

**Kerrey, Fischer Differ On Debt Reduction Path**

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska U.S. Senate hopefuls Bob Kerrey and Deb Fischer have sharply different ideas on how to reduce the soaring national debt.

Kerrey, a Democrat, supports a combination of sharp federal spending cuts and some tax increases on the wealthiest Americans.

Fischer, a Republican, rules out tax increases but says she wants deep spending cuts combined with a tax structure that would grow the economy, which she believes is a way to provide additional revenue without raising taxes. She also supports a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget each year, according to the *Lincoln Journal Star* reports.

The federal debt stands at \$16 trillion, including a \$1.1 trillion deficit in fiscal 2012.

Kerrey said the specific balanced-budget amendment that Fischer supports would have devastating consequences for the economy and vital federal programs, and the wiser course is congressional action that balances the budget and reduces the debt in a systematic and programmed way.

Their debate is a window into the role that each wants to play in Washington.

Kerrey says he's determined to cross party lines and seek a balanced and bipartisan agreement. Fischer says she's prepared to work across party lines to craft a plan that combines spending cuts with tax reform.

"But I'm not open to raising taxes," she said during an interview in Lincoln last week. Asked if that position was ironclad, Fischer said: "That's an ironclad no."

**Man Pleads Guilty For Assault On Fed Officer**

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A South Dakota man has pleaded guilty for punching a police officer.

Matthew Dupris, of Eagle Butte, is charged with assaulting a federal officer. He faces a maximum penalty of eight years in prison.

Authorities say the 24-year-old Dupris hit an officer in the face while he was being booked into jail in March on suspicion of driving drunk.

Sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 8.

**Survey: Nebraska State Fair Wins High Marks**

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — This year's Nebraska State Fair has won high marks as a family-friendly event that delivered a positive experience.

The Grand Island Independent reports that nearly 93 percent of fair-goers rated the venue as family-friendly, and more than 92 percent said their time at the fair was good or excellent. The reviews were part of a survey presented Friday to the Nebraska State Fair's board.

Attendance at the fair reached nearly 337,000 this year, an increase of more than 1 percent from the previous year.

The survey found that nearly 65 percent of visitors who attended the 2011 fair believed this year's event was much better. This year's fair in late August and early September marked the third year it has been held in Grand Island.

**4 Treated For Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

BELLEVUE, Neb. (AP) — Doctors were treating four Bellevue residents for carbon monoxide poisoning, and one male victim may have critical injuries.

KETV-TV in Omaha reports that fire officials discovered high levels of carbon monoxide inside the home around 1 a.m. Sunday. Doctors say they examined a man, a woman and two children at Nebraska Medical Center. They say the male victim may have critical injuries.

Investigators say the poisoning was caused by a gas generator that was turned on at the home because the power had been shut off.

**Plane Lands After Issues With Landing Gear**

PIERRE (AP) — Officials say a Great Lakes Airlines passenger plane with 10 people aboard landed safely at Pierre Regional Airport after the pilot reported problems with the landing gear system.

Mike Isaacs, the airport manager, says the pilot reported an in-flight emergency at 10:40 a.m. Sunday. Isaacs says the pilot could not tell if the gear was properly in place for the landing.

The plane circled the airport several times so observers on the ground could observe the landing gear.

KCCR radio reports that the plane landed at 11 a.m. No injuries were reported.

There were eight passengers and two pilots on the plane. Issacs did not know whether the flight originated in Denver or Minneapolis.

**Organizers To Continue S.F. Psychic Fair**

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Organizers of the first psychic fair in Sioux Falls say they plan to make the event an annual occurrence.

Body Lab's Holistic Healing and Psychic Fair Saturday drew vendors and participants from several states. The group currently holds 13 shows a year throughout the Midwest.

Fair attendee Stephanie Gavin, of Sioux Falls, says the event made her feel invigorated "like after a workout."

Terry Romine, of Fargo, N.D., who calls himself a psychic and personal development coach, tells the *Argus Leader* that the energy at the fair was at a high level.

