

Neb. Ebola Patient Making Progress

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska doctors treating the man who became infected with Ebola while working in Liberia say he is making progress, but it's not yet clear if he will recover.

Dr. Rick Sacra arrived at the Nebraska Medical Center on Friday for treatment in the hospital's specialized 10-bed isolation unit. Two of the doctors treating him gave an update on his condition Sunday.

Dr. Phil Smith says Sacra remains very tired, but his progress has been encouraging.

Sacra has been helping with his own treatment by providing information about Ebola to the doctors because he saw it in Africa.

Smith says Sacra has even made a few jokes with the doctors treating him.

The 51-year-old Sacra is the third American aid worker to be sickened with the Ebola virus.

1st Director Of UNL's Art Museum Dies

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The first director of the Sheldon Museum of Art on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus has died at the age of 98.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports Norman Geske died Saturday.

Geske helped create the Sheldon in 1963 as part of his job as director of the University of Nebraska's art galleries. He oversaw construction of the Sheldon's landmark building and developed its collection.

Filmmaker Laurie Richards who made a movie about Geske's life says he helped develop an artistic culture in Nebraska that inspired Richards and other artists.

Geske was a leading researcher on painter Ralph Albert Blakelock who worked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He also helped create the Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project.

Geske was a native of Sioux City, Iowa.

Tenants Must Move From Unsafe Homes

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska tenants can be forced to move on short notice when authorities decide apartment buildings or homes are unsafe if landlords won't make repairs.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports Nebraska is unusual in that it doesn't require landlords who refuse to make repairs to pay any of their tenants' relocation costs.

In Lincoln, Tina Tafoya will officially lose her apartment near the Capitol on Monday morning. Tafoya had less than two weeks to find a new home and a deposit, and she lives on a \$698 monthly disability check.

Mary Morris-Braun, who works helping tenants at Lincoln's Community Action Partnership, says this situation is uncommon, but it would be a big help if landlords were required to help with moving expenses in these cases.

New Shooting Complex Opens By Pierre

PIERRE (AP) — A shooting complex that's been in the works since 2005 has just opened near Pierre and Fort Pierre.

The state says the Lower Oahe Downstream Shooting Complex has averaged nearly 24,000 users annually since 2002 when the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department took over management of the site from the Corps of Engineers.

The shooting complex is now compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, has ten 100-yard shooting stations, two 50-yard shooting stations, two 300-yard shooting stations, two handgun bays with six shooting benches and room for standing shooting within the 25-yard handgun bays.

The site also includes a dedicated shotgun/trap area and 20 new concrete shooting benches.

Neb. Footballs Now Carry Microchips

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska has joined a handful of other university football teams that are using microchip-equipped game balls to help ensure they can't be faked or counterfeited in the collectibles market.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that Big Game USA, a manufacturer of college game balls, has a deal with Prova Group Inc. to install the chips in balls at Big Game's football factory in Dallas.

Prova Group said it uses chips, smartphones and cloud technologies to protect fans and consumers from counterfeit goods.

The chips, dubbed gametag, can track the life of a football, record its history and prove authenticity.

Without the technology, collectible footballs must be authenticated through an expensive and time-consuming analysis by experts and third-party opinion.

Nebraska Plant To Lay Off 33 Workers

FAIRBURY, Neb. (AP) — A southeast Nebraska agriculture manufacturing plant will close part of its operations and eliminate more than half its workforce by November.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that the Agrium plant in Fairbury will eliminate 33 jobs.

The plant manufactures high-purity liquid and dry micronutrients for the fertilizer and animal feed industries.

Bill Cornmesser, senior U.S. operations manager for the Canadian fertilizer company that owns the plant, says Agrium is exiting the zinc sulfate market, which affects the Fairbury operation. Cornmesser says the plant's Loveland Products business, which employs 20 people, will continue to operate.

Neb. State Fair Brings Millions To GI

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — A recently completed study by the Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce has found that the Nebraska State Fair's economic impact on the community exceeds \$22 million.

Chamber president Cindy Johnson tells *The Grand Island Independent* that the study took into account both the State Fair's 2013 budget of \$7.6 million and estimated spending of \$14.7 million by State Fair visitors in the community in 2013.

The \$22.3 million total exceeded the estimated economic impact in a study developed before the opening of the Nebraska State Fair in 2010, the year the event moved from Lincoln to Grand Island.

The 2010 study had projected a \$20.6 million impact.

Casino Collects \$7.2M In 1st Month

SIoux CITY, Iowa (AP) — The new Hard Rock Casino in Sioux City reported \$7.2 million in revenue during its first month of operation.

