

Arrest Made In Killing Of SD Airman In Virginia

RAPID CITY (AP) — Police in Virginia have arrested a man in connection with the slaying of a 22-year-old Ellsworth Airman who was killed while on leave from the South Dakota base.

KOTA reports police arrested 23-year-old Marcus Devall Wingate Tuesday in Virginia in connection with the murder of Richard Glenn Redick, Jr., after receiving an anonymous tip.

Redick was stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City, S.D. Police say he was on leave visiting his wife in Virginia when he was shot on Aug. 31.

He had served with the 28th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron since 2009.

Nebraska's Quirky Carhenge For Sale

ALLIANCE, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's Carhenge, an automobile replica of England's Stonehenge, the prehistoric circle of stones, is up for sale. The asking price is \$300,000.

Alliance radio station KCOW (<http://bit.ly/nG8z08>) says Wednesday that the Friends of Carhenge board of directors voted to place the 24-year-old tourist attraction, which consists of a circle of 38 cars, on the market.

The organization's president, Marcia Buck, says the quirky tourist attraction lacked volunteers and limited capital.

Carhenge was built in 1987 by the Jim Reinders family on land that Reinders' family once farmed just north of Alliance in western Nebraska. Reinders donated Carhenge and 10 acres of land around it to the Friends organization a few years later.

S.D. Unemployment Rate Drops Slightly

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota's unemployment rate dropped slightly in September, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Wednesday.

The state's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the month was 4.6 percent, down slightly from the August rate of 4.7 percent.

"The number of employed in the seasonally adjusted labor force increased by 3,400 people over the year," State Labor and Regulation Secretary Pam Roberts said in a news release. "Since May of last year, South Dakota has shown continuous over-the-year employment growth, a strong indicator of a sustained recovery."

Preliminary estimates show the number of seasonally adjusted nonfarm workers increased by 3,100 from September 2010 to September 2011, bringing the total nonfarm level to 406,900.

Industries adding the most workers included retail trade, health care and social assistance and manufacturing.

The state's unemployment rate was also 4.6 percent in September 2010.

Nationally, the unemployment rate in September remained at 9.1 percent, down from 9.6 percent in September 2010.

Nebraska Schools Report Reveals Wide Racial Gap

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Black, Hispanic and American Indian students in Nebraska's public schools are trailing their peers in math, according to a breakdown of statewide test results released Wednesday.

The three racial groups scored lower than their Asian and white peers, according to the newest annual State of the Schools Report. But among those higher-scoring groups, roughly one in four still failed to meet math proficiency requirements.

Overall, 63 percent of the students tested met or exceeded state math standards. Results from the statewide reading test showed 73 percent were proficient, up from 69 percent the previous year.

Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed said he expects the first-year math scores to improve, as they have in other subjects. But he said the results demonstrate a need for introducing math concepts earlier, increasing course requirements and developing strategies to help all students.

"Performance on the math standards is not where we'd like it to be," Breed said. "But I'm also encouraged by the response I'm seeing by teachers and school districts that now have access to this information. It informs what they need to do."

The Nebraska Department of Education report compiles test scores and demographic information from each of the state's 249 public school districts.

Nearly two out of three white and Asian 11th graders tested proficient in math, according to the results.

Math proficiency among black students declined consistently with each advancing grade level. Nearly half of the

black third-graders measured proficient, compared to one in five 11th-graders.

Roughly one-third of American Indian students in each grade level registered as proficient. With the exception of fourth- and fifth-graders, fewer than half of the Hispanic students tested met the math standard.

The results were based on new statewide, uniform tests. The Legislature adopted the new system after the U.S. Department of Education said Nebraska failed to show its local assessments accurately measured student achievement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

In the 2008-2009 year, when the last of the self-developed assessments were done, 93 percent of the students met or exceeded standards in math and reading. But education officials said results of the new test, considered more difficult, shouldn't be compared to results from the previous assessment system.

The state report card tested students in grades 3-8 and 11.

Family Grieves After Boys Remains Found

BY MARGERY A. BECK AND MICHAEL J. CRUMB
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — When a Brazilian missionary family who came to work in the United States first vanished, family members thought they had gone on a spiritual retreat. But as months passed and no one heard from Vanderlei and Jacqueline Szczepanik and their 7-year-old son, they began to fear the worst.

Now, their fears have been realized. Nearly two years after the family disappeared from the school they were renovating into a church center in Omaha, the remains of their son, Christopher, were found at the bottom of the Missouri River, and authorities say they have more evidence he and his parents were killed in a dispute over money.

The discovery of Christopher's body last week has prompted a new push to bring one of the three suspects back to the U.S. to face charges and fresh grief for family members and friends who have waited years to find out what happened to their loved ones.

