

Man Sentenced To 11 Years In Prison

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota man has been sentenced to 11 years in prison in a nearly two-decade old child sexual abuse case. U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says 42-year-old Frank Baker Jr. pleaded guilty in July to one count of aggravated sexual abuse of a child. Johnson says the Eagle Butte sexually assaulted a girl under the age of 12 between June 1995 and August 1996, when he was providing babysitting services. U.S. District Judge Roberto Lange has also ordered Baker to five years of supervised release. Barker is under the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

Minn.: 48 In Ebola Monitoring Program

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota health officials say they're currently monitoring 48 recently arrived travelers as part of their new program to watch for signs of Ebola. The Department of Health says it's contacting another 12 travelers to set up monitoring. The monitoring doesn't mean the travelers have any symptoms of the disease. It's part of the screening protocols the state recently announced. The travelers recently arrived in Minnesota from Liberia, Sierra Leone or Guinea. They'll be watched for 21 days for fever or any symptoms of possible infection. That's the incubation period for the disease that has wracked those western African nations.

Former Conductor Awarded \$900K

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A jury has awarded \$900,000 to an ex-Union Pacific train conductor who sued the railroad after suffering injuries in a 2010 derailment in Columbus. The Omaha World-Herald reports a Douglas County District Court jury deliberated for more than four hours on Oct. 30 before awarding the money to 68-year-old Loren Sweley of North Platte. Sweley's lawsuit says the train was traveling around 50 miles per hour on a foggy night in January 2010 when it hit a bulldozer performing work on the unlighted track. His attorney says severe spinal injuries left him unable to work. About 22 cars were derailed in the accident. Omaha-based Union Pacific declined to comment on the jury's ruling.

Pierre Seeks Comments On Urban Deer

PIERRE (AP) — Pierre residents are getting a week to comment on a proposal not to hold an urban deer harvest this year. KCCR radio reports that city commissioners on Tuesday night heard a task force's recommendation to not hold a harvest but took no action. Task force chairwoman and City Commission member Jeanne Goodman says the public should have a chance for input. Deer harvests have been held in Pierre since 2007 to control the population, with the exception of the Missouri River flood year of 2011. Goodman says deer counts done in September indicate the fewest number of animals since the counts began seven years ago. The numbers of vehicle collisions and public complaints also have dropped.

Man Sentenced For Fed. Sex Trafficking

PIERRE (AP) — A Wisconsin man has been sentenced to more than five years in prison on a federal sex trafficking charge in South Dakota. Thirty-four-year-old Thomas Roberts was accused of bringing a woman from Milwaukee to Sioux Falls a year ago for the purpose of prostitution. U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says he pleaded guilty in August to a charge of transportation for prostitution. Roberts was sentenced Monday to 63 months in custody to be followed by five years of supervised release.

Dakotas Republicans Relish New Senate Influence

BY HENRY C. JACKSON
Associated Press



Rounds

WASHINGTON — Republican lawmakers from the Dakotas on Wednesday savored sweeping GOP election gains, including a Senate seat for former South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds and a chance for incumbents in both states to push their policies in a majority for the first time since 2006. Rounds' victory in flipping an open seat held by retiring Sen. Democrat Tim Johnson helped round out GOP control of the Senate. The seat was one of at least seven picked up by Republicans nationwide, with races in Alaska and Virginia yet to be called. Only one Democrat — North Dakota Sen. Heidi Heitkamp — remains in the Dakotas' congressional delegation. What that means from a policy perspective will take shape in the coming months. But Rounds and the senior Republican senators, John Thune of South Dakota and John Hoeven of North Dakota, plan to take up a slew of issues they said had stalled under a Democratically controlled Senate. "Tonight was a marvelous stepping

stone. ... Let's build upon it," Rounds said after clinching victory on Tuesday night. Thune and Hoeven said Rounds' arrival in Washington would dovetail with renewed efforts on energy policy, limiting government overreach and applying fresh pressure to President Barack Obama. Chief among them, Hoeven said, was legislation that would allow the Canada-to-Texas Keystone XL oil pipeline to go forward. "I think the Keystone XL pipeline will be one of the first we take up, and I think we have the sixty votes we need to approve it," Hoeven said. "And it will be a big test case for the president. Whether he wants to work with us and move forward." Rounds campaigned on the Keystone pipeline and, more broadly, on providing a check to Obama. After wobbling during the campaign, he comfortably won an unwieldy, four-way race that included Democrat Rick Weiland and former Republican Sen. Larry

Pressler running as an independent. "I think we'll have enough votes to actually get the Keystone XL pipeline released from captivity," Rounds said, reiterating that less rail congestion would allow South Dakota farmers to ship more crops. "That's a huge economic issue in South Dakota." Both Thune and Hoeven worked behind the scenes to get Rounds into the race before he announced and then encouraged him and gave advice as the nearly two-year Senate campaign unfolded. Hoeven, who served as governor of North Dakota at the same time Rounds was governor of South Dakota, said he thought Rounds' background as a state leader would make him an excellent senator because he knows the importance of compromising and working with both parties. Thune said the overall mood was "very buoyant, as you would expect. It's always fun to win." Hoeven said being a part of the majority would be exciting but reflected a new responsibility, too. "The American people want us to address important issues, now we get to do that and see if the president joins with us," Hoeven said.

