

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska authorities have seized nearly 120 pounds of marijuana following two traffic stops on Interstate 80. The Nebraska State Patrol says one of the traffic stops occurred Friday near the Cozad exit. More than 90 pounds of marijuana was found in five duffel bags in an SUV. On Saturday, a trooper stopped a speeding SUV near Lincoln. More than 28 pounds of marijuana was located in four plastic trash bags inside. Jewell E. Pendleton II, of Raleigh, N.C., was arrested on a charge of possession of marijuana with intent to deliver in connection with the Friday stop. Wade N. Davis, of Crossville, Tenn., and Martin W. Singleton, of Crescent City, Fla., were arrested on the same charge in connection with the Saturday stop.

Branstad: Don't Link Gov. Pay To Others

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad says he would oppose efforts to tie the governor's salary to union worker pay raises or other criteria. Branstad was asked about his salary Monday at his weekly news conference, just days after an annual report showed more than 2,000 state employees earned more than the governor's pay of \$130,000 annually. The *Des Moines Register* reports Branstad says he knew what the position paid when he ran for governor and didn't mind earning less than other state employees. Top pay primarily went to athletic coaches and doctors. Last session Branstad proposed raising the pay of future governors, but lawmakers didn't act on the measure. Branstad says linking the governor's pay to other state employee salary increases would be "absolutely wrong" because it would lack transparency.

Sidney Man Held In Death Of Son-In-Law

SIDNEY, Neb. (AP) — A Sidney man has died after an altercation with his former son-in-law. Cheyenne County authorities say 23-year-old Theodore Medina was arrested Saturday on an assault warrant. Officers had been sent to a Sidney home after someone reported a fight there between Medina and Ernie Ward. Court documents say Medina lived in Ward's house despite no longer being married to Ward's daughter. Officers say that when they arrived Medina was giving Ward CPR. Medina said Ward was drunk when their argument turned into a physical fight. Medina said Ward's head was injured when he picked up Ward and threw him down. Court documents say Ward was pronounced dead shortly after 11:30 p.m. Saturday. Medina's lawyer from a case earlier this year didn't immediately return a call Monday from The Associated Press.

Sioux Falls Seminary Names President

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A vice president at a seminary in Illinois has been named the new president of the Sioux Falls Seminary in South Dakota. The seminary's board of trustees announced Monday that Greg Henson has been elected as the 12th president of the seminary that serves 26 denominations. Henson currently is vice president for institutional advancement at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Ill. Beginning next February he will succeed G. Michael Hagan, who is stepping down at the end of the year after a dozen years at the helm in Sioux Falls. The Sioux Falls Seminary bills itself as the only accredited seminary in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Wyoming and Montana. It had about 360 students last year.

I-80 Project In Nebraska Nearly Done

BY JOSH FUNK
Associated Press
OMAHA, Neb. — Ten years after workers began widening Interstate 80 between Omaha and Lincoln, all six lanes will be open to traffic later this week. The final stretch of the \$400 million project between Waverly, Neb., and the 56th Street exit in Lincoln is scheduled to open Friday. It's welcome news to those who regularly commute between the state's two largest cities and Nebraska football fans who regularly clog I-80 for the Huskers' home games. The speed limit for most of the stretch will be 75 mph, State Department of Roads spokeswoman Mary Jo Oie said. Roads Department officials

know that everyone is always happy when a big project like this is done, she added. The project widened 42 miles of the interstate in phases over the past decade with federal funding footing most of the bill. The final phase of the project this year included building four new bridges and revamping the Waverly exit. The work remaining on the stretch includes permanent lane markings and installing an electronic message board. Eventually, the roads department expects to widen I-80 between Lincoln and York to six lanes, but that project hasn't been funded and likely won't begin for at least several years. Other projects around the state scheduled in the next year include

widening Highway 133 between Omaha and Blair, and working on the east bypass around Kearney and the Highway 77 bypass around Wahoo. There are plans to widening several state highways to four lanes, such as U.S. 81 in eastern Nebraska, U.S. 71 and Highway 385 in the Panhandle and U.S. 275 between Omaha and Norfolk. But Oie said those longer-term projects being planned won't get started until at least 2016, and the schedule will likely depend on what funding is available.

Online:
Nebraska Department of Roads:
<http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov>

Man Shot At Iowa State University Dies

AMES, Iowa (AP) — A man who led police Monday on a car chase through Iowa State University that ended with multiple gunshots on campus has died, law enforcement said. Ames Police spokesman Geoff Huff said in an afternoon news conference that the man was taken to Mary Greeley Medical Center after he was shot in the morning incident. He was later pronounced dead. Huff said the man was driving his father's reported stolen pickup truck with a trailer when he ignored a patrol car's emergency lights. The man at one point put his truck in reverse and drove

the trailer into the patrol car. The man drove the car through a red light and the trailer became unhitched. The truck eventually went against one-way traffic, and witnesses told police that people were forced to jump out of the truck's way. The truck jumped the curb into a grassy area and eventually crashed into a tree. Huff said the car continued to rev its engine, and the driver ignored officers' verbal commands to shut the car off. An Ames officer "fired six rounds at the truck in an effort to stop the on-going threat to the public and the officers," striking the driver

at least once, according to a police report. Authorities did not say if the suspect was armed. The man's name has not been released. The name of the officer involved also has not yet been released. No students were involved or harmed in the incident. Students and university employees were told by the campus notification system that shots had been reported fired on campus. The message is distributed by email, cellphone and text message. The *Iowa State Daily*, the university's student newspaper, said an alert was sent to ISU students shortly before

11 a.m. that said the threat was over. At one point, police cordoned off an area around the crash site and asked people to avoid that area. "There is no threat to the community and we've encouraged people to go about their normal activity," said university spokeswoman Annette Hacker. The truck had a Spring Green Lawn Care logo on the side. A woman who answered the telephone at the business' Boone office said the company had no comment. The officer involved in the shooting is on paid administrative leave until the investigation is complete, a department policy.

