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[US Department of the Interior News Briefing](#)



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DOI In The News

Zinke Met With Locals Before Drafting Monument Recommendations.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4, Carlton) reports on Interior Secretary Zinke's campaign to meet with ranchers and others affected by federal monument designations. Zinke spent much of the summer traveling and holding such meetings before presenting his recommendations on whether to reduce some monuments to President Trump late last month. **Zinke** told the Journal, "The President directed me to give America a voice [and] a lot of the anger has been that they haven't had a voice."

New Mexico Wildlife Federation Director of Community Relations & Education Andrew Black, New Mexico Wildlife Federation Executive Director Garrett Vene Klasen, JACO Outfitters owner John Olivas, and Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen Co-Chairman Jim Bates argued in an op-ed for [The Hill](#) (9/1, Black, Klasen, Olivas, Bates), "As local sportsmen who have spent generations hunting and fishing we find it necessary to set the record straight" about recent arguments that "rolling back public lands might be good for the sportsmen community and wildlife." The writers added, "The proclamation specifically reaffirms the state's right to manage fish and wildlife," and, in fact, will enhance hunting opportunities.

In a guest editorial for the [South Florida Sun Sentinel](#) (8/30), the Florida Times-Union Editorial Board wrote, "President Donald Trump may eliminate protections previously granted to some of the nation's monuments." The article states that the Washington Post "reported that...Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments in Utah, and the Cascade-Siskiyou monument in Northern California and Oregon" will be targets in the downsizing efforts. The editorial states, "We should be concerned because this land represents not only the future for Americans, it illuminates remarkable portraits of the past."

NativesOutdoors owner Len Necefer and Sierra Club organizing representative Kimberley Pope argued in an op-ed for the [Boulder \(CO\) Daily Camera](#) (9/1) that Zinke's "less-than-two-page report" carries a clear message: "when your only concern is the short-term profits of the fossil fuel industry, you'll mortgage the opportunities of your grandchildren provided by public lands. The story not told in this report is the impact that it will have on rural communities,

indigenous peoples and public lands that support a sustainable economy.”

Mark Austin of Escalante, Utah calls in a letter to the editors of the [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (9/4, Austin) for Zinke to ensure a “scientific review of the monuments [is] conducted from within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or by objective and credible outside sources.”

Commentary is available also from sources including The [Charleston \(SC\) Post and Courier](#) (9/3), [KAJO-AM Grants Pass \(OR\)](#) Grants Pass, OR (9/3, Ray), The [Wichita Falls \(TX\) Times Record News](#) (9/1), The [West Salem \(WI\) Coulee News](#) (9/2, Skoloda), The [Ventura County \(CA\) Star](#) (9/2, Capps), The [Las Cruces \(NM\) Sun-News](#) (9/2, Hamblen), The [Taos \(NM\) News](#) (9/1, Hooks), The [High Country \(CO\) News](#) (9/1, Thompson), The [Kitsap \(WA\) Sun](#) (9/4, Blair), The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (9/3, Meyer), The [Summit \(CO\) Daily](#) (9/1, Calvert), The [Baltimore Sun](#) (8/31), The [Traverse City \(MI\) Record-Eagle](#) (9/3), The [Joplin \(MO\) Globe](#) (9/1), [Keys Weekly \(FL\)](#) (9/1), [Workers World](#) (9/1, Mezgar), The [Detroit Free Press](#) (9/3), [Ashland \(OR\) Jefferson Public Radio](#) (9/4, Profita), The [Huffington Post](#) (9/4, Peterman, Contributor), and The [Durango \(CO\) Herald](#) (9/2).

Former Interior Secretary Babbitt Blasts Asarco For Land Request. The [AP](#) (9/3) reports Former Interior Secretary and Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt blasted copper mining company Asarco for “its effort to push the government to reduce the size of the Ironwood Forest National Monument near Tucson as it plans an expansion in the area.” Babbitt claims the company is attempting to, in the AP’s words, “take advantage of a favorable political climate during President Donald Trump’s administration” by “framing its request to make a case for its elimination, though its formal request was to modify the monument’s boundaries.”

Alaska Files Motion To Join Trump In Lawsuit Over Arctic Drilling.

[Alaska Dispatch News](#) (9/1, DeMarban) reported the state of Alaska filed a motion in federal court Thursday “to intervene alongside President Donald Trump in a lawsuit brought by conservation groups seeking to prevent drilling in the U.S. Arctic Ocean.” Governor Bill Walker said, “In filing this motion, our objective is to make sure that the state of Alaska has future development opportunities in the Arctic (federal waters).”

[Natural Gas Intelligence](#) (9/1, Passut) reported the motion seeks “to intervene in support of an executive order (EO) Trump signed last April,” which “directed the Department of Interior (DOI) to consider allowing oil and gas leasing in several Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) areas, including the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, the Beaufort and Chukchi seas, Alaska’s Cook Inlet and the Gulf of Mexico (GOM).”

Blog: Interior Spokeswoman’s Comment On Robert E. Lee Statue Justified.

Erik Wemple wrote in a blog for [Washington Post](#) (9/1, Wemple) that “Interior Department spokeswoman Heather Swift had a point when she was quoted in a Post article this week” saying, “Absolutely ridiculous.” President Trump recently “announced the donation of his first-quarter presidential salary to the National Park Service, which would decide on its own how to spend the money,” which NPS later said it would use to restore the “historic Newcomer House on the Antietam battlefield, as well as “underwrite” replacement of rail fencing along Hagerstown Turnpike.” A piece by Justin Wm. Moyer headlined, “Trump donation will help restore historic home near Confederate statue,” attempted to connect Trump’s donation to the Charlottesville violence, alleging the donation would “benefit” a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. Wemple added that Swift “said funds used to benefit the historic home adjacent to the statue should not be interpreted as a provocation of those who criticize Confederate imagery, calling any attempt to connect them ‘absolutely ridiculous.’”

Zinke Appoints Members To Royalty Policy Committee.

The [Los Alamos \(NM\) Daily Post](#) (9/4, Clark) reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “announced the appointment of 20 primary and 18 alternate members to the Department of the Interior’s Royalty Policy Committee,” which is scheduled to hold its first meeting on October 4. “Working closely with the Committee, we will come up with solutions for modernizing the management of public and American Indian assets, while building greater trust and transparency in how we value our nation’s public mineral resources. It’s important that the taxpayers and tribes get the full and fair value of traditional and renewable energy produced on public lands and offshore areas,” Zinke said.

[The Hill](#) (9/1, Henry) reported the Interior Department has announced “officials for ConocoPhillips Co., Anadarko Petroleum Corp. and Cloud Peak Energy” as well as “three academics, and representatives from four tribes and six states” will serve on a new committee

“designed to assess federal royalty policies for energy development on public land.” In a statement, Interior Secretary Zinke said, “Working closely with the committee, we will come up with solutions for modernizing the management of public and American Indian assets, while building greater trust and transparency in how we value our nation’s public mineral resources.” Zinke added, “It’s important that the taxpayers and tribes get the full and fair value of traditional and renewable energy produced on public lands and offshore areas.”

Additional coverage is available from [OILMAN Magazine](#) (9/4, Ciarlone), [Natural Gas Intelligence](#) (9/1), and The [Casper \(WY\) Star-Tribune](#) (9/4, Richards).

