

1 Killed, 1 Hurt In Accident Near Wolsey

WOLSEY (AP) — Authorities say one man was killed and another man was injured when a pickup truck collided with a semi-truck eight miles west of Wolsey.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says the pickup truck was headed east on U.S. Highway 14 just before 2 a.m. Thursday when it crossed the center line and struck a westbound semi-truck.

The 38-year-old pickup truck driver died at the scene. The 58-year-old driver of the semi-truck was hospitalized in Huron with non-life threatening injuries.

The patrol has not released any names pending notification of relatives.

The investigation is ongoing.

Man Sentenced For Kidnapping, Assault

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — An Omaha man has been given 80 to 130 years in prison for raping, kidnapping and savagely attacking a woman over her boyfriend's debt.

Thirty-three-year-old Ronald Ford Jr. was sentenced on Wednesday. He and his girlfriend, 26-year-old Shavontae Green, were convicted for the attack on the 38-year-old woman. Green was sentenced Tuesday.

Authorities say Ford was upset because the woman's boyfriend owed Ford money for a laptop computer. Ford and Green went to the boyfriend's house in January but found only the woman there. She was beaten, and then they kidnapped her and took her to their home.

Prosecutors say the woman was beaten again, sexually assaulted, burned with a cigarette, whipped with a chain, doused with boiling water and splashed with bleach.

Man Accused Of Abusing Infant Son

SCOTTSBLUFF, Neb. (AP) — A Scottsbluff man whose infant son has been hospitalized is charged with intentional child abuse

The *Scottsbluff Star-Herald* reports that Jahad Clarke was arrested Monday. His attorney didn't immediately return a message Thursday from The Associated Press, seeking comment on Clarke's behalf. Court records show Clarke will turn 23 on Friday.

Police and medics were sent to Clarke's home on Monday because his 4-month-old boy was not breathing. The boy was taken to a local hospital and then flown to Children's Hospital in Aurora, Colorado.

Clarke initially reported that the boy had fallen off a couch while the boy's mother was at work. But Clarke later said that while he was holding the baby over his head, he accidentally dropped him to a floor.

Man Ruled Competent To Stand Trial

SCHUYLER, Neb. (AP) — A Schuyler man ruled competent for trial has taken a plea deal and been convicted of attempted murder for stabbing a woman.

The *Columbus Telegram* reports that 43-year-old Amauri Herrera-Alvarez pleaded no contest on Wednesday in Colfax County District Court. Prosecutors dropped a weapons charge in exchange for his plea. His sentencing is set for Feb. 3.

Prosecutors say the incident was discovered on Nov. 2, 2014, outside a Schuyler apartment building. An officer cut a rope Herrera-Alvarez was using to hang himself from a tree. Inside the building they found the injured woman, who was in a relationship with Herrera-Alvarez.

Herrera-Alvarez intended to plead not guilty by reason of insanity but eventually was found competent to stand trial.

Ex-Lawmaker Dies After Collision

BROKEN BOW, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a former state senator has died after his pickup collided with a semi-trailer near Broken Bow in central Nebraska.

Govier Brothers Mortuary in Broken Bow says Howard Lamb, of Anselmo, died at a Kearney hospital on Tuesday. He was 91.

The accident occurred around 1:15 p.m. Monday, about a mile south of Broken Bow on Nebraska Highway 21. Custer County Sheriff Dan Osmond says Lamb was driving on the highway when he tried to turn into a private driveway but collided with the oncoming big rig.

Lamb was taken to Broken Bow for treatment and then flown to CHI Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney. The semitrailer driver wasn't injured.

Lamb served in the Nebraska Legislature from 1977 to 1993.

Winning Lottery Ticket Sold In Sisseton

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Lottery says a single ticket sold in Sisseton hit the \$215,000 Wild Card 2 jackpot in Wednesday's drawing.

The odds of winning the Wild Card 2 jackpot are 1 in just under 1.9 million.

Wild Card 2 is played in Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. The jackpot resets to \$200,000 for the next drawing on Saturday.

The winning numbers were 1, 5, 17, 27 and 32, and the Wild Card was the King of Clubs.

Lottery officials say the holder of the ticket should sign the back of it immediately and put it in a safe place before contacting lottery offices in Sioux Falls or Pierre.

Entertainment Venue Opens In SF

STOIX FALLS (AP) — A 70,000-square-foot pawn shop and entertainment venue in Sioux Falls opened its doors on Saturday.

Badlands Pawn, Gold & Jewelry also features a gun range, firearms retail store, foundry, tattoo shop and a 24-hour live rock 'n' roll radio station. KBAD 94.5 FM went on air at 9 a.m. Saturday.