Iowa AG Wants Restrictions On Sale Of E-Cigarettes

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — Iowa lawmakers should ban the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors and address how the product is taxed, Attorney General Tom Miller said Monday. Miller said during a news conference that he wants the ban on electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, to be added to the Iowa Smoke-free Air Act, the state's indoor smoking ban. He also wants to determine if the product should have a higher state sales tax rate. "Over the past several years e-cigarettes have developed technologically, and they have grown quickly in popularity," Miller said in a statement. "Our state laws, regulations and policies don't address these products, and I think it's time for the legislature to begin the conversation." E-cigarettes are nicotine-infused vapor inhalers that are battery operated. Miller said there's no state or federal age restriction to prevent their sale to children. "I am not calling for a ban on e-cigarettes, but I am calling on state lawmakers to

stop allowing their sales to minors," he continued in his statement. Miller also said e-cigarettes are not addressed in the state's indoor smoking ban, which was passed in 2008. The law prohibits smoking in almost all public places and enclosed areas within places of employment, as well as some outdoor areas. Miller noted that four states — Arkansas, New Jersey, North Dakota and Utah — have included e-cigarettes in their indoor smoking bans. Miller also wants to address e-cigarettes' standard 6 percent state sales tax rate. Iowa's tax on cigarettes is \$1.36 per package of 20 and \$1.70 per package of 25. Other tobacco products are taxed at 50 percent of wholesale. Miller is one of dozens of state officials around the country who signed a letter in September to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration urging officials to regulate e-cigarettes as tobacco products under the Tobacco Control Act.

Roofing Company Cited In Omaha Worker's Fatal Fall

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Federal safety authorities cited a roofing company and proposed \$70,000 in penalties for a worker's fatal fall from one Omaha roof to another, the agency said Monday. The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration said JMA Roofing committed one repeat violation and one other-than-serious safety violation. OSHA said the worker was replacing a rooftop rubber membrane on July 17 when he fell to the top of an adjacent building. Police estimated the man fell about 30 feet and said he wasn't wearing a safety harness. "It's unacceptable that JMA Roofing failed to provide and ensure that workers used fall protection to prevent severe injuries," said Marcia Drumm, OSHA's acting regional administrator in Kansas City, Mo. "Falls remain the leading cause of death and injury in the construction industry. Companies must protect their workers by following safety regulations." Ghaleb Suleiman, who operates JMA Roofing, said

Monday that the man fell after he and a buddy went on the roof after their workday was over. His company had all the necessary safety equipment on the roof, Suleiman said, and added that he had gone home for the day and didn't know the two were on the roof. He said he thinks the pair had been drinking or doing drugs. OSHA said one repeat violation was issued because the company didn't protect workers from falls while performing work on a low-slope roof more than 6 feet above the ground. JMA had a similar violation in 2010, the agency said. The other violation, which was listed as less than serious, said JMA didn't certify that workers had been trained in fall protection standards and requirements. Suleiman said he will fight OSHA's findings and penalties. Under OSHA rules, JMA has 15 business days request an informal conference with OSHA's area director or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

Omaha Sends Layoff Notices To 19 Firefighters

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Omaha started sending layoff notices to 19 firefighters Monday as a way to cut costs. Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert said in a news release the layoffs are needed because the fire department is \$6.2 million over its 2013 budget. She said the cuts could be avoided if the firefighters union agrees to change its contract. The fire department budget has been a point of contention ever since Stothert took office earlier this year and the disagreements contributed to the departure of former Fire Chief Mike McDonnell. The layoffs would affect probationary firefighters who were hired in February, and they would be effective Jan. 4. "With the layoffs not being effective until January, there is still time to avoid them if

the union is willing to come to an agreement," Stothert said. The mayor said the city won't have to lay off firefighters if the union reduces the 2014 paramedic training class from 48 to 12 members. The no-layoff pledge would continue through 2015 if the department stays within its 2014 budget. Fire union president Steve LeClair tells the *Omaha World-Herald* the union is considering Stothert's proposal but needs assurances about future staffing. "We've agreed to give the city the tools for the Fire Department to meet its budget in 2014, and in return, we've asked for something that's been categorically rejected," he said. LeClair wouldn't discuss what the union has requested in negotiations. The announcement comes just before McDonnell is scheduled to retire Friday. McDonnell agreed to leave after completing 24 years of service with a \$124,000 pension. As part of the McDonnell deal, Stothert agreed not to

lay off any firefighters or make major cuts to the department until after Dec. 21. Battalion Chief Bernard Kanger is serving as interim chief while the city searches for a new leader for the department because McDonnell has been on paid administrative leave through the fall.

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