EPA Now Requires Political Aide’s Sign-off For Agency Awards, Grant Applications.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/4, A1, Eilperin) reports on its front page that the EPA “has taken the unusual step” of putting “political operative” John Konkus “in charge of vetting the hundreds of millions of dollars in grants the EPA distributes annually.” Konkus, “who officially works in the EPA’s public affairs office,” is a “former Trump campaign aide with little environmental policy experience.” He has so far “canceled close to \$2 million competitively awarded to universities and nonprofit organizations” – many of them affecting Alaska, whose Sen. Lisa Murkowski irritated President Trump with her vote against the Senate GOP healthcare bill. The Post reports that EPA veterans from the Bush and Obama administrations say no one from Konkus’ office had such authority then. The Post mentions that the Interior Department, “which is conducting a review of its grants, last month canceled a \$100,000 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine study aimed at evaluating the impact of surface mining on nearby communities.”

Legal Scholars Support Reassigned Climate Scientist: NPR.

[NPR](#) (9/4, Johnson) offers a transcript of an interview with climate change scientist Joel Clement, “who says he was reassigned in retaliation for his views.” According to NPR, “Clement used to work on policy analysis at the Interior Department. Now he reports to an office that handles accounting issues.” NPR reports Clement is among “about 50 senior executives reassigned by the Interior Department this year,” noting that a spokesperson for the department “says the moves will help taxpayers and streamline department operations.” However, Clement said, “I don’t think they were hiding their cards any when they moved the climate adaptation guy to the fossil fuel royalty collection office.”

Counties Bet On Zinke For Millions.

The [Grand Junction \(CO\) Daily Sentinel](#) (9/2, Harmon) reported local government officials, who are “gambling that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke might find a way to direct money to northwest Colorado counties from oil shale research,” have asked Federal lawmakers “legislators to keep the matter out of a must-pass defense measure.” According to the piece, the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado asked Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) “to refrain from seeking an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would direct the money from an Interior Department account to Colorado. The money, possibly as much as \$76 million, has been an issue for years dating back to before the completion of work cleaning up the Anvil Points oil shale research facility west of Rifle.”

World’s Largest General Science Organisation Slams Trump’s Lack Of ‘Scientific Thinking.’

The [Independent \(UK\)](#) (9/2, Johnston) reported American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) chief executive Dr Rush Holt “has accused the Trump administration of paying ‘scant attention’ to research and lacking understanding of scientific thinking.” Holt, “speaking amid controversy over the US Department of Interior’s decision to halt a \$1m study into the effects of ‘mountain-top’ coal mining on the health of people living nearby,” cited Trump’s “‘great slowness’ in appointing people with a scientific background to senior positions.”

Men Of Sleet: The Snowflakes Behind Trump’s Macho-man Act.

Alan Pyke commented for [Think Progress](#) (9/1) that President Trump’s rise has been powered by “many ingredients, but they are all funneled through the same engine: TV and internet chatter.” He alleged that “the web-shouting creche that nurtured Trump’s white-grievance politics into a wave strong enough to sweep him to 300 Electoral College votes last November has a few signature traits,” including a tendency to label one’s opponents as “oversensitive little babies.” Pyke also alleged “Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke may be a Navy SEAL, but he’s packed on some snowflake pounds since leaving the service.” Pyke commented, “If Zinke popping his top at a

taxpayer asking him a straightforward question doesn't move you, consider instead his team's reported intervention in the Senate debate over Trumpcare. With the Republican party's long-suffering war against the Affordable Care Act just a few votes shy of triumph in July, the administration knew who it had to convince. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) wasn't ready to go along with leadership's plan. Rather than engage her disagreements and persuade her on the merits, Zinke – whose agency doesn't run health care policy but does wield huge power over gigantic wilderness-heavy states like Alaska – jumped in with threats. Vote with Trump, the secretary's office warned, or Zinke would close the federal faucet."

Mountaintop Removal Mining Study Singled Out For Interior Cease-work Order.

The [Charleston \(WV\) Gazette-Mail](#) (9/2, Ward) reported that, although "researchers from around the country are continuing to use Interior Department funding to examine the effects and efficiency of chemical dispersants in cleaning up oil spills" and various other projects, "a panel that is trying to understand why dozens of studies show mountaintop removal mining appears to be making coalfield residents sick has gotten orders from the Trump administration to 'cease' its work." Although "Interior Department officials have downplayed the move" as "part of a review of all Interior grants and partnerships that exceed \$100,000," the Gazette-Mail pointed out that the "mountaintop removal study is the only one of eight current Interior-funded National Academies projects that has been put on even a temporary hold." The article linked the move with President Trump's promise to "bring back coal jobs."

Hundreds Suing Federal Government For Gatlinburg Wildfires.

[WSMV-TV](#) Nashville, TN (9/2, Burch) reported Knoxville attorney Sidney Gilreath claims to be representing about "200 people who plan to file lawsuits against the U.S. Department of the Interior in connection to the November 2016 Sevier County wildfires." The people, who are seeking "compensation for losing their property" or loved ones, "feel like that the federal government is responsible for letting the fire get out of hand and not managing it properly," said Gilreath. He alleged, "They knew, and we can prove this, that there were extreme drought conditions at the time. They knew that they were short on personnel and equipment because they put in a funding request in for extra personnel in November before this fire."

Also covering the proposed lawsuit were [WBIR-TV Knoxville \(TN\)](#) Knoxville, TN (9/1) and [WATE-TV Knoxville \(TN\)](#) Knoxville, TN (9/1), while The [Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#) (9/3), The [Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#) (9/1, Lakin, Ahillen), and The [Asheville \(NC\) Citizen-Times](#) (8/31) offered continuing coverage of the NPS report outlining the causes of the Gatlinburg fire.

Interior Secretary Zinke Gets It. He Knows That America's Hunters And Anglers Are The Backbone Of Successful Fish And Wildlife Management.

NRA Institute for Legislative Action executive director Chris W. Cox argued for [Fox News](#) (9/1, Cox) that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's appointment "was celebrated by America's hunting community and those who care about our wildlife resources" because he's "cut from the Roosevelt mold." According to Cox, "A lifelong advocate of hunting and fishing, Zinke's public service career has been focused on protecting our natural resources while recognizing that hunting and fishing are critical to our ongoing success. He clearly understands that without sportsmen at the center of the equation, fish and wildlife are at risk. That's why he prioritized hunting and fishing access from day one at the Interior Department and his comprehensive review of national monument designations was so critically important to America's sportsmen."

Bureau Of Land Management

BLM Considering Oil, Gas Lease Sale Locations.

The [AP](#) (9/1) reported, "The Bureau of Land Management announced plans to offer drilling rights on about 145 square miles (380 square kilometers) in a December online auction," citing President Trump's goal of increasing energy production in the US. The AP states the locations include publicly owned "oil and gas near Dinosaur National Monument in northeastern Utah." Officials indicated in a press released that steps will be taken to protect the air and water. Utah Republican Gov. Gary Herbert spokeswoman Kirsten Rappleye said, "It appears the BLM did a thorough job in balancing out the feedback that the governor shared."

The [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (9/1) also ran the Associated Press story.

The [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (9/1, Ramseth) reported that "Federal land managers are

moving forward with a proposed sale of controversial oil and gas leases in Utah's San Rafael Swell and on the doorstep of Dinosaur National Monument, the agency announced Friday." Uintah County and officials from the National Park Service fear that the leases will draw away from the Dinosaur's scenic charisma. Utah Governor Gary Herbert has asked the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to "re-evaluate" three leases, which are adjacent to Utah's half the Dinosaur monument. In response, BLM is deferring two of the leases while the third is set for auction on Dec. 11.

BLM Considers Theodore Roosevelt National Park For Oil, Gas Lease Sale. The [Bismarck \(ND\) Tribune](#) (9/1, Dalrymple) reported that The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) "is considering including a parcel bordering Theodore Roosevelt National Park in a federal oil and gas lease sale." Conservationists have urged the agency to protect a 120-acre plot of land bordering the park's North Unit by not including the parcel in the lease. Former Theodore Roosevelt National Park superintendent and current National Parks Conservation Association consultant Valerie Naylor said, "This small parcel is not going to make or break the lease sale, but it could make or break the park as it relates to the visitor experience."

