

STATE-BY-STATE

News from across the USA

ALABAMA Dothan: During 2013, 85% of the city's call-outs for police narcotic investigators involved synthetic marijuana. *The Dothan Eagle* reported. Lt. Bubba Ott, supervisor of the drug division, called it an epidemic.

ALASKA Fairbanks: The Chena River is flowing cleaner than it has since it was placed on the state's list of impaired waters in 1990, the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* reported. The Department of Environmental Conservation credited the public's awareness of erosion and stormwater issues and large erosion-control projects.

ARIZONA Sedona: University of Arizona researcher Emily Cory has installed a puzzle box in hopes of occupying the ravens that are causing trouble at the Red Rock Ranger Station. To get a food reward, the birds will have to open a latch on the box. The birds have ripped out wiper blades and weatherstripping from U.S. Forest

Service and employee vehicles.

ARKANSAS Pocahtontas: Black River Technical College's board of trustees voted not to extend President Wayne Hatcher's contract, which expires June 30.

CALIFORNIA Oakland: Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District drivers and mechanics ratified a labor deal, ending the threat of a strike. The agreement includes a 9.5% wage increase over the next three years.

COLORADO Fountain: Authorities said a man found dead in a Fountain street may have been struck by a hit-and-run vehicle. Police haven't released the man's name.

CONNECTICUT Wethersfield: The state Department of Motor Vehicles is promoting better driving among teenagers with a contest for public service ads. The DMV is encouraging high school students to create a 25-second public service announcement calling for a stop to distracted driving.

DELAWARE Wilmington: State police and cemetery officials reported close to 600 bronze vases have been stolen from cemeteries in the state since late November and have likely been sold for scrap. The vases, which hold flowers at gravesites, can sell for hundreds of dollars.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Starting today, a new set of cameras will ticket drivers for speeding and infractions at stop signs, crosswalks and intersections. Police activated the cameras in late November, and so far they have been issuing warnings.

FLORIDA Polk City: Kermit Weeks is awaiting approval from the Federal Aviation Administration to re-enact the USA's first commercial flight on its centennial. He hopes to launch his re-created bi-wing seaplane from St. Petersburg's North Yacht Basin on Wednesday and retrace Tony Jannus' 23-minute flight over Tampa Bay with a passenger.

GEORGIA Acworth: Inalfa Roof Systems is set to open at the Cherokee 75 Corporate Park during the first week of January. Plant manager Daniel Twork said the plant has hired about 85 employees, with the goal of 300 workers likely to be realized by 2015.

HAWAII Honolulu: The Coast Guard is reminding the public to maintain a safe distance from humpback whales that are migrating to the

HIGHLIGHT: GEORGIA

New launch for spaceship-like lounge

The Associated Press

ATLANTA Polaris, the landmark blue dome that once dominated Atlanta's skyline, will soon reopen, nearly half a century after it was built.

When it made its debut in 1967, the Polaris lounge's futuristic flying-saucer shape and prominence atop what was the city's tallest hotel made it instantly recognizable in postcards. Its blue bubble-shaped top lit up the night sky, and it drew visitors from miles around.

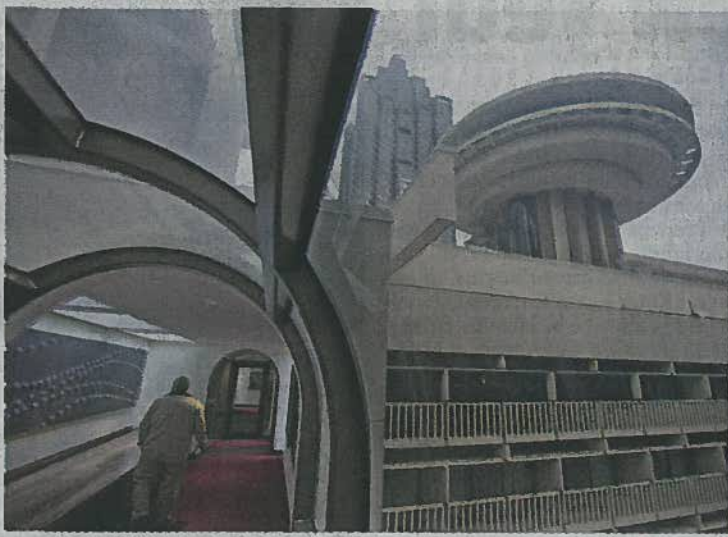
"It was really a symbol of Atlanta for the whole country, and we want that to be the case again," said Walter Woods, marketing manager at Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

The Polaris has been vacant since 2004. Now, the hotel is refurbishing the structure and adding a bar that rotates for a panoramic view. The plan is to reopen the Polaris sometime in March, said Peter McMahon, general manager of the hotel.

