

President Orders Flags At Half-Staff

PIERRE — President Obama has called for flags at half-staff, effective immediately, out of respect for the victims whose lives were taken by the violence in Paris, France, on Friday, Nov. 13, the office of South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced Sunday.

Flags are to remain at half-staff until sunset on Thursday, Nov. 19.

Supreme Court Denies Boundary Change

TEA (AP) — The state Supreme Court has upheld a lower court's ruling blocking three Tea families from joining the Sioux Falls School District.

The *Argus Leader* reports the Supreme Court's decision affects three families living in the Westwood Valley subdivision that sought a school boundary change.

The three homes have a Sioux Falls address, and other families in the subdivision transitioned their property into the Sioux Falls district years ago. But Tea officials recently have denied boundary change requests in an effort to hold onto one of the fastest growing areas in the district.

The families argued they felt more connected to Sioux Falls than Tea. But the court concluded that their "conscious choice to move into" the Tea Area School District "discounts their claimed connection to the" Sioux Falls district.

Lawmakers Ask VA To Extend Hospital Study

HOT SPRINGS (AP) — South Dakota's congressional delegation is asking the Department of Veterans Affairs to extend the comment period on a study that looks at the impact that closing a Hot Springs hospital would have on veterans.

U.S. Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds and U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem have requested the extension in a letter to VA Secretary Robert McDonald.

VA officials have proposed shuttering the historic Battle Mountain Sanitarium, transitioning long-term care services to Rapid City and leaving only an outpatient clinic in Hot Springs. Veterans have vehemently opposed this proposal.

The study released last month showed the VA's proposal would have an estimated 30-year cost of over \$148.5 million.

The public comment period is scheduled to end Jan. 5. Lawmakers are asking to extend it to Feb. 5.

Scottsbluff Airport Closes For Hours

SCOTTSBLUFF, Neb. (AP) — A woman inadvertently caused the Scottsbluff airport to shut down for several hours by trying to return a bag that wasn't hers.

The problem was that the woman left the bag sitting in the luggage screening area at the Western Nebraska Regional Airport Saturday afternoon after she couldn't find anyone to help her.

The unattended bag triggered an evacuation and a call to the bomb squad after it was discovered around 3 p.m. The tags on the bag didn't match Great Lakes Airlines or any of the airlines passengers.

While the bomb squad's robot X-rayed the bag and took it to a remote location to examine it, authorities examined surveillance video.

Sheriff Mark Overman said video showed the woman placing the bag at the Transportation Security Administration area and leaving the airport.

Fortunately, the woman who dropped off the bag heard media reports about the incident and called authorities to explain.

Overman said the woman had recently flown into the Denver International Airport, and grabbed the wrong bag. But she didn't realize she had the wrong bag until after she returned home.

The woman told authorities that United Airlines officials told her to give the bag to Great Lakes, so it could be returned to Denver. Overman said the airline plans to do that.

The airport was cleared by 7 p.m. Saturday.

Man Sued By His Mother- And Sister-In-Law

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — An Omaha man's mother-in-law and sister-in-law say he mishandled their investments and cost them more than \$1 million.

Anna Pettis and Michele Palagi have filed a lawsuit against Philip Huston demanding that he repay what they say was lost, the *Omaha World-Herald* reported Sunday.

Pettis and Palagi said in their lawsuit that Huston told them in early 2012 they should be earning more on their investments, and he offered to manage the funds at no cost.

So Pettis transferred about \$838,000 to a TD Ameritrade account and Palagi moved about \$330,000 into another account, according to the lawsuit. The women say Huston controlled the accounts.

By this October, Pettis' account had fallen to \$70,000, and Palagi had roughly \$18,000.

Huston's attorney, Dave Domina, said his client is in a difficult spot financially because he also invested in an Alabama coal producer that filed for bankruptcy protection.

"Is he sick about it? Yes, he is," Domina said. "It's been a family with successful relationships. He would be delighted to do whatever he can to help out his sister-in-law and his 94-year-old mother-in-law. Unfortunately, my client invested his own money and suffered, too."

Denise Frost, who represents Pettis and Palagi, said her clients just want to recover what they lost. So they want a judge to order the sale of some of Huston's assets, possibly including a resort in Canada or his home across the street from Warren Buffett's in Omaha.

"This is a tough case and a sad case," she said. "My clients just want to be able to have something to live on. They're totally low-drama people."

Frost said her clients believe Huston improperly withdrew money from Pettis and Palagi's accounts and used it himself.

Domina said that's not the case. Instead, Huston made a bad investment that cost everyone significantly.

"He's sad about this," Domina said. "He's a sincere and honorable person. His heart is broken."

One of the main stocks Huston bought in the accounts was Walter Energy. But that stock tanked from \$16.50 at the end of 2013 to 8 cents per share last summer after the coal company filed bankruptcy.

Lincoln On Track To Be Homicide-Free In 2015

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — In a year that has seen cities across the country reporting a spike in violent crimes and homicides, Nebraska's capital city of Lincoln finds itself in the rare position of experiencing no homicides so far this year.

If that holds through the end of December, it will be Lincoln's first homicide-free year since 1991.

"Our random shootings ... are few and far between for us," said Lincoln Police Chief Jim Peschong, who announced last week his plan to retire early next year. He's hoping to end his 40-year police career on the Lincoln force on a high note.

"I'm hopeful, but I know that we've got another just under 50 days left yet in the year," he said.

Only 50 miles northeast, Nebraska's largest city of

Omaha has seen a jump in homicides, with 40 so far this year, compared to 33 in all of 2014. Other cities across the country, from Baltimore and Chicago to Kansas City and Milwaukee, have seen significant increases in homicides since last year.