US Allows Oil, Gas Drilling On Utah Monument Land. The [AP](#) (9/1) reported that "federal land managers said Friday they will allow drilling for publicly owned oil and gas near Dinosaur National Monument in northeastern Utah." The article stated that "the Bureau of Land Management announced plans to offer drilling rights on about 145 square miles (380 square kilometers) in a December online auction." While the plan addresses "President Donald Trump's goal of increasing domestic energy production," some officials, including Utah Gov. Gary Herbert (R), are concerned about disruption to the park. The AP added that Bureau of Land Management officials "said energy companies would be required to take steps to protect air and water quality."

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

Gulf Oil Production Down 5.5 Percent.

[Reuters](#) (9/3) reported about 5.5 percent of the Gulf's oil production, about 96,000 bpd, remained shut on Sunday. Total lost oil production from the Gulf since offshore platforms started shutting is equal to about 2.97 million barrels. The BSEE said, "Since the storm has passed, operators have begun inspecting facilities and resuming production. To date, no damage reports have been received." The [Houston Chronicle](#) (9/2, Blunt) reported oil and gas operators started reboarding platforms and drilling rigs to assess the damage from Harvey. The BSEE said personnel have returned to all five rigs evacuated during the storm. Companies have also started reopening shut in wells.

BSEE Expects Gulf To Resume Full Production Mid-Next Week.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (9/1, Osborne) reported Lars Herbst, regional director for the BSEE, said offshore production in the Gulf of Mexico should be back and running close to full capacity by the middle of next week. He said, "There's been no substantial damage reported so far. ... By the middle part of next week we anticipate substantially all of the production to be back online." Regulators also have no reported offshore oil spills because of Harvey. [Platts](#) (9/1) reported offshore production has resumed quicker than onshore output in the Eagle Ford shale. Williams spokesman Christopher Stockton said, "We are starting to see some offshore production starting to come back online. ... We expect to see that number continue to improve this weekend." Raymond James analyst Marshall Adkins said soggy conditions will continue to hamper onshore production, as fracking crews are expected to struggle through muddy conditions to return to drilling sites.

Fish And Wildlife Service

Kaine To Seek Funding For Eroding Tangier Island.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/2, Portnoy) reported Sen. Tim Kaine this month will push for federal funding to protect Tangier Island from the effects of climate change. The island "has lost two-thirds of its land since the first accurate map was made in 1850," and "could be uninhabitable in 25 to 50 years." However, residents "blame the land loss on waves and storms...not climate change brought on by man-made activities." Still, Kaine hopes that the town will win "a spot in an infrastructure bill that the Trump administration is planning." The Post mentioned that Kaine "was

also encouraged to hear officials from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had planned to visit."

After Generations, Salmon Back In Lake Champlain Tributaries.

The [AP](#) (9/3, Ring) reported landlocked Atlantic salmon have been spotted in some Lake Champlain tributaries in Vermont and New York, where they spawn, "for the first time in about 150 years." According to senior Fish and Wildlife Service fish biologist Bill Ardren, "Salmon are a great indicator species for looking at how well we are doing. So when you start to see salmon reproducing naturally, and the juveniles surviving, that is starting to show that we are making progress in restoring that aquatic ecosystem."

Drake: Can Energy Industry Survive Zinke's Help?

Kerry Drake argued for the [Wyoming Tribune Eagle](#) (9/1, Drake) that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's "new wrecking crew" has been working fast, slamming "the brakes on a plan to protect the greater sage grouse that was years in the making." Drake argued, "Is the public supposed to be happy that Interior spent a whole 60 days reviewing nearly 100 federal land-use plans in 10 states, behind closed doors, before they hurried to the unfounded conclusion that Zinke knows best? The new plan could allow more drilling in sage grouse habitat, reduce protections in high-priority focal areas for sage grouse and abolish the requirement for Interior to act if catastrophic losses of sage grouse numbers or habitat occurs. 'Inferior' would be a better name for this department since the Trump administration took over."

Retired management consultant Earl DeGroot argued similarly for the [Casper \(WY\) Star-Tribune](#) (9/3) that recent changes to United States Fish and Wildlife Service protections for the sage grouse should be alarming to sportsmen and Wyoming residents alike.

River Herring, Hurt By Dams And Climate, Might Be Endangered.

The [AP](#) (9/4, Whittle) reports the National Marine Fisheries Service is "reviewing the status of a pair of river herring species to see if the little fish should be listed under the Endangered Species Act because of factors including dams and climate change." The agency is considering "the health of the alewife and blueback herring populations," which "live in rivers from Maine to Florida," because "conservationists have long made the case that their declining populations pose a major problem for the health of ecosystems along the East Coast."

Denver Airport In Talks To Allow Bison To Roam On 200 Acres.

The [AP](#) (9/3) reported authorities are considering a plan "to allow bison from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge to roam on 200 acres belonging to the Denver International Airport, airport officials said." The AP added, "Word of the potential deal comes after federal wildlife officials doubled the fenced space for the refuge's herd, which now numbers 122 bison after 18 calves were born this year."

Scientists Still Scratching Their Heads Over Big Darby Mussel Die Off.

The [Columbus \(OH\) Dispatch](#) (9/4, Renault) reports scientists are still confused about "the massive die-off that stretched along almost 60 miles of Big Darby" last year. The Dispatch mentions that US Fish and Wildlife Service biologist and contaminants specialist Deborah Millsap said "officials have 'pretty much exhausted all potential pathways'" in their search for the cause of the die-off.

NPR Interviews "Bumblebee Hunter" Robbin Thorp.

[NPR](#) (9/3, Burns) interviewed "octogenarian entomologist" Robbin Thorp about his work with the Franklin bumblebee, briefly mentioning that Jeff Dillon with the US Fish and Wildlife Service organized the search for the elusive species this year.

Sea Otters May Be Victims Of Toxin That Crippled Crab Industry.

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (9/1, Fimrite) reports two California sea otters undergoing treatment at Marine Mammal Center in the Marin Headlands are suffering "brain lesions apparently caused by the same neurotoxin that closed down the Dungeness crab fishery two years ago and killed hundreds of other sea creatures, officials said." The Chronicle cites statistics from the US Fish and Wildlife Service stating that California sea otters "also known as southern sea otters, haven't been spotted in the bay since the early 1800s, and there have been fewer than 20 confirmed sightings in the Bay Area since 1979, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

National Park Service

California, Washington State Governors Declare States Of Emergency As Wildfires Spread.

[Reuters](#) (9/2, Coffman) reported California Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency as the Ponderosa Fire spread across northern Butte County, prompting evacuations of around 500 homes and burning 3,715 acres. Meanwhile, a second wildfire, the La Tuna fire, broke out Friday near Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, the [AP](#) (9/2) reported that Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has declared a state of emergency for all of Washington State as firefighters battle “multiple fires east of the Cascades, including the Jolly Mountain Fire in Kittitas County.”

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/4, story 7, 0:30, Muir) reported, “Firefighters still fighting the largest fire in the history of Los Angeles. Officials say rain and cooler temperatures are now helping firefighters battle the La Tuna Fire, now 30 percent contained after destroying four homes and forcing a state of emergency. In Oregon tonight, more than 150 hikers stranded by this fire, now rescued, and the evacuations are mounting. Authorities believe that blaze was caused by illegal fireworks. More than 75 large wildfires now burning in the West.”