"We always had high hopes they would be found alive, but then the three men were arrested and we lost hope," Christopher's 20-year-old brother, Darcy Klein, told The Associated Press in Brazil.

"All I ask at this point in the name of the three who I will no longer see alive and who were tortured and killed, is that justice be done."

At the time of their disappearance in December 2009, the Szczepaniks had been living in Omaha for five years after moving from Florida to renovate an old school into a center for the Assembly of God church, said Joao de Brito, the site manager of the school where children participated in art and other social events.

De Brito, who also is Brazilian, described Christopher as a respectful child with a huge smile who struggled to carry his book-filled backpack and violin case.

"There was something about him, I don't know how to describe," de Brito said. "He was not like a regular kid."

After the family disappeared, anxious

relatives and friends spent months trying to figure out what happened. Klein's sister traveled to Omaha to help with the investigation. Aside from finding their abandoned Nissan pickup truck and 1995 Dodge Caravan, search after search turned up empty.

The family had vanished and no one could explain why.

In May 2010, three men, who were from Brazil and had worked for the family, were first charged with running up thousands of dollars in charges on the family's credit cards. A break in the case came eight months later, when one of the men, Valdeir Gonçalves-Santos, was charged with murder. He later made a deal with prosecutors in exchange for being sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Another of the men, Jose Oliveira-Coutinho, was ordered last week to stand trial on murder charges. His attorney declined to comment Wednesday. A warrant has been issued for the third man charged, Elias Lourenço-Batista, who is living in Brazil.

Investigators say Gonçalves-Santo told them that the men beat Vanderlei Szczepanik to death with a baseball bat and a metal rod and hanged the boy and his mother, then threw the bodies in the river. Then, last week, Gonçalves-Santos led authorities to the point on the river where he said remains would be found.

Omaha police and Douglas County prosecutors did not immediately respond to questions from the AP on Wednesday.

De Brito said he believes the killings were over money. He said Oliveira-Coutinho used to play with Christopher and had been Vanderlei Szczepanik's "right hand man" overseeing other workers on the project, de Brito said. But Oliveira-Coutinho had grown angry at his boss after he was fired and later rehired at lesser pay, he said.

In an interview in August with the Brazilian newspaper *Estado de Minas*, Lourenço-Batista denied any involvement in the slayings and said Gonçalves-Santo's plea took him by surprise.

"Valdeir must be crazy. He must not be able to stand the pressure of being in jail," he

told the newspaper from his two-room house in his hometown of Ipaba, located in the southwestern state of Minas Gerais. "We don't speak English very well, and the guards put you in a cell by yourself. They order you to confess, and turn one against the other."

Klein, who is an operator at a call center in Santa Catarina state city of Lages, said his mother, stepfather and brother first left Brazil 10 years ago to live in Miami where his stepfather opened a small construction firm. He said he and his sister, Tatiane, spoke to their mother at least three times a week, mostly about "our day-to-day lives." But about a month before they disappeared, Klein said he had the impression his mother was being threatened.

"She told me she was sorry we were not together and her voice sounded strange," he said. "She did not say she was being threatened but I had what you can say was a son's gut feeling that something was wrong."

On Wednesday, Tatiane Costa Klein said she would continue to search for mother and stepfather's bodies and implored the Brazilian government to extradite Lourenço-Batista to the United States.

"They are Brazilians who assassinated Brazilians," Klein said of the three men. "I want to see peace and peace for my family, so I can go back to Brazil and have my life back knowing that justice was done."

But it is unlikely that Brazil will extradite Lourenço-Batista to face charges. He said he's willing to help the prosecution but will not return to the U.S.

"If the authorities want to come here and hear what I have to say, I'll help as much as possible, but I am never going back there," Lourenço-Batista said.

Speaking to reporters in Omaha, Tatiane Klein said there is some peace in knowing her brother's body was recovered. But she bristles at the idea of the discovery providing "closure" for her and her family.

"I will never have closure," she said.

Crumb reported from Des Moines, Iowa. Associated Press reporters Stan Lehman in Sao Paulo and Juliana Barbassa in Rio de Janeiro contributed to this report.

Gov. To Push Arden Hills Stadium Site For Vikings

BY PATRICK CONDON
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Gov. Mark Dayton said Wednesday he's ready to throw his political weight behind a new, publicly subsidized football stadium that would be built on a site preferred by the Minnesota Vikings.

Following three days of meetings with various stadium stakeholders, including Vikings owner Zygi Wilf, Dayton said that within the next three weeks he plans to unveil a detailed proposal tied to the Ramsey County site — including how to raise the state's \$300 million share toward a project estimated at \$1.1 billion. The Democratic governor did not reveal if he has a preference between several financing options already floated including new state sales taxes, fees on game-related activities, tax revenue from an expansion of gambling, or something else.