"It was the place of special occasions," McMahon said, adding that he often hears from people who remember riding the Hyatt's glass elevators to reach the Polaris, perched on top of the hotel's main building.

Rock star Jim Morrison described the "strange sensation" of riding the elevators to the Polaris during a 1970 interview, before he died the following year.

"The elevators are, like, kind of



DAVID GOLDMAN, AP

Polaris, the flying-saucer-shaped dome that once dominated Atlanta's skyline, will reopen atop the Hyatt Regency hotel in March.

Victorian rocket ships." Morrison — in Atlanta at the time for a film festival with The Doors' documentary *Feast of Friends* — said in an audio-taped interview.

The elevators to Polaris are a key part of the overall experience, the designers renovating the space said.

"It's a transporter room. You get in there and you leave the building and you arrive in this spaceship," Brian Finkel of the architectural and design firm the Johnson Studio says in a hotel video update on the renovation.

Finkel's colleague Bill Johnson

says aspects of the Polaris' history will be apparent when it reopens.

"We weren't trying to make a museum, but at the same time, we were trying to preserve some of the retro parts that really are still cool today," Johnson says in the video.

The 22-story Hyatt Regency was Atlanta's first major hotel built downtown since the 1920s, according to the exhibition Rendering Atlanta at the city's History Center. It was Atlanta architect John Portman's first significant hotel project featuring the open-atrium design he came to be known for.

IOWA Ames: A clinic at Iowa State University is working to help injured wildlife animals. The Wildlife Care Clinic at the school's Lloyd Veterinary Medical Center takes in injured animals and helps them get well enough for release. *The Des Moines Register* reported.

KANSAS Wichita: The state Supreme Court is letting a life prison sentence stand for an inmate who claimed he was improperly forced to stand trial as an adult in a gang-related killing. Sashada Maktheparak was convicted in a May 2001 shooting in an area home. He was 16 at the time.

KENTUCKY Calhoun: McLean, Henderson, Webster and Union counties on Thursday will launch the Kentucky Network for Development, Leadership and Engagement in the hope that the counties will get more attention from government leaders.

LOUISIANA Monroe: The Monroe City Council wants the state Legislature to let the city set a \$10 minimum wage. The Monroe Chamber of Commerce wants to know whether the move would be legal.

MAINE Augusta: One of 22 defendants in a drug ring operating between New York and central Maine has forfeited his \$100,000 bond after failing to show up for two court hearings. Chief Justice John Woodcock said it may have been a mistake for James Proudfoot, 33, to miss one hearing, but he said the second absence and his decision to resist arrest will cost him.

MARYLAND Baltimore: The city recorded its 234th homicide in 2013, the most in four years. *The Baltimore Sun* reported.

MASSACHUSETTS Boston: Federal health officials have added Massachusetts to the list of states where the flu is now widespread. The latest flu report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the week that ended Dec. 21 said the flu is now widespread in Massachusetts and nine other states: Alabama, Alaska, Kansas, Louisiana, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Wyoming.

day of Duluth's Spirit Mountain ski area and the Bayfront skating rink. Wind chills ranged from minus 30 to minus 50 degrees.

MISSISSIPPI Oxford: Oxford High School students left for Christmas break waving goodbye to their old high school. Classes resume Jan. 7 in a new \$30 million facility in the Oxford Commons area.

MISSOURI Jefferson City: Women seeking an abortion in Missouri would need to wait 72 hours, instead of the current 24, under legislation proposed in the 2014 legislative session starting Jan. 8.

MONTANA Kallispell: A man who aimed a rifle at a store clerk following a dispute about paying for gas has pleaded guilty to felony criminal endangerment. *The Daily Inter Lake* reported that Richard Boggess, 47, entered the plea in Flathead District Court.

NEBRASKA Omaha: Police said a man found naked on a street has been accused of attacking two officers. Travis Kitkowski, 20, was arrested early Sunday after police said he attacked officers who stopped him.