According to [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/4, story 5, 1:50, Alexander), “Nearly 60 major fires are raging across the region, forcing thousands to evacuate and destroying dozens of homes so far. Record-setting Labor Day weekend heat only helping fuel those flames, We get more now on that from NBC’s Steve Patterson.” NBC (**Patterson**) added, “In Los Angeles, state of emergency. The so-called La Tuna Canyon Fire scorching 7,000 acres and forcing 1,400 people to evacuate, destroying four homes. Today, a break in the weather. Firefighters getting the upper hand. Evacuation orders lifted, but the homecoming heartbreaking.” According to NBC, one “Southern California blaze is one of 58 un-contained wildfires sweeping across the West, from Nevada to Washington state. In Northern California, 32 homes destroyed by a fire nearly six square miles, more than 1,600 firefighters on the front lines. In Montana, multiple wildfires scorching bone-dry land. Hot shot fire crews taking on the massive Low Peak Fire. In Oregon, close call. More than 150 hikers stranded Saturday, trapped between two out of control wildfires. The National Guard rescued them, airlifting some to safety. There was relief, hugs and smiles when they reunited. A happy ending this Labor Day weekend, but with more hot weather in the forecast, fire season is just reaching its peak.”

Sources offering coverage of various wildfires across the US include The [AP](#) (9/4, Volz, Thanawala), The [Missoula Current \(MT\)](#) (9/4), The [AP](#) (9/1, Volz), The [AP](#) (9/3), The [AP](#) (9/1), The [AP](#) (9/1), The [Telegraph \(UK\)](#) (9/2, Millward), and The [Independent \(UK\)](#) (9/3, Weber, Angeles).

National Parks In Michigan See Increase In Tourism.

The [AP](#) (9/3) reports data from the National Park Service shows “tourism is up more than 5 percent” at Michigan’s national parks through July. National Park Service Midwest Region special assistant Lauren Blacik explained, “[Michigan has] even more visitors at this point in 2017 than we had in 2016, and 2016 was a record-breaking year.” Blacik added, “Nationally, we saw a huge increase in enthusiasm and support for our national parks around the National Park Service centennial last year in 2016, and that seems to have just continued this year in 2017 with more people wanting to explore their national parks, discovering those parks they might not even have known are in their backyards and planning vacations to national parks.”

Statue Of Liberty Tour Boat Crew Members Help Rescue Swimmer.

The [AP](#) (9/2) reported National Park Service police officers and Statue of Liberty tour boat crew members “rescued a man who jumped into the water at the southern tip of Manhattan” over the weekend. According to the AP, “a Park Police officer swam out to the man, grabbed him and swam to shore with him. Fellow officers and statue cruise personnel helped pull both men out of the water.”

Slow Progress On Park Service Harassment (National Park Service Staffers Confront Harassment).

The [High Country \(CO\) News](#) (9/4, Gilpin) Lyndsey Gilpin reports Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Dan Wenk, who “spent the last year investigating allegations of sexual harassment and gender discrimination in his park,” is now “carrying out up to 12 ‘disciplinary actions’ – which could range from letters of reprimand to firings – and is working to improve

training and reporting processes for Yellowstone employees.” Gilpin argues that, “although Wenk’s response is a step in the right direction for Yellowstone, the agency as a whole still hasn’t delivered on many of its promises.”

Army Couple Visits Every National Park In Under 5 Years.

[Military](#) (9/2, Bushatz) reports married Army Capts. Kendall and John Gomber planned to “check off their 59th and final national park this Labor Day weekend with a visit to Acadia National Park in Maine.” The couple began exploring the National Parks with “a quiet weekend trip to Arches National Park, Utah, in early 2012.”

Rappahannock Regional Library, Park Service Team Up For Lecture Series On Reconstruction.

The [Fredericksburg \(VA\) Free Lance-Star](#) (9/4, Freehling) reports the National Park Service and the Central Rappahannock Regional Library are offering “a series of programs focused on the complex and difficult years that followed the Civil War in the Fredericksburg region.”

Gillibrand, Katko Pledge To Continue National Park Push For Safe Haven Museum, Fort Ontario.

[WRVO-FM](#) Oswego, NY (9/4, Horning) reports Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and central New York Rep. John Katko (R-Camillus) recently “toured the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Museum in Oswego” in an effort to “renew interest and support for making the historic site part of the National Park Service (NPS).”

Denali Park Road Plan Allows Deterioration Of Final Miles.

The [Fairbanks \(AK\) News-Miner](#) (9/3, Friedman) reported the National Park Service intends to “focus repair money on the first miles of the Denali Park Road while allowing some deterioration at the end of the road in the face of anticipated funding shortages.”

Goodbye, Yosemite.

In an op-ed for the [New York Times](#) (9/2, Duane), author Daniel Duane argued a recent contract dispute forcing the renaming of several hotels in California offers “an opportunity for the National Park Service to dump dozens of place names that are the linguistic equivalents of Confederate statues.”

Odd Inheritance: 1889 Landmark Courthouse With Clock Tower.

The [AP](#) (9/3, Collins) reported the state of Connecticut has abandoned use of a 19th-century courthouse and returned the property to George Beckwith, whose ancestors allowed the state to lease the property with the stipulation that it be returned to their decedents if no longer in use. The AP stated that the “courthouse is the most prominent landmark in the Litchfield Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.”

2 Bodies, Believed To Be Missing Thai Students, Recovered From Kings River Rapids.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/1, Panzar, Hamilton) reported authorities on Friday pulled two bodies – “believed to be those of students from Thailand who went missing” – from a vehicle that had remained “trapped for weeks in the middle of a treacherous Kings River gorge in Central California.” The pair – believed to be University of South Florida exchange students Pakapol Chairatnathrongporn, 28, and Thiwadee Saengsuriyarit, 24 – was “visiting Kings Canyon National Park when the manager of the motel they were staying in reported them missing.”

Campfires Banned In Northwestern Washington Starting Friday.

The [AP](#) (9/1) reported the Washington State Department of Natural Resources initiated a “burn ban” beginning last Friday “for northwest Washington because of continued hot, dry weather and extreme fire danger.” The ban reportedly “applies to all outdoor burning including recreation fires on state forests, state parks and forestlands under DNR fire protection within Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island and San Juan counties” and “includes all National Park Service lands and campgrounds along State Route 20 as well as Hozomeen and the entire Stehekin Valley.”

When Your \$10.4 Million Mansion Comes With An Iconic Lighthouse.

[Bloomberg News](#) (9/1, Gross) reported the Saybrook Breakwater Lighthouse – “a Connecticut icon” – is now owned by construction magnate Frank Sciamè. The article detailed the complicated

process by which “the National Park Service began trying to transfer control of 12 ‘excess’ lighthouses away from the federal government and, ideally, to nonprofit, educational, or cultural agencies. For various reasons – logistical, bureaucratic, political – this didn’t happen,” according to Bloomberg. But “by 2015, Sciame had the chance to acquire it through a General Services Administration auction.”

Man Dies While Rappelling Near Zion National Park In Utah.

The [AP](#) (9/4) reports an unnamed New Hampshire man, 38, was killed “while rappelling near Zion National Park in southern Utah.” He was reportedly “hiking with four siblings east of the national park when the incident occurred Sunday,” and the group says “they were rappelling down about 300 feet for an unknown reason the deceased fell the final 80 feet into a rocky canyon.”

Exploring America’s Newest National Park: Pinnacles In Central California.

[Huffington Post](#) (9/1, Payne, Contributor) Contributor Stefanie Payne shared her experiences at “Pinnacles in California – America’s newest national park.” She said the park closed out her 52 week road trip with Jonathan Irish to every US national park in celebration of “the centennial anniversary year of the Park Service.”

Office Of Insular Affairs

OIA Awards CNMI More Than \$1M TAP And MAP Grants.

The [Saipan \(MNP\) Tribune](#) (9/1) carries a press release announcing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was awarded upwards of “\$1 million in funding through the Office of Insular Affairs’ Technical Assistance Program and the Maintenance Assistance Program for key community projects and public services.”