Romine says his work as a spirit guide includes "bringing messages from beyond."

**S.D. Execution**

**Roberts' Life Takes Unlikely Path**

BY JOHN HULT  
Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Eric Robert's life bears little resemblance to that of his peers on death row.

Most condemned killers have troubling personal stories and long criminal histories.

Donald Moeller was beaten, demeaned and made to watch his biological mother's drug use and sexual behavior. Elijah Page, executed in 2007, moved from house to house with substance-abusing parents then bounced from foster home to foster home in several states.

Rodney Berget suffered with an alcoholic father and abuse, and was first sent to the adult prison system at age 15. His brother, Roger, was executed in 2003 in Oklahoma, eight years before Rodney Berget and Robert would commit a capital crime in the murder of Corrections Officer Ron Johnson.

Robert's life looked nothing like Berget's. He will be put to death at 10 p.m. Monday.

Robert was the child of a single mother who helped raise his younger sister in his home state of Wisconsin. He had a stellar academic record, put himself through college and had a successful career in wastewater treatment. He was an emergency medical technician and frequent community volunteer who once helped erect a monument to a murdered sheriff.

He grew close to his longest-term love interest through her son, whom Robert coached on a Little League team.

In 2005, before he was sentenced to 80 years in prison for a Meade County kidnapping, his sister told the judge that her brother "has done more good in his life than many people in this world."

This week, the state of South Dakota intends to put Robert to death by lethal injection for the brutal, premeditated killing of Johnson on April 12, 2011.

The rage that fueled the killing was a measure of how far he'd fallen from the life he once had. Robert said so himself in court one year ago. He'd refused to let his lawyer mention his good deeds.

"To be honest with you, the good acts that I've done in my life were not mentioned here, because they are irrelevant to these proceedings," Robert said. "That person who did good things no longer exists."

Last week, through his lawyer Mark Kadi, Robert reiterated his reasoning for staying quiet about his prior kind acts during sentencing for the Johnson murder "My client feels that none of the good things he's done justify the killing of Ron Johnson," Kadi said.

Eric Robert was born May 31,

1962, in Massachusetts. His father was gone by the time he was 6 months old. Robert, his mother and younger sister moved to Hayward, Wis., when he still was young.

His sister, Jill Stalter, declined to comment for this story but testified on her brother's behalf in 2005.

She said then that Robert was the father figure in their house as their mother worked three jobs and studied to earn a college degree.

"My brother took care of everything. He took out the trash, he made sure dinner was on the table, he even did grocery shopping. He got me my first dog. He did everything. He even shoveled snow, and in Hayward, it's a lot of snow," Stalter said. "He put himself through college by working weekends and during summer breaks. He didn't take a

penny from my mother because she was putting herself through college."

He was a good student, as well, graduating 18th in his class at Hayward High School in 1980. He returned to Hayward after earning a biology degree with a chemistry minor at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

In 2000, he applied for a job as the wastewater treatment supervisor for the city of Superior. On his job application, released as part of a records request by the *Argus Leader*, Robert wrote that he hadn't missed a day of work in 10 years.

He got along well with co-workers. Frog Prell, the city attorney, started work for the city in 2000, just a few months after Robert, whom family and friends knew as "Ranger."

Robert eventually lost his job in Superior, though, because he

failed to comply with a city residence requirement, but he continued to consult with the city afterward.

In September, when Robert pleaded guilty to first-degree murder, his lawyer, Mark Kadi, told Judge Zell that his client wanted to plead guilty the next day.

"My client has never wavered in his desire to take responsibility for this crime," Kadi said. During the past few weeks, Kadi said on several occasions that his client has experienced no change of heart with regard to his desire to die.

If he does, Kadi will be there. Robert will have the right to request a delay for appeals purposes until he's on the execution table, but Gov. Dennis Daugaard said last week that "barring unforeseen circumstances," he does not intend to delay it.



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