

Military Operations Begin At Expanded Bomber Training Area

BY JAMES NORD
Associated Press

PIERRE — The first military flying operations took to the air Friday at an enormous bomber training area over the northern Plains that was approved this spring after years of consideration.

The expansion of the Powder River Training Complex over the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming roughly quadruples the training airspace to span nearly 35,000 square miles, making it the largest over the continental U.S. Flight operations began after the Federal Aviation Administration finished mapping work on the expanded airspace, a spokeswoman for the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth Air Force Base said in an email.

The airspace will be used by B-1 bombers from Ellsworth in South Dakota and B-52 bombers from Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. The U.S. Air Force says the expansion will significantly boost training opportunities for

Ellsworth and Minot aircrews.

"It'll be the first flights in the newly charted airspace, which again, is something that we think has very positive, beneficial national security implications for our ability to train air crews," said South Dakota U.S. Sen. John Thune, who began pushing for the expansion nearly a decade ago. "At the same time, it's saving money."

The expansion is expected to save Ellsworth up to \$23 million a year in fuel costs by reducing the number of training flights to other states.

Ellsworth delayed the first flights for a day after the training complex went active to ensure a smooth transition into the new airspace, said 1st Lt. Rachel Allison, 28th Bomb Wing public affairs chief. Thune, a Republican, told The Associated Press that parts of the expanded airspace won't be active until communications equipment has been installed.

Allison said the complex's first flights took off as scheduled on Friday

morning. Outside of large-scale exercises, she said, operations in the new airspace will be similar to flights in the former training area.

Any given location across the training area could experience up to nine low-altitude overflights annually. Supersonic flights would be limited to 10 days a year during large-scale exercises involving roughly 20 aircraft.

The Air Force has said as many as 88 civilian flights a day could be delayed when large-scale exercises are conducted but that the number would likely be smaller.

Opponents of the airspace expansion have argued that the bombers would disrupt rural communities and scare livestock as they roar overhead on maneuvers, dropping flares and chaff, or fiber clusters intended to disturb radar waves.

Thune said he will continue working with the Air Force to make sure that concerns are being addressed.

Nebraska

Attorney Sends Lethal Injection Docs To Watchdog

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — The U.S. attorney's office in Nebraska says it can't determine whether state officials violated federal law in their efforts to obtain lethal injection drugs, so prosecutors have forwarded key documents to a watchdog agency for further review, according to a letter released Friday.

Prosecutors examined the documents last month at the request of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska, which accused Gov. Pete Ricketts and state officials of trying to import the foreign-made drugs illegally.

In an Aug. 25 letter to the ACLU of Nebraska, U.S. Attorney Deborah Gilg said her office sent the documents to the Food and Drug Administration's Office of the Inspector General and will decide whether to take action based on that agency's report.

"We are unable to determine from the materials whether or not any federal criminal or civil statutes are implicated," Gilg said.

Nebraska currently has no way to

execute inmates because it lacks two of the three required lethal injection drugs for its protocol.

The state paid \$54,400 in May for drugs from Harris Pharma, a distributor in India, but the FDA has said Nebraska can't legally import them. An attempt to ship them to the United States via FedEx was thwarted late last month because the delivery service company said the drugs didn't have proper paperwork for international transport.

Ricketts has said state officials are working with the Drug Enforcement Administration to import the required drugs — sodium thiopental and pancuronium bromide — so Nebraska can resume executions. He also has argued that the review sought by the ACLU of Nebraska was politically motivated because the group opposes the death penalty.

Lawmakers abolished the death penalty in May, overriding Ricketts' veto, but supporters of the punishment launched a petition drive to suspend the repeal until voters decide the issue in November 2016. On Thursday, death penalty opponents filed a lawsuit argu-

ing the petition drive was invalid.

Danielle Conrad, executive director of ACLU of Nebraska, said she was pleased that the U.S. attorney's office took the matter seriously.

"The FDA and the U.S. attorney's office should give this matter their full attention to assure Nebraskans that their tax dollars aren't being used to violate the law," Conrad said.

Jan Sharp, the criminal division chief for the U.S. attorney's office in Omaha, said he reviewed the documents and concluded that it was best for the FDA to examine them. He said his office will stay in contact with the agency, but he didn't know how long the review will take.

"It's an unusual situation," Sharp said.

The DEA has said Nebraska is legally registered to import drugs, but can be blocked from doing so if other federal agencies object. In a July 13 letter to Nebraska corrections director Scott Frakes, a DEA administrator said the FDA raised legal concerns about the state's efforts.

Sheriff: Last Of 6 Bodies Recovered

PLATTE (AP) — The Charles Mix County sheriff says investigators have recovered the last of six bodies from a South Dakota home that burned to the ground.

Sheriff Randy Thaler says that investigators aided by cadaver-searching dogs from Codington County completed their search of the home near Platte on Friday. He says they are confident all victims have been recovered.

Thaler offered no comment on a suspected cause.

Firefighters were called to the home of Scott and Nicole Westerhuis early Thursday after a passer-by reported the blaze. Authorities did not immediately name the fire victims, but Platte-Geddes School Superintendent Joel Bailey says local agencies informed him that the family had perished.

He says the children killed were Kailey, a third-grader; Jaci, a fifth-grader; Connor, an eighth-grader; and Michael, a high school sophomore.

Sioux Falls Reaches \$1M Settlement

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The city of Sioux Falls has reached a \$1 million settlement with Denny Sanford Premier Center contractors regarding metal siding that's bulging.

The announcement Friday came two weeks after the city said it was going to sue.

The settlement is between the city and M. A. Mortenson Co., Sink Combs Dethlefs PC, Koch Hazard, M.J. Dalsin Inc. and Innovative Metals Co. Inc.