Saipan Middle School Completes Renovation.

[Marianas Variety](#) (9/5) reports Hopwood Middle School has finished its renovation, “with the help of Insular ABC and the Public School System through the Capital Improvement Project office.” According to Marianas Variety, “The Assessment of Buildings and Classrooms or ABCs is a partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs and the CNMI.”

North: Three Grim Items At The Intersection Of Immigration And Education.

David North, formerly of the Interior Department’s Office of Insular Affairs, argued for The [Center For Immigration Studies](#) (8/31, North) that “three bits of information – all unrelated to each other and all grim in nature – popped up this week in the arena where education and immigration mingle” – “A Chinese college student was deported for hiring someone else to take her pre-admission English test; a Midwest school is offering F-1 visas and work opportunities to alien graduate students who need to be on the campus only *two out of 56 days*; and one of the U.S. territories, finding that the H-1B program for teachers does not allow sufficient exploitation of its foreign teachers, is moving toward a different and more employer-friendly foreign worker program, the J-1.”

Schneider Official: Hospital Services In Jeopardy.

The [Virgin Islands Daily News](#) (8/31, Blackburn) reported Schneider Regional Medical Center officials “pleaded with senators for more money for Fiscal Year 2018” but lawmakers “pushed back, pointing out that the entire government needs cash and the hospital may need to operate more efficiently.”

USVI And U.S. Dept Of Veterans Affairs To Collaborate On Veterans’ Health Issues.

The [Virgin Islands Consortium \(VIR\)](#) (8/31) reported “Governor Kenneth Mapp and officials of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs agreed to collaborate more closely to expand and to improve services to veterans in the territory, Government House has announced.”

B-1 Bombers From Guam Join Display Of Airpower.

[Marianas Variety](#) (9/5) reports the US displayed its “newest and most advanced fighter jet, the Marine Corps’ F-35B Lightning II,” in a “show of force meant as a signal to North Korea.” The jets “joined Air Force B-1B Lancers from Guam for the first time in a sequenced mission with Japan and South Korea, Wednesday.”

Office Of Surface Mining

Trump Nominates Zatezalo To Oversee MSHA.

[The Hill](#) (9/2, Thomsen) reports President Trump on Friday nominated David Zatezalo, the former chairman of Rhino Resources, a company that "clashed with federal officials over mining safety rules under President Obama," as an assistant secretary of Labor overseeing the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA).

US Geological Survey

Magnitude 5.3 Earthquake Hits Southeastern Idaho: USGS.

[Reuters](#) (9/2, Dunham, Coffman) reports Idaho experienced a magnitude 5.3 earthquake "on Saturday about 63 miles (101 km) from the city of Pocatello, the U.S. Geological Survey reported."

Top National News

Haley: North Korean Leader "Begging For War."

Monday's emergency session at the UN Security Council is garnering heavy media coverage, with remarks by Ambassador Haley widely reported. All three networks reported Monday night on Monday's meeting. In its lead story, the [CBS Evening News](#) (9/4, lead story, 2:25, Quijano) said Haley "warned there are limits to America's patience" and "pressed the Security Council for more sanctions against the rogue nation."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/4, Demick) reports Haley said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is "begging for war," and "called for members to exhaust all possible diplomatic measures and impose urgent economic sanctions to prevent it." From the US to Japan, the Times says ambassadors "spoke in increasingly shrill tones, expressing fear and anger" after Sunday's test of a nuclear bomb. Said Haley, "His abusive use of missiles and his nuclear threats shows that he is begging for war."

In the lead story for [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/4), Sara Murray said the Administration is "now...making clear its patience is running thin," and in the lead story for [Fox News' Special Report](#) (9/4), Kevin Corke reported that Haley issued a "scathing rebuke of Pyongyang's latest nuclear test." Haley was shown stating: "To the members of the Security Council, I must say enough is enough." The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/4, story 2, 2:50, Quijano) showed Haley saying, "The time for half measures in the Security Council is over. The time has come to exhaust all of our diplomatic means before it is too late."

The [New York Times](#) (9/4, Chan, Ramzy, Choe) reports Haley "did not threaten unilateral military action by Washington or repeat President Trump's statement on Twitter" Sunday that South Korea's call for more diplomacy was a form of "appeasement." Instead, Haley said "the time has come for us to exhaust all of our diplomatic means before it's too late." [Bloomberg News](#) (9/4, Kang, Kim, Wasson) too says Haley "reinforced Trump's threat on Twitter to cut off trade with nations that trade with North Korea," saying the US "will look at every country that does business with North Korea as a country that gives aid to their reckless intentions."

Haley, the [AP](#) (9/4, Peltz, Sanminiatielli) reports, "said the US would look at countries doing business with the North and planned to circulate a resolution this week with the goal of getting it approved Sept. 11." But the AP says the US resolution "faces an uncertain future. Russia and China have both proposed a two-pronged approach: North Korea would suspend its nuclear and missile development, and the United States and South Korea would suspend their joint military exercises."

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/4, Siegel) reports Haley "criticized proposals for both North Korea and South Korea to each stop military activities," calling suggestions that the US end its activities in the region "insulting." [Townhall](#) (9/4, O'Brien) reports Haley also criticized the Security Council, which she said has often been "too slow and too weak" to respond to North Korea's missile tests.

At the White House on Monday, [Reuters](#) (9/4, Kim) reports President Trump "held calls with foreign leaders, including South Korean President Moon Jae-in and German Chancellor Angela

Merkel," and the White House declared that "all options to address the North Korean threat are on the table." [Politico](#) (9/4, Lacy) reports that according to a White House statement, Trump and Moon discussed North Korea's latest nuclear test and pledged to "strengthen military capabilities" – including "initial approval for South Korea to beef up its missile payload capabilities and 'conceptual approval' for the purchase of billions of dollars worth of weapons and equipment from the US." The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/4, story 3, 1:50, Quijano) said South Korea is now allowing the US to install four more THAAD rocket launchers.

The [AP](#) (9/4) reports both leaders also agreed that the latest test was "unprecedented." The [Washington Times](#) (9/4, Boyer) also reports similarly on Trump's call with Moon. A [New York Times](#) (9/4, Choe) analysis writes that for the last seven decades, the US and South Korea "have been the closest of allies," but Trump "issued a blast of antagonistic comments in the last few days that have made South Koreans doubt that they can take the alliance for granted any longer." The tone of Trump's statements "stunned" South Korean officials and "underscored what unlikely partners he and Mr. Moon are."

A [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4, Board) editorial says Trump's threats Sunday to withdraw from the US-South Korea trade pact has caused unease in South Korea. The Journal argues that if the US were to withdraw from the pact, Kim Jong Un would benefit.

Meanwhile, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4, Nations, Cheng, Davidson) reports that also on Monday, South Korea warned that North Korea appears to be preparing to test another intercontinental ballistic missile. Maj. Gen. Jang Kyung-soo, acting deputy minister for national defense policy, didn't say what signs of activity were detected, nor did he give a time frame for a possible launch.

South Korea Defense Minister Song Young-moo, the [Washington Post](#) (9/4, Fifield) reports, on Monday "said it was worth reviewing the redeployment of American tactical nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula to guard against the North, a step that analysts warn would sharply increase the risk of an accidental conflict." Song said he asked Defense Secretary Mattis during talks at the Pentagon last week "for strategic assets like US aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines and B-52 bombers to be sent to South Korea more regularly."