NEVADA Reno: The state Board on Geographic Names is again pushing a proposal to name a scenic Lake Tahoe cove for Samuel Clemens, Mark Twain's real name. The board's national counterpart rejected the request two years ago in a 5-4 vote, citing as a factor doubt about whether Twain camped at the spot.

NEW HAMPSHIRE Enfield: After emerging from a mountain of debt, New Hampshire's Whaleback ski area is opening in a limited capacity on Monday. The ski area was more than \$1 million in debt when it shut down in March.

NEW JERSEY Newark: Police departments in Camden, Cape May, Hunterdon and Ocean counties are considering giving officers Narcan, an aerosol that counteracts the effects of heroin and other opioid drugs, to administer to people suffering from overdoses to buy time to get them to hospitals.

NORTH DAKOTA Minot: Poker players are vying for a \$50,000 top prize during the 10th annual Texas Hold'em Championship here. The championship runs through Tuesday at the Vegas Motel.

OHIO Cleveland: University Hospitals on Wednesday will take over Parma Community General Hospital and EMH Healthcare in Elyria.

OKLAHOMA Oklahoma City: Authorities have arrested a former Oklahoma City-based doctor on nine murder complaints after eight patients reportedly died of prescription-drug overdoses and another allegedly caused a fatal traffic accident. *The Oklahoman* newspaper reported. Federal agents arrested William Valuck, 71, at his home in Kilgore, Texas.

OREGON Portland: Police officers used a sandwich to stop a naked man from jumping off the ledge of a parking structure. He is currently being evaluated medically at an area hospital.



PENNSYLVANIA Newville: State police rescued two sisters hiking in a central Pennsylvania park who say they got disoriented after seeing a bear. The 21-year-old and 19-year-old women said they were working on a college project at Colonel Denning State Park. Authorities did not release the sisters' names.

RHODE ISLAND Providence: The Rhode Island chapter of the Red Cross is helping a family of three find emergency housing following a fire in Central Falls. In Pawtucket the organization is helping 13 people with emergency housing after their home caught fire on Christmas night.

SOUTH CAROLINA Columbia: Some popular hiking trails that were

SOUTH DAKOTA Rapid City: The first kill of the South Dakota mountain lion hunting season was an 87-pound female lion in Lawrence County. The kill was made Friday, a day after the season opened. The season runs through March, unless a harvest limit of 75 mountain lions or 50 females is reached earlier.

TENNESSEE Maryville: A statue of Sam Houston planned for the Municipal Center will portray the American hero and former Blount County resident as a 20-year-old man, the age at which he enlisted in the army. Artist Wayne Hyde said he hopes to have the 7-foot-tall bronze sculpture ready for display by March 2015.

TEXAS Austin: Police arrest affidavits show a man charged in a hit-and-run that left a woman and her son dead and four people seriously hurt had a blood-alcohol content more than three times the legal Texas limit. Witnesses said Nicolas Wyzcowski's pickup was traveling between 80 and 100 mph when it collided with the woman's car.

UTAH Salt Lake City: Utah officials said it will cost some \$2 million to hire outside counsel to fight a federal judge's ruling striking down the state's voter-approved constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

VERMONT Montpelier: The Canada lynx appears to be increasing in number in the Northeast Kingdom, an encouraging sign for a species the state considers endangered.

VIRGINIA Richmond: Legislation amending the state's charitable gaming law to allow "network bingo" takes effect Wednesday. Hundreds of non-profit organizations hope to reverse a steady decline in bingo revenue by joining forces for a weekly game offering a top prize of up to \$25,000.



WASHINGTON Bremerton: The state auditor's office said a local conference center needs better oversight. *The Kitsap Sun* reported that the auditors determined some sales records were missing at the Conference Center at the Bremerton Harborside.

WEST VIRGINIA Sundial: A segment of W.Va. Route 3 in Raleigh County is closed because of a rock slide. The Department of Transportation said the road could remain closed for a week.

WISCONSIN Milwaukee: The Jewish Museum Milwaukee is hosting a display of large silkscreen portraits by Andy Warhol. "Ten Portraits of Jews of the Twentieth Century" will be on display through March 30. The silkscreens include Sarah Bernhardt, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, George Gershwin, the Marx Brothers and Gertrude Stein.

WYOMING Casper: A federal court jury has awarded \$28.2 million to a woman who said she suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning at a Casper apartment. *The Casper Star-Tribune* reported a jury ruled for Amber Lompe in Cheyenne federal court.