The *Sioux City Journal* reports state regulators said Friday the new Hard Rock easily surpassed its predecessor's typical August results.

The former Argosy Sioux City casino reported revenue between \$3.9 million and \$5.3 million in the past 10 Augusts. The Argosy closed July 30 after losing a court battle to remain open.

Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission administrator Brain Ohorilko said the increase is similar to what other communities experienced after older riverboat casinos were replaced with land-based casinos.

The newer facilities offer larger gambling floors and more amenities. The Hard Rock has a 30,000-square-foot casino floor offering 839 slot machines and 25 table games.

"We're definitely pleased with the figures that we've seen in the first month," Ohorilko said. "We're cautiously optimistic we'll continue to see those numbers."

Women Will Remain Minority In Nebraska Legislature

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Despite an increase in female candidates for statewide office, women will remain a minority in the Nebraska Legislature next year no matter who wins in November.

Women could see a net gain of up to three seats after the election, but with that increase they would only account for 26 percent of Nebraska's state senators.

Women now hold 10 seats in the 49-member Legislature. Three will leave office in January because of term limits. Six women are running for the first time, all in districts represented by men.

If all incumbents and the first-timers win, there would be 13 women in the Legislature.

That would be near the national average of women making up 24.2 percent of legislatures in 2013, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Women in Nebraska have gained prominence in recent high-profile elections, including Republican Deb Fischer's victory in the 2012 U.S. Senate race and Jean Stothert's win in last year's Omaha mayoral contest.

This year, Democrats are fielding women candidates for a number of statewide offices in Nebraska. State Sen. Amanda McGill of Lincoln is running for state auditor, Fremont lawyer Janet Stewart is campaigning for attorney general and Lancaster County Commissioner Jane Raybould is vying to become Nebraska's next lieutenant governor.

Nebraska was the nation's first state to see a gubernatorial race between two women, when Republican Kay Orr defeated Democrat Helen Boosalis in 1986.

Still, civic and political groups in Nebraska said they're troubled to see relatively few women in the Legislature in a state where women make up slightly more than half of the population. Some are trying to draw more into the public realm.

"It's very concerning," said Sherry Miller, president of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters of Nebraska. "In preparing for this year's primary, I was dismayed that there were only a handful of women candidates running — and very few from greater Nebraska."

Miller, who ran for a local school board seat in 1999, said many female candidates want to wait until "the right time" when they're young, or retired with more free time.

"It consumes your life," Miller said. "If you have other things happening that you need take care of, it's really tough."

Those challenges are magnified in geographically large districts outside of Omaha and Lincoln because of the additional travel time required, she said.

The Nebraska Federation of Republican Women helps run "campaign schools" with the state party and works to promote candidates who have received a party endorsement, said Lona Ferguson, the group's president. Democrats are undertaking similar efforts.

Ferguson said she expects the number of women seeking legislative seats will grow over time.

"We encourage them to run because we think they bring some additional things to the table," Ferguson said. "They have concerns about children and the educational system. Not that men don't, but we feel they bring a little more of a mother's concern. It provides a good balance on legislative issues."

Women in the Legislature often provide different perspectives on policy debates because of their experience managing their family's finances, keeping tabs on their health care needs, and balancing jobs and children, said state Sen. Kathy Campbell, of Lincoln. That background often translates when working on state budgets or health care policy, she said.

"I think it adds a diversity of opinion," Campbell said. "We all bring different backgrounds and experiences to the Legislature, and I think we miss some of that by not having more women."

Campbell, who speaks occasionally at campaign-training workshops for women, said many are initially reluctant to raise money for themselves. Some also question whether they can commit to a position that demands long hours for low pay while managing their families and a full-time job.

Sen. Danielle Conrad of Lincoln said it's important to have a government that reflects its citizenry.

"It's important for a lot of reasons, and not just for the sake of having women there," she said. "It's important to have a lot of different perspectives and backgrounds. When you look at the numbers and where we are today, we have a long ways to go."

Trikers

From Page 1

awareness campaign.

HHT advocates are seeking \$10 million annually in federal funds for research, Brown said. The research could not only cure but prevent strokes, he said.

Congress has considered HHT bills but shows reluctance to fund research, Brown said. However, the nation would receive economic benefits from solving HHT, he said.

"Dan was a cabinet maker and had 12 employees, but now the business is gone and the employees are elsewhere," Brown said. "If people like Dan were helped, they would remain productive people who would be paying taxes."

In contrast to Zimmerman's disease, Brubaker's strokes resulted from incidents — twice. After her 2010 assault, she was fitted for a pacemaker. After a year of rehab, she was involved in the head-on collision and suffered another setback.