GOP Expands Majority In Nebraska Legislature

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Republicans expanded their majority in the Nebraska Legislature in the election, setting the stage for more debates over taxes and spending when lawmakers convene in January. The GOP saw a net gain of five seats in Tuesday's election. The new, one-house Legislature that convenes in January will have 35 Republicans, 13 Democrats and one independent. The new Legislature is likely to be more conservative, with freshman members that include the founder of the Western Nebraska Taxpayers Association and a prominent member of Nebraska's tea party. "I think it's a sea change," state Sen.-elect Mike Groene of North Platte, the taxpayer group's founder, said Wednesday. "People are just upset. There's an uneasy feeling in the country that government is out of control." Groene defeated another Republican candidate in the Lincoln County district with promises to push for state

spending cuts and to seek more money for the region's schools. Groene also was a board member for the Platte Institute, a conservative Omaha think tank. He testified against a proposal last year to expand Medicaid in Nebraska, saying it would turn the state into a magnet for poor people. The turnover was largely driven by term limits, which prevented 17 senators from returning this year. Eight of the departing lawmakers were Democrats, and the GOP flipped five of those seats. Three of the Democratic senators who are departing serve as heads of legislative committees. Two Republicans were uncontested for seats that came open because of term limits. Two incumbents — Republican Sens. Bob Krist of Omaha and Jim Smith of Papillion — ran unopposed. Nebraska's Legislature doesn't have formal party caucuses or leadership, so it's more difficult for the parties to exert control over senators than it is in other states. Many votes fall along party lines, but coalitions can

also form based on regional interests, persuasion of individual senators and vote-trading. State ballots don't specify party affiliation in legislative races, but both parties usually list their candidate endorsements online. Many of the GOP candidates focused on taxes, spending and workforce development. Those in rural districts talked frequently about agriculture and state water policy, said Bud Synhorst, executive director of the Nebraska Republican Party. Synhorst said the candidates generally focused their energy on door-knocking and meeting district residents face to face. "We had candidates who are passionate about our state and who worked their tails off," Synhorst said. "They went to every town, every village, walked in every parade, spoke at every rotary club, and knocked on door after door after door." Not all the Republican candidates succeeded. State Sen. Burk Harr of Omaha, a Democrat seeking re-election, defeated GOP challenger

Gwenn Aspen in one of the state's most expensive legislative races. Harr spent \$198,000 on the race as of Oct. 20, while Aspen spent nearly \$103,000 on her bid, according to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. Even with a majority, the Republicans could face challenges in enacting major changes. Many GOP-backed proposals have stalled in recent years due to legislative filibusters, and moderate Republicans sometimes break with the party and side with Democratic senators. Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, Nebraska's longest-serving state lawmaker, also frequently uses procedural rules to stall legislation he opposes. Republican Pete Ricketts won the governor's race on Tuesday, and has promised a collaborative relationship with lawmakers. Current Gov. Dave Heineman has occasionally clashed with senators, including some fellow Republicans, on tax reforms and major social issues, such as a proposal to provide government-funded prenatal care to women in the country illegally.

Home Of Former Corn Palace Director Searched

MITCHELL (AP) — The former director of the Corn Palace tourist attraction in Mitchell allegedly misused more than \$1,000 in gift cards. A search warrant for Mark Schilling's home and its supporting affidavit allege that he and his son-in-law made personal purchases in 2012 and 2013 using numerous gift cards donated to the Corn Palace by Cabela's, The Daily Republic newspaper reported. Authorities searched Schilling's home last week as part of an ongoing probe by the state Division of Criminal Investigation and say they found at least one of the purchased items — a handgun valued at \$463. Schilling resigned in March at the request of

Mayor Ken Tracy. A state audit concluded that Schilling mishandled money — routinely counting money from cash registers alone in his office, failing to keep proper financial records and misusing a city credit card on multiple occasions — though no evidence was uncovered that he took any funds. The Division of Criminal Investigation has since been looking into whether Schilling broke any laws. Schilling, 49, told The Associated Press last spring that he didn't think he had done anything wrong, but that he stepped down after 13 years as director because a change was in the city's best interests. He didn't immediately respond to a phone message seeking comment left at his home

before working hours on Wednesday. Schilling has still not been replaced as Corn Palace director. Tracy last week offered the job to local businessman Steve Koch, but Koch withdrew his name from consideration on Friday. Koch in 2002 was accused of misusing money from a family business — a felony — and pleaded guilty to a reduced misdemeanor charge of petty theft. Tracy said he did not know if that played a role in Koch's decision to withdraw. A home telephone listing for Koch is disconnected. About 200,000 tourists each year visit the Corn Palace, which is undergoing a \$7.2 million renovation.

Hospital Feels Better Prepared After Ebola Scare

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A Sioux Falls man faces a charge of false reporting after allegedly telling police officers who arrested him on suspicion of drunken driving that he was suffering from the Ebola virus. Twenty-eight-year-old Komouthie Toe was arrested Monday after officers found him allegedly passed out at the wheel of a vehicle that had crashed into a street sign.

Toe was taken to a hospital, where health workers determined his alleged Ebola claim was false. Avera McKennan officials say the hospital turned the situation into a drill, which has left them better-prepared. A telephone listing could not be found for Toe, and it was not clear if he had an attorney.

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