

Escaped Monkey In Neb. Caught

DONIPHAN, Neb. (AP) — Officials say they have caught a therapy monkey that had escaped from a home near Doniphan (DON' ih-fan).

The 10-pound greenback grivet monkey escaped through a doggie door at the home earlier this week. KHGI reported the monkey was found Thursday afternoon by animal control officers.

Executive Director of the Central Nebraska Humane Society, Laurie Dethloff, says the monkey was staying at the home until it moved to a retirement center.

Animal control officers spotted the 5-year-old monkey earlier in the day but were unable to catch him. He was later caught after the officers put more fruit out.

Officials say the monkey, named "Rodney" was scared and hungry but seemed OK. He was taken to a local animal shelter to be checked out.

Man With Pink Bat Charged \$1 Robbery

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Lincoln police say they have arrested a man who wielded a pink baseball bat during a robbery in which he stole just \$1.

KOLN reported the victim was on a walk Wednesday night when a man with a pink baseball bat approached him and demanded money. The victim gave the man \$1 and a cigarette lighter.

The same suspect walked into a convenience store 45 minutes later wearing a mask and carrying a pink bat, but when the clerk refused to give him money, the suspect smashed things inside the store.

Police say witnesses wrote down the suspect's license plate which helped officers find the vehicle and arrest 26-year-old Robert Allen of Lincoln.

Allen is charged with two counts of robbery. No attorney information was immediately available.

SD Supreme Court Denies Diaz Appeal

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has denied an appeal by a 16-year-old girl charged with murder to try her case in juvenile court.

Attorney General Marty Jackley said Thursday that the Supreme Court has upheld a circuit court's decision to try Marciela Diaz as an adult in the killing of 16-year-old Jasmine Guevara.

Diaz, of Ft. Wayne, Ind., and Guanajuato, Mexico, has been charged with five counts of murder, kidnapping and arson. Her trial is set for next March.

Officials say Guevara, of Mitchell, was lured to rural Hanson County in November 2009, stabbed and left in the vehicle that was started on fire.

Twenty-one-year-old Alexander Salgado, of Ft. Wayne, Ind., and Guerrero, Mexico, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in August 2010 and was sentenced to life without parole.

Fire Prompts Plea To Stop Harvest

SPENCER, Iowa (AP) — A large field fire fueled by gusty winds has prompted officials with the Clay County sheriff's office to ask farmers to temporarily stop their harvest.

The *Des Moines Register* reported the fire burned most of Thursday afternoon, fed by 45 mph winds.

A farmer in neighboring Palo Alto County, Neal Heldt, lost a combine when it burst into flames.

He says he was harvesting soybeans when something sparked and suddenly he was surrounded by flames.

Fires also were reported near Langdon, Emmetsburg, Fostoria and Hartley.

Much of northern and eastern Iowa were under a high wind advisory Thursday, warning of winds higher than 60 mph.

Neb. Man Sentenced On Cocaine Charge

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A Lincoln man has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine.

U.S. Attorney Deborah Gilg says 40-year-old Leonard Anderson was sentenced Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Richard Kopf. Anderson.

Medicaid Considers Covering Transgender Surgery

BY MICHAEL VIRTANEN
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — A panel advising Gov. Andrew Cuomo on ways to revamp Medicaid has proposed that the program that pays for low-income residents' health care cover surgery and therapy for transgender New Yorkers.

Cuomo earlier this year appointed a task force to overhaul the Medicaid system, which paid \$53 billion for medical care in New York last year, and cut costs. A group of health care professionals examining disparities in coverage is expected to decide next week where the transgender proposal fits on its list of priorities.

Advocates say there's limited data on the state's transgender population, but the change could affect thousands of New Yorkers and help cut Medicaid costs for their mental health and drug abuse treatment. California and Minnesota already provide Medicaid coverage for trans-

gender surgery and hormone replacement therapy, which the American Medical Association supports.

"The reason the AMA said this is medically necessary is if the transgender can't get services they need to live in the gender they are it leads to depression, suicide attempts, substance abuse," said Ross Levi, executive director of the Empire State Pride Agenda, which advocates for gay and transgender rights. The cost would be a tiny part of the Medicaid budget, a fraction of a percent, and overall could provide a net cost savings, he said.

The proposal says: "Provide Medicaid coverage for transgender surgery/hormone replacement therapy and treatment."

Cuomo will consider task force recommendations in his budget, Health Department spokesman Peter Constantakes said. Legislators, who will vote on next year's spending plan, will also have a say.

Spokesman Josh Vlasto said Thursday the governor's

office has not yet reviewed the transgender proposal, and the panels' recommendations have not actually been made yet.

"It doesn't seem to be appropriate," Republican Senate Health Committee Chairman Kemp Hannon told the New York Post, which first reported the transgender proposal Thursday.

Other issues Cuomo's task force is examining are basic benefits, behavioral health, long-term care, payment overhaul and systems design. Other proposals to address health care disparities include better data collection, ensuring effective contraception for all women of reproductive age, ensuring health care for low-income immigrant adults and covering obesity counseling and diabetes prevention.

Federal funds pay half of New York's Medicaid program, with the state paying 40 percent and localities 10 percent.

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