An [AP](#) (9/4, Lederman) analysis says the Administration's options "are going from bad to worse as Kim Jong Un's military marches ever closer to being able to strike the US mainland with nuclear weapons." The AP says that as President Trump "seeks to show global resolve after the North's most powerful nuclear test, his leverage is limited even further by new tensions he's stoked with South Korea, plus continued opposition from China and Russia."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4) editorializes that the US and allies have never utilized all of their options to prevent North Korea from becoming a nuclear power, and warns that time is running out to prevent Kim Jong Un from becoming a nuclear menace.

The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/4, lead story, 2:25, Quijano) said that while the North will need more tests to know if its warhead can survive reentering the atmosphere after an intercontinental flight, "it seems like only matter of time." Stephen Ganyard similarly said on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/4, story 4, 1:10, Muir), "Theoretically, [Kim Jong Un] has the ability to hit most of the United States with a thermonuclear weapon, but more concerning is no matter what the US seems to do, he doesn't slow down. In short, Kim is winning, and the rest of the world is losing."

Richard Engel reported on [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/4, story 2, 3:20, Alexander), "Multiple US officials tell NBC News, North Korea crossed a big line on Sunday, detonating what it claimed was a thermonuclear bomb." However, Engel added: "I'm hearing that at least the military members of Trump's Administration don't want this to become a military conflict. They want a diplomatic solution through China, but they say the window for diplomacy, if it doesn't work, is somewhat limited, and it is closing because at some stage, North Korea will have enough missiles, enough nuclear weapons to pose an irreversible threat to the United States."

The [New York Post](#) (9/4, Fredericks) reports Switzerland on Monday "offered to act as a mediator to help resolve the North Korea nuclear crisis, offering to host negotiations to avoid a military confrontation." Swiss President Doris Leuthard said her nation is "ready to offer our role for good services as a mediator." She added, "I think that's our role to look at what kind of possibilities we find. Because, well, Twitter won't be an adequate instrument. This must be very discreet."

Sen. Ed Markey said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/4) that there "is no military solution to this problem," because it would result in the North retaliating against South Korea, creating what "would be the most catastrophic event on this planet since WWII." He said the agenda must be getting the Chinese, the Russians, and others to "impose crippling sanctions" on Pyongyang, "and then we try to negotiate quickly."

Sen. Ben Cardin likewise said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/4) that a military option "could be catastrophic" in terms of "loss of life" and it therefore "has to be a last resort."

Rep. Mike McCarthy said on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (9/4) that President Trump "has been strong," but "we need to speak with one voice. ... We have to bring more allies together. I think pressuring China to do more is the responsible thing to do."

[Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4) columnist Gerald F. Seib writes that the most urgent need is for the international community to negotiate an end to North Korea's missile and weapons tests.

Mara Liasson said on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (9/4), "There have been a lot of mixed messages. The President has been on a lot of different sides of this. At some point, he has talked about talking to North Korea. At other times he has tweeted that the time for talking is over."

Tom Rogan of the Washington Examiner said on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (9/4), "Ultimately, the Administration would be willing to accept North Korea now as a nuclear weapons power. What they would not be willing to accept...is the idea that North Korea could put those weapons onto intercontinental ballistic missiles. That's something that alters the game."

China: Trump's Trade Threat Over North Korea "Unacceptable." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/4, story 3, 2:50, Muir) reported that after President Trump declared on Twitter that "he is considering launching an economic attack, 'stopping all trade with any country doing business with North Korea.'" That would presumably include China. The Chinese Foreign Ministry is "firing back." The [AP](#) (9/4) reports China on Monday criticized Trump's threat Sunday to "cut off US trade with countries that deal with North Korea and rejected pressure to do more to halt the North's nuclear development." Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said, "What is definitely unacceptable to us is that on the one hand we work so hard to peacefully resolve this issue and on the other hand our interests are subject to sanctions and jeopardized. This is unfair."

A [New York Times](#) (9/4, Mozur) analysis writes that Trump's threat to stop all trade with countries doing business in North Korea "would mean economic disaster for the United States as well." The North's biggest partner by far is China, which is also the largest trading partner of the United States, and "that makes cutting off all United States trade with China a nonstarter, experts say." [Breitbart](#) (9/4, Carney) reports former Bush Administration Treasury spokesman Taylor Griffin warned that if the US cuts off trade with China, the consequences would be "apocalyptic."

Japan Planning For Possible Evacuation Of Its Citizens In South Korea. [Nikkei Asian Review](#) (9/5) reports that as tensions with North Korea "reach new heights," Japan is planning for "a possible mass evacuation of the nearly 60,000 Japanese citizens currently living in or visiting South Korea." Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Monday, "There is a possibility of further provocations. We need to remain extremely vigilant and do everything we can to ensure the safety of our people."

Hudson Institute fellow Walter Russell Mead writes in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4, Mead) that North Korea's nuclear buildup is pushing Japan towards developing its own nuclear weapons. In the event Japan decides to pursue nuclear weapons, Mead says it is likely that South Korea and Taiwan would soon follow.

US Officials Monitoring Ties Between North Korea, Iran. The [Washington Free Beacon](#) (9/4, Kredon) reports US officials are "closely monitoring an ongoing meeting between senior North Korean and Iranian officials that comes on the heels of a nuclear test by Pyongyang, according to senior Trump administration officials and other sources who expressed concern that North Korea is helping to put the Islamic Republic back on the pathway to a functional nuclear weapon." Sources told the Free Beacon that Pyongyang "continues to stockpile illicit nuclear material on Iran's behalf in order to help the Islamic Republic skirt restrictions implemented under the landmark nuclear deal."

Gas Prices Come Down On Monday.

[Reuters](#) (9/4, George) reports US gasoline prices fell on Monday as port operations, pipelines and refineries bring services back online. AAA said benchmark US gasoline futures dropped by 3 percent, while retail prices only climbed one cent on Monday. [Reuters](#) (9/3, George) reported that prices continued to be boosted by the limitations of refineries and pipelines as they begin to restart. Texas ports also have restricted operations that limits the ability to load large vessels. The [Financial Times](#) (9/4, Raval) reports GasBuddy analyst Patrick DeHaan said all 50 states had higher average prices in the last week. However, any respite may be short-lived as attention shifts to Hurricane Irma.

Gasoline Spiked During Weekend. [Reuters](#) (9/1, Seba, Kumar) reported that retail gasoline

prices “surged to two-year highs on Friday and global shipping routes were scrambled, even as some of the nation’s oil refineries began restarting in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.” The national retail average rose “to \$2.519 a gallon, the highest since August 2015.” [Bloomberg News](#) (9/1, Grant) reported prices saw “the largest one-day gasoline price jump in more than a decade on Thursday.” In total, “gasoline prices have risen by 17 cents a gallon since...Harvey first made landfall,” and prices are expected to continue their increase. According to [AP](#) (9/1, Lauer, Martin), “prices rose at least 15 cents in 24 hours in several metropolitan areas,” and “at least .10 cents in eight states since Thursday: South Carolina, Ohio, Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia and Texas.” The [Financial Times](#) (9/2, Crooks) reported in continuing coverage that gas prices reached \$2.59 per gallon on Saturday, hitting a two-year high.

The [Richmond \(VA\) Times-Dispatch](#) (9/1) reported Virginia gas prices jumped 11 cents a gallon after the hurricane, and the [Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#) (9/1, Ohm) reported “Tennessee is among states that have seen the largest gas price increases since one week ago,” with jump of 22 cents per gallon. The [Atlanta \(GA\) Journal-Constitution](#) (9/2, Kempner) reported Atlanta gas prices “increased another 2 cents on average Saturday morning,” after a “sharp spike” of 12 cents on Friday. Similarly, the [Minneapolis \(MN\) Star Tribune](#) (9/1, Chanen) reported Minnesota gas prices are expected to climb another 10 cents per gallon this weekend, and the [AP](#) (9/2) reported New Jersey prices are up “up 18 cents from last week.”