Once a proposal is in hand, Dayton said he'd call a special legislative session before the end of November, allowing lawmakers to vote on the plan. But he still must convince skeptical Republican legislative leaders, who couldn't block him from calling a session but whose support would be crucial to passing any stadium bill.

"I think there's a way to keep the Vikings in Minnesota without

the extraordinary step of a special session," said House Majority Leader Matt Dean, R-Dellwood. He didn't say what those steps could be, but noted that special sessions have typically been reserved for responding to emergencies like natural disasters.

The Vikings have sought a replacement for the Metrodome for nearly a decade, calling the Minneapolis venue no longer sufficiently profitable. The team's lease there runs out at the end of the current season, and earlier this week an NFL vice president in town to meet with Dayton did nothing to squelch speculation that failure by state leaders to fund a replacement could result in another city grabbing away the franchise.

The Arden Hills site, a former Army ammunition dump, is favored by Wilf and by his allies on the Ramsey County Board who see it as a good way to clean up an environmentally troubled site and bolster economic growth in surrounding areas. Their plan, likely to serve as the main basis for whatever Dayton proposes, has the county paying \$350 million

raised by a half-cent sales tax increase; the state paying \$300 million from a yet to be determined source; and the Vikings paying \$407 million plus any cost overruns.

Some political and business leaders in Minneapolis have angled to keep the team there, at one of three possible sites in the downtown area. Dayton has been careful not to dismiss Minneapolis as a prospect if the suburban site is somehow disqualified.

"The only site the Vikings are willing to consider, and put four to five hundred million dollars into, is Arden Hills," Dayton said.

Dayton met with Wilf for about 45 minutes Wednesday afternoon. Wilf left without taking media questions, but the team later released a statement calling the meeting "productive." Dayton also met with the Ramsey County Board members who have pushed the Arden Hills deal, and several executives from the Minneapolis-based real estate developers Alatus LLC.

Alatus is seeking state authorization to build and operate a new casino in the financially troubled downtown Minneapolis shopping

center known as "Block E," and state lawmakers who back that plan have suggested that new tax revenue it generates is one possible way to fund the state's share of the football stadium construction.

Another proposed gambling expansion also has been floated to help pay for the stadium: the long-time request by owners of two horse-racing tracks on the outskirts of the Twin Cities metropolitan area for state authorization to add slot machines.

How the state raises its proposed \$300 million share is one of the major remaining stumbling blocks for stadium backers. Opposition to more gambling is strong in the Legislature, and even a stadium backer like state Sen. John Harrington said he'd have trouble supporting it.

Harrington said he'd prefer a suggestion first floated by St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, a small hike in the state sales tax on liquor sales. But Republican legislative leaders have already drawn a firm line against any state tax increases to help the Vikings.

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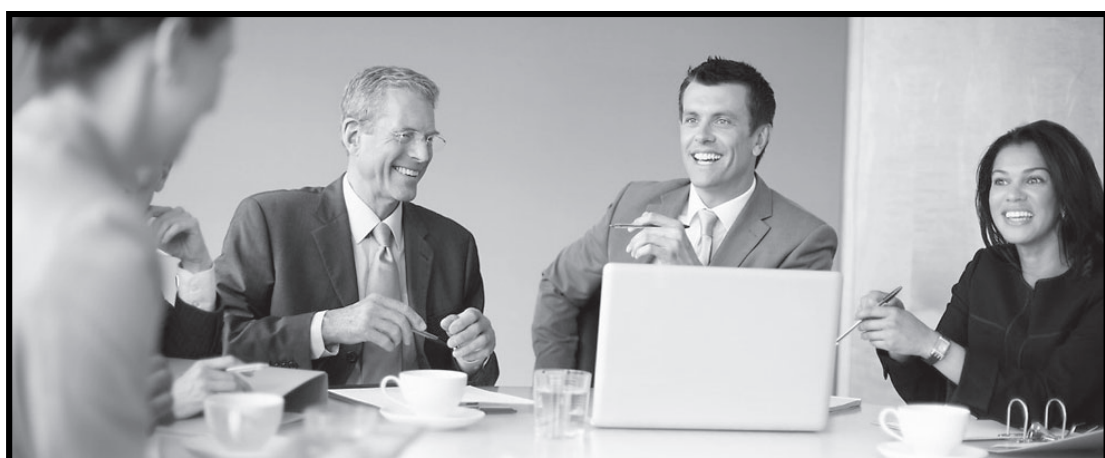
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