

Johnson: Process Should Play Out

WASHINGTON (AP) — Retiring Sen. Tim Johnson says he currently believes the review process should play out before construction begins on the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

The Senate is expected to vote next week on legislation that would allow construction on the Canada-to-Texas oil pipeline to move forward. But Johnson, a Democrat leaving office in January, says there's still significant uncertainty at the state and federal level.

The Obama administration is doing an extended review of Keystone. Johnson says any project that big must be dealt with carefully because of environmental, economic and public safety concerns.

But he says a decision shouldn't take too long, either. Sen.-elect Mike Rounds, who will take Johnson's seat, says he supports the Senate bill.

Wilder Autobiography To Be Released

PIERRE (AP) — Laura Ingalls Wilder's autobiography that will give fans a more realistic view of frontier living will be released Monday.

"Prairie Girl: The Annotated Autobiography" is being released nationwide by the South Dakota State Historical Society Press. Wilder wrote the autobiography before the "Little House on the Prairie" series but couldn't get it published. Accounts from the memoir served as inspiration for her more family-oriented books.

The autobiography was edited by Pamela Smith Hill. It includes annotations, images, appendices and maps showing the difficulties of frontier living. The tales include stark scenes of domestic abuse, love triangles gone awry and a man who lit himself on fire while drunk.

PBR Series To Come To South Dakota

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The Professional Bull Riders will have their first-ever South Dakota event in 2015.

The series will stop in Sioux Falls for an event scheduled in March at the Denny Sanford Premier Center. Sioux Falls will be the 11th of 27 stops for the Built Ford Tough Series that will culminate at the world finals in Las Vegas in October.

Rider Reese Cates is the 2008 Rookie of the Year. He tells the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/1xTghpH>) that South Dakota fans "are more educated, as far as the sport goes" compared to aficionados elsewhere.

The event is expected to feature the world's top 35 bull riders. The list includes six former Professional Bull Riders champions: Silvano Alves, J.B. Mauney, Renato Nunes, Kody Lothrop, Guilherme Marchi and Mike Lee.

Disaster Aid For June Storms Tops \$10M

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The disaster aid for the mid-June storms in South Dakota including the Wessington Springs tornado has topped \$10 million.

Officials on Thursday said the Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved \$9.08 million and the state of South Dakota has approved an additional \$1.21 million as part of the state's 10 percent cost share.

The money is meant to be used for a variety of disaster recovery costs such as removal of debris, road and bridge repair, and restoration of electrical utilities.

Officials say the process of identifying and documenting eligible damages and costs is nearly finished.

Rounds Working On Finding His Way In Washington

BY HENRY C. JACKSON
 Associated Press



Rounds

WASHINGTON — Elected a little more than a week ago, incoming Sen. Mike Rounds is in the middle of a whirlwind orientation: He's meeting dozens of new colleagues, finding his way around the labyrinth hallways of the U.S. Capitol, moving quickly to build out a Senate staff. Not that it's anything he didn't expect it.

"It's a lot of information — a lot of information," Rounds said in an interview with The Associated Press. "But there are no surprises at this point. Just a lot of people who have been very interested in helping."

Rounds and other newly elected Senate colleagues arrived this week for new member orientation. Coming just a week after Election Day, it is a rapid-fire mix of matters big and small, from photo ops to tutorials about rules for senators and Senate staff to tours of Senate committee rooms and offices to meeting new colleagues. There are personal matters, too — Rounds is trying to figure out where he and his wife, Jean, will live in Washington.

The week's activities also included one of Rounds' first substantive acts as a Senator-elect. He joined Republican

colleagues in a closed meeting on Thursday, unanimously electing Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell as the next Senate majority leader and also voting for his South Dakota colleague, Sen. John Thune, who was re-elected to the no. 3 role in Senate Republican

leadership.

After an at-times uncomfortable Senate campaign, Rounds ultimately easily won a four-way Senate race to succeed outgoing Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson. Now, Rounds told the AP, he's looking to dig in to the issues like energy policy, the budget and providing more robust congressional oversight.

"There has been a sense that Washington really does have to change and we're getting that discussion both on the Republican side and with a number of Democrats," Rounds said. "So I think there's a breath of fresh air here in the Capitol halls."

Rounds' new colleagues expect him to settle in quickly.

North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven, who served as that state's governor at the same time Rounds was leading South

Dakota, said he'd enjoyed catching up with Rounds and that he seemed to barely need any help.

"He already knows a lot of the senators already. He is fitting well," Hoeven said.

Thune said Rounds was handling "all the hoops" that new senators must jump through. He said he'd given Rounds some suggestions on where to live in the city and would continue to help him with the process. He joked about Rounds' arrival making him the senior senator in S.D.

"I never wanted to be the senior anything," he said with a laugh.

For the next few weeks, Rounds will be shuttling back and forth to Washington as he adds staff for constituent services in the state and a new office in Washington. He said he will lean on his experience as governor as he goes through the process.

"It's very similar to the transition team with a governor, except that we weren't switching locations from the middle of the country to Washington," he said. "So we're doing things a bit remotely."

Rounds said the process was frantic, but ultimately fulfilling.

"The biggest challenge is simply keeping track of all the moving parts," he said. Lots of things that have to be done and done quickly, but we'll make it work."

Rapid City Industrial Fire Creates Toxic Smoke

RAPID CITY (AP) — Rapid City firefighters had to battle bitter cold and toxic smoke when they fought a blaze in a large building in an industrial park.

No injuries were reported from the Wednesday afternoon blaze. Firefighters had protective gear, and no one without the proper equipment was allowed near the scene. Traffic was rerouted for about three hours, according to Fire Department spokesman Oliver White.

An auto shop, a landscaping company and a basement repair business rent space in the building, owner Scott Totten told the Rapid City Journal. He did not know which businesses were operating Wednesday.

The toxic smoke was

created by used oil, petroleum products and cleaning agents that were inside the building, according to White. Firefighters reported several small explosions inside the building as they fought the flames.

Firefighters also had to deal with frigid cold during the 2 1/2 hours that it took them to contain the fire. The air temperature was 12 degrees at the time the call came in, with a wind chill of minus 10 degrees, according to the National Weather Service.

One fire truck had unspecified equipment problems caused by the cold, and firefighters on the hose line had to be rotated to ensure their uniforms didn't become too wet.

ACLU Calls Neb. Library Proposal Unconstitutional

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A civil liberties group said a proposal to make it easier for law enforcement to access personal information from Omaha library cards is unconstitutional.

Currently, a law enforcement officer must obtain a warrant or subpoena to get library patrons' information.

Last month, the mayor's chief of staff, Marty Bilek, asked the city's library board to change that policy. He wants library staffers to release patrons' names, addresses and phone numbers to police in emergencies.

The library board is expected to vote on the proposal next week. The American Civil

Liberties Union in Nebraska said Wednesday that the U.S. Constitution and state law protects such information as private.

But Bilek, a former chief deputy for the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, said names, addresses and phone numbers aren't too much to ask for. He emphasized the information's release would only apply in emergency situations. Some library board members have expressed doubt about his proposal.

In her letter, Miller also cited several Supreme Court cases in which the court ruled the Constitution protects the right to privacy when accessing information.

Domeward Bound!

Go Bucks!



Congrats on a great season!

Good Luck at the 11AA State Championship Game at 7:30pm tonight (Friday) at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. Yankton Bucks (10-0) will play the Brookings Bobcats (8-2).

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