Also reporting are [Bloomberg News](#) (8/31, Sharples), The [Washington Post](#) (9/1, David Koenig |, Ap), The [New York Post](#) (9/1, Musumeci), [Reuters](#) (9/1, Flitter, Parraga) and [Barron's](#) (9/1, Stone)

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/1, Yang) reported gas prices eased slightly on Friday, as some refineries announced plans to resume operating over the next few days. [Bloomberg News](#) (9/1, Katakey) reported Friday’s drop was the first “in almost two weeks.” The [Pittsburgh \(PA\) Business Times](#) (9/1, Lott) added that Bevi Powell, Senior Vice President, AAA East Central, believes prices may increase over the next week, but said that “high inventory levels have the potential to offset gas price surges similar to what we have seen with past hurricanes.”

Abbott: Texas Has Enough Gasoline To Meet Demand. [Reuters](#) (9/1, Scheyder) reported Texas Gov. Greg Abbott at a news conference “said on Friday that the state will not run out of gasoline after Tropical Storm Harvey flooded much of the Gulf Coast and shut down a quarter of U.S. refining capacity.” Abbott asserted, “There’s plenty of gasoline in the state of Texas. ... Don’t worry. We will not run out.” The [San Antonio Express-News](#) (9/1, Brezosky) reported Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller said the state-wide gas panic was “short term” as the start started to reverse the flow of pipelines from Gulf Coast refineries, bring in fuel by barge, and shut down pumps spilling gas contaminated by the storm. Miller said, “We have plenty of fuel. ... We have a pipeline that goes from our refineries up to Oklahoma and we’ve reversed that pipeline. Now we have fuel coming back into Texas instead of leaving.” Chris Tomlinson wrote in his column for the [Houston Chronicle](#) (9/1, Tomlinson) that Texas’ gas panic is self-induced, and not a result of Hurricane Harvey. Tomlinson said that when consumers started hearing that prices of gasoline would increase because 25 percent of the nation’s refining capacity was shut in, they went “nuts” to fill their tanks at a good price. Railroad commissioner Ryan Sitton said, “It’s just like a run on a bank, it’s a run on gas stations. ... Right now almost every Texan is refueling their car, and not only are they fueling up their car, they are filling up gas cans.” Texas consumers typically use 1 million bpd, but the panic buying caused demand to surge to 3 million bpd on Wednesday.

Gas Prices Threaten Trump’s Economy. [The Hill](#) (9/4, Henry) reports the higher gas prices threaten the bright economic picture that President Trump has lauded during his time in office. Even a short-term surge in gas prices has the potential to have a lingering impact on the American economy, particularly when combined with the other economic damage from Harvey. Heritage Foundation fellow Stephen Moore said, “The negative effect will be not pretty. We’re talking about maybe knocking half a percent, or one percent, off GDP for a quarter or two, higher gas prices for sure, because Houston is the energy capital of the country. ... So all those things are negative.” [USA Today](#) (9/1, Davidson) reported Barclays expects the economic growth for the third quarter to be between 1-1.5 percent, down from its initial estimate of 2.5 percent, according to chief US economist Michael Gapen. He said the impact is a result of “the high value-added nature of the energy sector to the U.S. economy. It’s a significant disruption to oil, natural gas and chemical production.” Moody’s expects Harvey to take an overall economic toll between \$86-108 billion, with up to \$11 billion in lost economic output.

Hurricane Irma Expected To Strengthen As It Heads Toward Caribbean.



The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/4, story 4, 0:25, Quijano) reported the category four Hurricane Irma is expected to grow stronger by Tuesday night “as it approaches the eastern Caribbean, including Antigua and St. Maarten.” [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/4, lead story, 2:20, Muir) reported Irma is “sweeping toward the Caribbean” at 130 mph and is “expected to strengthen even more.” The hurricane is expected to move north of Haiti and Cuba, with South Florida in its track. [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/4, lead story, 1:50, Alexander) reported Irma “has the potential to not only devastate the Caribbean but also the eastern seaboard.” Florida Gov. Rick Scott has already announced a state of emergency.

The [Tallahassee \(FL\) Democrat](#) (9/4, Attelbury) reports that Scott “issued the executive order” for all 67 Florida counties “to give local governments time, resources and flexibility to prepare for Irma.” The [Miami Herald](#) (9/4, Dixon, Neal, Wooldridge) reports that “most forecasts call for the storm, which was traveling at 13 mph, to turn to the west-northwest by the end of the day Tuesday — putting Florida in its path,” and “many South Floridians took advantage of the Labor Day holiday to hit grocery and hardware stores.”

Linzie Janis reported on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/4, story 2, 2:15, Muir) that with the storm expected to hit Puerto Rico Wednesday, “the National Guard has been activated, schools have been closed, and workers ordered to cut their day short tomorrow, so they can get ready.” FEMA has “400 people on stand-by. Giant crates of supplies delivered to the US Virgin Islands, where Irma could hit as early as tomorrow night.”

The [Washington Post](#) (9/4, Lamothe, Achenbach, Contrera, Larimer) reports that the Coast Guard has begun “moving a number of helicopters out of Texas and into Puerto Rico, Florida and Georgia, in anticipation” of Irma’s landfall. With many model forecasts showing storm “striking the US East Coast as early as Saturday or Sunday, with tropical storm winds arriving in Florida as soon as Friday,” FEMA “is also deploying its resources eastward in advance of Irma, FEMA Administrator William ‘Brock’ Long said Sunday on CBS News’ ‘Face the Nation.’” [USA Today](#) (9/4, Graham) says forecasters are warning East and Gulf Coast residents to “start preparing now.” According to weather officials, Irma “is currently a Category 4 storm — Harvey level,” and “is currently moving at a speed of about 14 mph, according to the Weather Channel.”

Tainted Water Well Leads PA Resident To Seek Buyout From Cabot.

The [AP](#) (9/2, Rubinkam) reported that Ken Morcom and Kim Grosso want Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. to purchase their home since they “doubt they could sell a house with tainted water.” The AP states that, “state regulators found that Cabot...had contaminated 18 residential wells with methane,” which led to an ongoing controversy. Morcom and Grosso’s home sits in the Dimock County, PA in an area roughly 150 miles north of Philadelphia. The AP added that Cabot has taken the position that the water wells were contained with methane prior to the company’s drilling activities, however, 2012 Environmental Protection Agency testing showed that “well water” for 64 homes “didn’t pose a health hazard.”

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“Nicole Malliotakis, A Gutsy G.O.P. Challenger.” A [New York Times](#) (9/5, Board) editorial profiles Nicole Malliotakis, “the daughter of a father from Crete (and of a Cuban-born mother)” and “young Republican member of the State Assembly from Staten Island’s eastern shore whose district extends into southern Brooklyn.” Malliotakis is the latest Republican mayoral candidate, and the Times says “she has guts” to campaign against incumbent Bill de Blasio. Malliotakis believes “Blasio has presided over a deteriorated quality of life, a mass transit system in shambles and an unacceptable municipal policy that protects undocumented immigrants convicted of serious crimes.” Regardless of whether Malliotakis “will raise enough money to qualify for city matching funds and for a place in a debate,” the Times encourages de Blasio “to debate her anyway. The city would be the better for it.”

Washington Post.

“Congress’s Most Important Assignment After Summer Vacation.” In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/4) says Treasury Secretary Mnuchin’s call to include the debt ceiling increase in the hurricane relief bill “could be a risky maneuver, given the inevitable resistance from the GOP right; it’s also somewhat illogical, since the government would not be borrowing to enable new spending, but to pay for that which Congress has already approved.” The Post points out

that President Trump, House Speaker Ryan, and Senate Majority Leader McConnell “have repeatedly insisted that they intend to raise the debt limit,” and argues that they “should make a ‘clean’ bill Job One,” as “preserving the United States’ basic financial credibility must take precedence.”