CEO Chuck Brennan says the owners of American Jewelry & Loan in Detroit consulted with him on the project. Guests at the weekend grand opening will include Les and Seth Gold from TruTV's "Hardcore Pawn."

Brennan is owner of Dollar Loan Center, which has 100 locations in multiple states.

Minden Celebrating Centennial Of Lights

MINDEN, Neb. (AP) — Minden will begin its monthlong celebration of its Christmas lights when switches are flipped at dusk Friday.

Minden city and tourism officials have been planning the 100th anniversary celebration for more than a year, according to the *Kearney Hub*. In addition to the bright holiday lights, there will be a carnival, hayrack rides and ice skating.

"We're trying to cover a lot of bases in a short period of time and trying to make it as fun for as many people as possible," Minden Mayor Ted Griess said. "I think most everyone who has lived here for a decade or more is very impressed that it's a tradition that's carried on for 100 years. It's something the community can boast about."

The tradition began in 1915, when the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War veterans organization, planned its annual encampment in Minden. Residents wanted lights strung around the town square and north for two blocks to the city auditorium to welcome the organization members.

In 1946 a set of tower bells and a music system were installed inside the Kearney County Courthouse, allowing Minden residents to start performances of "The Light of the World" Christmas pageant.

There are 10,000 to 15,000 lights decorating the courthouse. Each year when the lights come down, every bulb is unscrewed and put in separate boxes to prevent them from breaking. The wire strands are rolled up and packed away for the next year.

South Dakota

If Legislature Agrees, Counties Might See More Revenue

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — If you were born in 1980 or after, you've never paid the tax that was levied in South Dakota on personal property such as livestock, equipment and personal items.

But you could hear a lot about it starting in January when the Legislature opens its 2016 session.

That's because county commissioners and state lawmakers still struggle over the millions of dollars which county governments lost.

The 1978-79 repeal of the personal property tax required state government to make up the \$40.7 million.

Legislators didn't provide for inflation, however.

That remained a rub among county officials and their supporters for the next 15 years.

Then the situation became worse for county governments. The replacement money was taken away from counties in 1995.

Known as personal property tax replacement funds, or PPTR, the replacement money was redirected after 1995 to a new purpose of reducing real estate taxes that pay for public schools.

Making the matter more challenging, the Legislature imposed a cap on local governments and school districts that

they generally couldn't raise their budgets by more than 3 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever was less.

There were two safety valves. New tax revenue such as from construction or expansion of buildings didn't count against the cap. And a government wanting more could go through the process of an opt-out to levy higher property taxes, but opt-outs could be subject to a local vote.

In a 1979 analysis Philip Favero, then an assistant professor at South Dakota State University, said the repeal of the personal property tax save farmers and ranchers approximately \$18.8 million they had been paying on livestock, equipment and tools.

He said businesses would save about \$6.4 million of taxes on inventory and additional amounts on equipment and tools.

But Favero concluded the repeal would put more pressure on the state sales tax and more pressure on real estate taxes.

He also noted the absence of an inflation adjustment.

How right he was on all counts. Real estate taxes — which we commonly now call property taxes — kept climbing, while counties kept calling for an inflationary increase in the PPTR funding.

During his 1986 run for governor, Democratic nominee Lars Herseth argued that state government should provide more in PPTR funding. He lost a close election to Republican George S. Mickelson and the argument for more PPTR funding

gradually lost steam.

Meanwhile, just as Favero had forecast, property taxes kept going up. The battle peaked in 1994, when Danielle Elshere of Milesville led the fight for a statewide ballot measure that would have rolled back property taxes by about two-thirds.

The 1994 election for governor saw Democratic nominee Jim Beddow promise a 30 percent rollback of property taxes if he was elected.

Republican nominee Bill Janklow, who was first elected governor in 1978 and had to find the money for the PPTR funding in 1979, was working to return to office for a third term in 1994. He matched Beddow's promise but wouldn't guarantee how quickly the 30 percent reduction would be accomplished.

The Elshere measure lost by less than 1 percent. Janklow won election on a theme of "Putting Taxpayers First Again" and the 1995 legislative session focused on finding money for the first 20 percent of the promised 30 percent reduction.

The PPTR money became a big piece of the 20 percent. Through further efficiencies, Janklow's administration eventually fulfilled the 30 percent promise during his fourth and final term.

Now years after the 1978 repeal and the 1995 redirection, the aftershocks can still be felt. County officials and legislators

REVENUE | PAGE 9A



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