Asked what could explain the lack of homicides in Lincoln this year, former longtime police chief-turned Lincoln Public Safety Director Tom Casady deadpanned, "Not very many people have been shot."

That's only partly in jest. Most cities' homicide rates are directly tied to how many shootings occur, Casady said.

"We have had seven people shot in Lincoln this year," he said. "That's a real small number of shootings."

By comparison, Casady said, Philadelphia had seen 1,035 people shot by early November, with 195 of those resulting in fatalities. Taking

into account Philadelphia's population of 1.6 million, "our shooting rate is 17 times smaller than Philadelphia's," Casady said.

But most people compare Lincoln's violent crime rate to Omaha's, he said.

"Despite our population disparity, we have an awful lot in common," Casady said. "We have the same underlying economy; we have similar demographics, similar education level; we drink the same water."

But Omaha has "a lot more concentrated disadvantaged," he said.

Peschong credits, in part, a police effort in the early 1990s to deter Kansas City and Omaha gangs from establishing roots in Lincoln, and including the public and community leaders in on that plan.

"We said, 'We're going to resist this, and we're not going to give up one block of any neighborhood to the

gangs,'" Peschong recalled. "We said, 'You are apt to see the police make arrests or issue citations for some petty things, that normally we wouldn't do.' But it was our intent to try to keep gangs from getting a foothold in the community. Because we thought once they start getting a foothold, it's pretty tough to ever get it out."

Lincoln's status as a college town, its strong economy and low unemployment rate help contribute to historically low homicide rates, said Ryan Spohn, director of the Nebraska Center for Justice Research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Lincoln has averaged about five homicides a year over the past 25 years.

"Modern medicine helps as well," Spohn said. "Often there isn't a very big difference between a serious aggravated assault and a homicide, other than blind luck or proximity to health care."

South Dakota Farmers To Produce Record Crop Of Soybeans

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — South Dakota is poised to have its highest soybean production year on record, as timely plantings, sufficient but not excessive rainfall and a late frost created the perfect growing climate.

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service expects the state's soybean crop this year to reach 234 million bushels, a 2 percent jump from last year. Yield is forecast at 46 bushels per acre — another record — while South Dakota's acres for harvest remain unchanged at 5.11 million acres.

"I've talked to so many farmers that have told me that this has been my best crop ever," said Jeremy Freking, executive director of the South Dakota Soybean Association. "And we aren't that far removed from 2012 when we had one of our worst crops ever because we

had the bad drought."

Nationally, soybean production is forecast at a record 3.98 billion bushels, up 1 percent from last year. Based on conditions at the beginning of the month, yields are expected to average 48.3 bushels per acre, up 0.8 bushel from last year.

The USDA said increased U.S. production has led to higher-than-expected stockpiles, which has been driving down prices. Soybean futures for January were trading at about \$8.50 a bushel Friday on the Chicago Board of Trade, down from more than \$9.20 in mid-October.

Freking said he hopes that prices have stabilized, and that this year's high yields should help South Dakota farmers weather the recent drop.

Alvaro Garcia, agriculture and natural resources program director for South Dakota State University Extension, said farmers should also

be keeping an eye on the upcoming Nov. 22 presidential election runoff in Argentina. Argentina produces about 16 percent of the world's soybeans, and the USDA has warned that a new government looking to stimulate economic growth in the country could thrust its inventories onto the market, which could further drive down prices.

"If they go on to a very severe devaluation, soybeans will suffer because Argentines will produce at a lower price," Garcia said. "That might hurt the market."

The United States and Brazil each grow about 27 percent of the world's soybean crop, according to the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

North Dakota's 2015 soybean production is forecast at 190 million bushels, down 6 percent from last year. Average yield in the state is forecast at 33 bushels per acre, down 1.5 bushels from 2014. Harvested acres of 5.77 million acres are down 2 percent.

Agency To Remove Art By Native American Activist Prisoner

TUMWATER, Wash. (AP) — A Washington state agency plans to remove four paintings by an inmate serving time for killing two FBI agents after former law enforcement officers complained about the artwork's inclusion in a lobby art exhibit.

The paintings were done in prison by Leonard Peltier, 71, a Native American activist who is serving two consecutive life sentences in the deaths of two FBI agents during a 1975 standoff on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

The works were hanging near the front doors of the state Department of Labor

and Industries' headquarters in Tumwater, Washington, and part of an exhibit to mark National American Indian Heritage Month, KING-TV in Seattle reported.

An association representing retired FBI agents demanded the state agency remove the paintings.

"He's nothing but a thug," said retired FBI agent Ray Lauer. "He's an unrepentant cop killer."

Lauer is a member of the Retired FBI Agents Association, which wrote a letter to Labor and Industries demanding the paintings be removed.

"For the state of Washington to use taxpayers' dollars

to basically offer a free art gallery to somebody who is a convicted cop killer, I find it, as a law enforcement officer, appalling and quite frankly disgusting as taxpayer also," Lauer said.

The state agency said it will replace the paintings this week with other artwork.

Displaying the work wasn't meant as an endorsement of Peltier's cause, said Tim Church, a state Labor and Industries spokesman. It was simply meant to be about Native American art, he said.

"We feel badly about the impressions that they're taking from it. We truly do. That was in no way our intent," Church said.

Peltier's case has been a source of protest over the decades.

His son, Chauncey Peltier, said there is no evidence his father killed anyone. He has been exhibiting his father's paintings around the country to raise awareness about his father's attempt to gain a presidential pardon.

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