“The Last Big Piece Of Unfinished Business From The Great Recession.” In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/4) writes that the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp – Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – should begin transitioning the current federal holdings of roughly half of all US residential mortgages to a new system in which the private sector “takes the lead” in mortgage finance and under which government, at most, provides “a guarantee against a catastrophic meltdown.”

“In Azerbaijan, Some Journalists Get Free Apartments. Others Get Jail Cells.” In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/4) writes that despite Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s recent award of hundreds of apartments to journalists while proclaiming the importance of freedom of speech, his presidency has waged “a sustained and punishing campaign...against dissenting scholars, human rights defenders and journalists.” The Post calls for the release of imprisoned journalists in Azerbaijan, and concludes that no one “should be fooled by the president’s fancy words about a free press nor by his corrosive practice of buying off journalists.”

Wall Street Journal.

“Options For Removing Kim Jong Un.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4) editorializes that the US and allies have never utilized all of their options to prevent North Korea from becoming a nuclear power, and warns that time is running out to prevent Kim Jong Un from becoming a nuclear menace.

“Trump’s Korean Trade Folly.” A [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4, Board) editorial says President Trump’s threats Sunday to withdraw from the US-South Korea trade pact has caused unease in South Korea. The Journal argues that if the US were to withdraw from the pact, Kim Jong Un would benefit.

“The Free Speech Battles Of Berkeley.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/4) writes that despite University of California, Berkeley chancellor Carol T. Christ’s efforts to ensure that events featuring conservative speakers continue on campus, Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin has asked the university to cancel upcoming controversial speakers. The Journal argues that Ms. Christ correctly understands the importance of the First Amendment and that despite the security difficulty of hosting controversial speakers, the mayor has a responsibility to ensure public safety.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today’s Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Returning Lawmakers Face A Tough Agenda With Little Margin For Error](#)
[US Urges Strong Response As North Korea Prepares New Launch](#)
[United Technologies To Buy Rockwell Collins For \\$23 Billion](#)
[P&G Proxy Fight Pits Former Finance Chief Against Longtime Protégé](#)
[Battle Shapes Up In Congress Over Fate Of Immigration Program](#)

New York Times:

[US Urges Fuel Cutoff For North Korea, Saying It’s ‘Begging For War’](#)
[On DACA, President Trump Has No Easy Path](#)
[Trump Faces Deal-Making Challenges As Congress Returns](#)
[Traces Of Crime: How New York’s DNA Techniques Became Tainted](#)
[In Texas, Distrust Of Washington Collides With Need For Federal Aid](#)
[‘Brexit’ Threatens Subsidies For UK’s Landed Gentry, And Queen](#)

Washington Post:

[Cold Political Truth Emerges In Arctic](#)
[Hill Is Facing DACA Battle](#)
[Pastors Try An Appeal To Trump’s Heart](#)
[Return Of US Arms Discussed In Seoul](#)
[‘If They Deport All Of Us, Who Will Rebuild?’](#)

Financial Times:

[North Korea Is 'Begging For War' Says US Ambassador To UN](#)

[Reddit Caught Between User Highs And 'Edgier' Lows](#)

[Hollywood Licks Its Wounds After Dismal Summer](#)

Washington Times:

[Iran Fears No International Intervention Into Alarming Treatment Of Imprisoned Dissidents](#)

[How Sarah Huckabee Sanders Remains Calm Amid White House Press Storms](#)

[Patriot Prayer Urges Supporters To Let The Antifa Beat Them Up In Oregon](#)

[Menendez Corruption Case Puts Other Democrats At Legal Risk, Sidelines Senator For Trial](#)

[Armed With New Data, Committees Ready To Ratchet Up Investigations Into Trump's Ties With Russia](#)

[Terrorist Attacks In Spain Reveal EU Security Weaknesses, Radical Islamic Strengths](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Hurricane Irma-Forecast; Hurricane Irma-Preparation; North Korea Nuclear Test; North Korea Nuclear Test-Bomb Strength; White House-DACA Repeal Plan; Hurricane Harvey-Tolls; West Coast-Wildfires; Utah-Hospital Police Violence; Philadelphia-Car Break Failure; Temple University Student Murdered; British Royal Family-Pregnancy; Hurricane Harvey-Neighbors.

CBS: North Korea Nuclear Test; North Korea Nuclear Test-White House; North Korea Nuclear Test-South Korean Response; Hurricane Irma; Hurricane Harvey-Environmental Impact; Hurricane Harvey-Health Risk; White House-DACA Repeal Plan; West Coast-Wildfires; Gasoline Price Hike; British Royal Family-Pregnancy; Hurricane Harvey-Drone Operators.

NBC: Hurricane Irma-Forecast; North Korea Nuclear Test; White House-DACA Repeal Plan; Hurricane Harvey-Recovery Effort; West Coast-Wildfires; Utah-Hospital Police Violence; British Royal Family-Pregnancy; College Football Season; Hurricane Harvey-Katrina Survivors Help.

Network TV At A Glance:

North Korea Nuclear Test – 14 minutes, 25 seconds

Hurricane Harvey – 13 minutes, 35 seconds

White House-DACA Repeal Plan – 7 minutes, 50 seconds

Hurricane Irma – 6 minutes, 50 seconds

West Coast-Wildfires – 4 minutes

British Royal Family-Pregnancy – 2 minutes, 15 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: White House-DACA Repeal Plan; Hurricane Irma; North Korea Nuclear Test.

CBS: North Korea Nuclear Test; Hurricane Irma; Hurricane Harvey; White House-DACA Repeal Plan; Utah-Hospital Police Violence.

FOX: White House-DACA Repeal Plan; Hurricane Irma; Hurricane Harvey.

NPR: White House-DACA Repeal Plan; Hurricane Harvey; North Korea Nuclear Test; Chicago Newspapers Merger.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Meets with the National Economic Council; meets with key members of Congress and his Administration regarding tax reform; speaks with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of Australia by telephone.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Participates in a swearing-in ceremony for President and Chief Executive Officer of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) Ray Washburne; participates in a swearing-in ceremony for US Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams.

US Senate: 1:15 PM Dem Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto participates in press call on DACA – Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto participates in a press conference call to discuss the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and 'call on President Donald Trump to protect DACA'. Sen. Cortez Masto is joined by DACA-recipient Astrid Silva Location: TBD
<https://www.cortezmastosenate.gov/> <https://twitter.com/SenCortezMasto>

3:00 PM Senate votes on U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia nominee – Senate

convenes and proceeds to executive session to consider the nomination of Timothy Kelly to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, followed by a vote on the nomination Location: Washington, DC <http://www.senate.gov/>

US House: 2:00 PM House meets for legislative business – House of Representatives meets for legislative business, with agenda including consideration of 'H.R. 1843 – Clyde-Hirsch-Sowers RESPECT Act', 'H.R. 3110 – Financial Stability Oversight Council Insurance Member Continuity Act', 'H.R. 2864 – Improving Access to Capital Act', as amended, and 'S. 1616 – Bob Dole Congressional Gold Medal Act' under suspension of the rules Location: Washington, DC <http://www.house.gov/>

4:00 PM House Rules Committee hearing – Hearing on 'H.R. 3354' – the legislative vehicle for the remaining appropriations bills Location: U.S. Capitol, H-313, Washington, DC <http://www.rules.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/RulesReps>

Other: 11:00 AM U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley in conversation at AEI – American Enterprise Institute hosts conversation with U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amb. Nikki Haley Location: American Enterprise Institute, 1789 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC <http://www.aei.org/> <https://twitter.com/AEI>

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

The late night shows did not air or were re-runs.

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