The \$117 million events center opened a year ago. Mayor Mike Huether says resolving the matter of the bulging panels has "been a long and challenging process."

The city says the bulging panel issue is one of aesthetics. An investigation concluded that the metal siding is structurally sound and doesn't need replacing. The 20-year finish warranty on the siding remains in effect.

Three More Statues Added To Trail

PIERRE (AP) — Three more statues have been placed along the Trail of Governors in Pierre, bringing the total to 12.

The statues added Thursday were of South Dakota's fourth governor, Charles Herreid; its 18th governor, George T. Mickelson; and its 25th governor, Richard Kneip.

Statues that will be completed next year are Warren Green, the 13th governor, Nils Boe, the 23rd, and Mike Rounds, the 31st. Those statues will mark the halfway point of the project.

Survey: Neb. Home Ownership Drops

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — U.S. Census data show that the percentage of Nebraskans who own their own homes has dropped again, hitting the lowest figure in more than 50 years.

The Lincoln Journal Star reports that the 2015 American Community Survey, which has census data from 2014, shows that less than 66 percent of Nebraska residents own their homes. That's down from 67.4 percent in 2010 and 69.3 percent in 2008.

David Drozd is research coordinator at the Center for Public Affairs Research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and he says the last time the rate was lower was in the 1960 U.S. Census, when 64.8 percent of the population reported homeownership.

73-Year-Old Driver Dies After Collision

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A 73-year-old Lincoln man has died after a collision between his pickup and a sport utility vehicle.

Police say the accident occurred around 7:40 p.m. Wednesday on the south side of Lincoln when the west-bound pickup ran through a stop sign and collided with the northbound SUV.

Police say the pickup driver was taken to a Lincoln hospital, where he died Thursday morning. He was identified as Ronald Walker.

Injured Nebraska Pilot Escapes Plane

PAXTON, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a pilot escaped before his wrecked plane caught fire near Paxton in western Nebraska.

The plane went down in a soybean field around 1:40 p.m. Wednesday. Keith County Sheriff Jeff Stevens says the pilot suffered lacerations, a concussion and other injuries and was taken to a North Platte hospital. He was released Wednesday evening.

Funds Awarded To Upcoming Sanford Lab Project

From Pioneer staff reports

LEAD — The South Dakota Community Foundation (SDCF) will make a \$2 million program-related investment in an upcoming experiment at the Sanford Underground Research Facility in Lead, at the request of the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority (SDSTA).

"This is a unique alliance between the South Dakota Community Foundation and Sanford Lab," said Casey Peterson, chair of the SDSTA board of directors. "The SDCF's investment in a future experiment will benefit the Lab and the state of South Dakota for years to come, both economically and educationally."

The program-related investment will work differently than the grants the foundation typically distributes to nonprofits, because the original investment will be repaid at the end of 11 years. The \$2 million program-related investment will also be the largest one-time funding outflow for a single project in the foundation's 28-year history. The leadership of the community foundation saw this opportunity as a way to leverage the foundation's grant resources to support significant economic development in the state.

"The program-related investment is a new way to carry out the original mission set in 1987 by the late Gov. Mickelson, myself, and fellow members of the first South Dakota Community Foundation board of directors," said Jim Hart, foundation board of directors chairman. "The South Dakota Community Foundation has been tasked with investing in programs that benefit the social and economic well-being of the people of South Dakota, and helping to launch the LUX-ZEPLIN experiment at Sanford Lab will do just that."

As of January, the Sanford Lab has spent more than \$148 million in outside money in South Dakota to date, has an annual payroll of \$12.4 million, and has created 125 full-time jobs in the state. In addition to its economic impact, the Sanford Underground Research Facility is having a positive influence on education in the state. Currently, there are 14 research projects underway in physics, biology, geology and

engineering, which involve students and/or faculty from universities across South Dakota. The new experiment will help sustain and expand the economic and educational impact of the Sanford Lab.

"The South Dakota Community Foundation is providing critical funding to the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority to help ensure that the next phase of research, already approved by the Department of Energy and the National Science Foundation, happens here in South Dakota and brings millions of dollars in positive economic impact

with it," Stephanie Judson, president of the South Dakota Community Foundation, said.

The SDCF's program-related investment will support LUX-ZEPLIN (LZ), the successor dark matter experiment to LUX (Large Underground Xenon), which is currently operating on the 4850 Level of the Sanford Lab. LUX, which has 1/3 of a ton of liquid xenon at its core, is the most sensitive dark matter detector in the world today. LZ, the next-generation dark matter detector, will have 10 tons of liquid xenon and will increase the opportunity to

discover dark matter by a magnitude of 30.

"We're honored to be partnering with the South Dakota Community Foundation to advance the development of the LZ experiment at the Sanford Lab," said Mike Headley, executive director of the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority. "The foundation's investment in this project will help the U.S. keep a science-leadership role in the global competition to detect dark matter."

The LZ experiment is estimated to run from 2018 to 2026.

Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. is pleased to announce the association of

April K. Willman

MD, FAAP, Board Certified Pediatrician

Dr. Willman completed her residency in pediatrics at the University of Missouri in Columbia and received her medical degree from the Sanford School of Medicine at the University of South Dakota. She completed her undergraduate work at Augustana College in Sioux Falls. Dr. Willman will join Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. September 22, 2015. She specializes in pediatric care for newborns and children up to 18 years and has expertise in caring for premature babies, providing support for parents and children to develop healthy lifestyles, and cares for acute and chronic illnesses in children. Part of her practice is the evaluation and care for physical and emotional development, including ADHD.

She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. Willman and her husband, Dave, are the parents of two children and reside in Yankton.

Dr. Willman will begin seeing patients at the Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. September 22, 2015.



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