"I had to start all over," she said. "I had to learn to walk and talk again. It took the wind out of my sails."

Both Zimmerman and Brubaker turned to bicycling — or in this case, low-ride tri-cycling — which produced tremendous benefits.

"My life has changed by riding," Zimmerman said. "The first month, I could walk and talk better. I have lost 70 pounds. It has helped my circulation, but I still have a problem where I wear hose to keep my blood from pooling (in my legs)."

Brubaker has gained mobility in the past year. However, her brother drives her to work, and she cannot perform routine daily tasks. She continues to experience problems with balance.

"Even when I go into (the store), I have to hold on to my cart for balance. If I stand up, I would be disoriented," she said. "But here, I'm riding across America on my trike."

When in public, Brubaker runs into numerous misconceptions.

"One of the big issues for Catherine, she doesn't drive anymore, and so she has a handicap sticker," Brown said. "She walks into a store, and people ask, 'What's the deal? She looks spry to me.' But her handicap is invisible, and it still exists. People can't see it."

Bystanders don't realize that disabilities aren't necessarily visible, Brubaker said.

"You look normal," she said. "People don't understand the challenge of living with a brain injury."

MAKING THE TREK

Brown held deep doubts about embarking on a cross-country ride when Zimmerman proposed it 18 months ago, before meeting Brubaker.

"I said to Dan, if your doctor thinks it's a good idea, I'll set it up for you," Brown said. "The doctor not only gave his blessing but donated \$800 for expenses."

To gain experience and build up endurance, Zimmerman and Brown rode in major bike rallies across the nation. Zimmerman traveled 6,280 miles in the past year, including RAGBRAI in Iowa.

In September 2013, Zimmerman met Brubaker on a bike path in Scottsdale, Arizona. When she learned of Zimmerman's plans for a cross-country ride, she expressed interest in joining the venture.

Brown was skeptical that Brubaker, who was still using a walker, possessed the endurance for such a trek. However, she completed a 60-mile ride, which convinced him of her ability.

Brubaker said she isn't riding just for herself. "I'm riding for those who don't have a voice," she said. "I want to raise hope for people with brain injuries, that they can have their freedom."

Zimmerman is riding a Catrike 700 with brakes connected to a lever on his left side. He can shift and brake with his left hand. He isn't strong enough yet with his right hand, although he can use it to help steer.

The low-lying trikes offset balance issues, particularly for Brubaker. Because of her disorientation and difficulty with directions, Brown built a Global Positioning System (GPS) into her trike. He programs the next day's route so the GPS processes the information.

During early July, the trik-

ers traveled through the Pacific Northwest. They waited for the mountain snowmelt, eventually traveling over five passes in the Cascade Mountains. They spent five days in Glacier National Park.

At one point, Brubaker got ahead of the pack and encountered an unwelcome visitor — a grizzly bear.

"The bear was posturing and slobbering in front of her," Brown said. "She tried to use her phone, but there was no signal. Then, a car pulled up and soon there were other cars. Finally, the bear got tired of it and left."

The trikers have traveled through South Dakota, enjoying Mount Rushmore, Custer and the Badlands. Moving eastward, they passed through Pierre, Pickstown, Springfield and Niobrara, Neb., before reaching Yankton for a two-day rest.

The travelers have encountered tremendous hospitality across the Rushmore State, Brown said.

"South Dakota has been fantastic. The people are so incredibly friendly," he said. "We have met really caring, interesting people. They have provided us with vegetables, donated money anonymously and even given us pumpkin bread."

With about half of this trip still remaining, the travelers are already planning fundraisers to purchase trikes for stroke and brain injury patients.

In particular, they want to help soldiers suffering traumatic brain injuries (TBI). They were interested to learn about retired Yankton soldier Corey Brist, who suffered TBI and other combat injuries from a roadside

bomb in Iraq.

"We want to help the wounded warriors who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan," Brubaker said. "They suffer brain injuries and receive physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy. But after that, the government doesn't take care of them. (The soldiers) get depressed, suffer from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), and many commit suicide."

The trikes represent freedom, Brubaker said. "We would love to get trikes to people with brain injuries," she said.

Zimmerman pointed to his tremendous life changes. "When I started (triking) four years ago, I could hardly walk and talk. This has given me my life back," he said.

The traveling party looks forward to the second half of the trip. Will Buffett be on hand to greet the visitors when they arrive in Key West?

"Jimmy is in France this month, but his tour ends in October," Brown said, hoping something can be arranged.

No matter, a celebration is planned, Zimmerman said. "If Jimmy's a no-show, we'll drink a toast to him," he said with a laugh.

For more information about the cross-country trip, visit online at www.spokesfightingstrokes.org.

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