

News From The States

EVENING WRAP

Thanks for being here and [supporting our work](#).



By [Sean Scully](#)

Happy Wednesday and Happy Thanksgiving. The Evening Wrap team is taking a little time off to be with friends and family, so we won't be sending out editions Thursday and Friday. Back at you on Monday, though.



The Big Takeaway

Thanksgiving is the time when we gather to celebrate the bounty of nature and the richness of our agriculture. It is fitting, therefore, that we start with a stroll in the great outdoors, with stories about the food we eat and the wildlife we see (and sometimes also eat).

In Wisconsin, Chef David Heide and his staff, boosted by a team of volunteers, have spent the week preparing more than 600 Thanksgiving meals that will be delivered to those in need across Madison, the state capital, [the Wisconsin Examiner reports](#). Of those, 530 will be delivered to families by a community group called [Feeding the Youth](#) and another 100 will go to the [Madison Dairy Drive community](#) for unhoused people.

“To me, food is love, right? And we know this, right?” Heide says. “Our two biggest holidays of the year in America are what — they’re Thanksgiving and Christmas. And both of those revolve around food, right?”



Fiona McTavish cuts up cooked turkey meat for Thanksgiving dinners prepared for people in need in Madison, Wisconsin.

(Photo by Erik Gunn/Wisconsin Examiner)

Heide operates two suburban restaurants, but he is also passionate about helping people who can barely dream of a night out at his establishments. Before the pandemic, he established a food truck that would serve free meals at various beleaguered parts of town, using food that grocery stores were planning to throw away because of their expiration dates, even though it was perfectly edible still.

“We’ve set our city up to never have to see the other side of Madison,” he said. “There are so many humans [who] are teetering on the verge of total loss. Food insecurity isn’t someone who’s homeless. Food insecurity is like that single mom with three kids who can’t afford day care and can’t afford anything and is working two jobs, just to make sure she can try and pay rent, like she needs to. We need to support her, so she doesn’t become homeless.”

Slightly less uplifting is a new report that finds some food retailers are stuffing their pockets at the expense of people who just want to stuff their turkeys.

U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, a Pennsylvania Democrat, [released a report this week](#) that accuses food producers of using the cover of inflation to jack up prices for a variety of holiday staples, a practice he calls “Greedflation,” [the Pennsylvania Capital-Star reports](#).

For example, the Capital-Star writes, the price of boneless chicken is up 38% since January 2020, nearly twice the rate of overall inflation of 19% during that same period. Turkey prices are down from last year, but still well above what they were in 2020. And the price on potatoes is up more than 60% year-over-year.

This at a time when major food producers are seeing surging income and profits, Casey says.

“These higher prices are the result of greedflation — big food and agriculture businesses are gobbling up Pennsylvanians’ paychecks simply because they can,” Casey wrote in a statement accompanying the report. “I’m taking steps to fight back so we can make corporations pay their fair share and put more money in the pockets of working families.”

In Illinois, meanwhile, a jury has found that a company run by an Indiana candidate for U.S. Senate and two industry groups illegally conspired with another company to restrict egg supplies to artificially drive up prices, [the Indiana Capital Chronicle reports](#).

“Rose Acre Farms Inc. — previously chaired by John Rust, who is running to succeed U.S. Sen. Mike Braun — Cal-Maine Foods Inc. and two egg-industry groups will have to pay damages to General Mills Inc., a Kraft Heinz Co. unit, Kellogg Co. and Nestle SA,” The Capital Chronicle writes.

The jury will decide the penalties when court resumes after Thanksgiving.

Rust declined to comment on the verdict, but his rival for the Republican Senate nomination was quick to pounce on the news.

“Today’s verdict proves John Rust isn’t just a conman pretending to be a Republican, he is a crook who exploits working class Hoosiers across Indiana for his own financial gain,” U.S. Rep. Jim Banks said in a statement. “While Indiana families struggle to put food on the table, he’s making it even harder to do that. Hoosier families deserve to know whether he is bankrolling his campaign with money he made ripping off Hoosier families by gouging the price of eggs for decades and through the COVID pandemic.”



*Hey folks, could you just leave me out of this, please?
(Photo via the National Park Service)*

In Minnesota, the annual deer hunting season is turning out to be a disappointment, with total numbers down, part of a multi-year slump in the number of animals taken by hunters, [the Minnesota Reformer says](#).

Hunting groups, backed by some Republican politicians, say they know exactly who is to blame here: wolves.

“A hunting group recently erected a billboard near Eveleth, for instance, [making the fantastical claim](#) that ‘wolves devour over 54,000 fawns a year in Minnesota,’” the Reformer writes.

Nonsense, say scientists and wildlife managers.

While wolves do kill and eat deer, by far the main driver of deer populations is harsh weather. And Minnesota has seen some nasty winters in recent years. A similar pattern played out in 2014 and 2015 after a bout of cold weather. If anything, deer populations are higher now than they were during the previous slump eight and nine years ago, officials say.

“Research and experience in Minnesota strongly suggest that, at the population level, wolves do not suppress deer numbers,” [the state Department of Natural Resources explained](#) on its website. “Over the last couple of decades, the deer population in Minnesota’s wolf range has experienced significant declines following severe winters and intense hunter harvest; however deer numbers can and have rebounded fairly quickly, despite relatively high wolf numbers, in response to mild winters and harvest management strategies that reduce deer hunting pressure.”



*Yeah, and leave me out of this too.
(Photo by Ed Godfrey for the Oklahoma Voice)*

In Oklahoma, the threat to deer is not so much the weather but an illness known as chronic wasting disease, [reports the Oklahoma Voice](#). The disease is a slow-progressing neurological disease, similar to the more familiar mad cow disease, that infects deer and related species. It has been found in 30 states and across Canada, but had only appeared previously in Oklahoma in two private elk herds that were quickly euthanized to prevent spread.

But now, wildlife officials say, it has shown up in wild deer herds in the state. They have only found two infected animals, but it’s probably more widespread than that.

“It’s a disease that is very slow to develop, but once it gets its hooks into an area it is something that is not possible to eradicate,” said Dallas Barber, big game biologist for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

The disease causes infected animals to wander away from their herds, behave erratically and lose their appetite, slowly starving them to death. While there is no evidence that the disease can spread to humans, the Centers for Disease Control recommends that hunters in areas with known infections test their meat and avoid eating diseased animals.

The arrival of chronic wasting diseases is a big deal in Oklahoma, where hunting is big business. The state makes about \$7 million per year on deer licenses alone and hunters took in a record 134,158 animals last year. Officials estimate hunting has an economic impact of around \$600 million per year.

“Chronic wasting disease is one of the greatest threats facing deer, elk and moose populations across the country, jeopardizing hunting opportunities, ecosystems and our nation’s outdoor economy,” said Mike Leahy, director for wildlife, hunting and fishing policy for the National Wildlife Federation.

More from the Bounty of Nature file: [State’s corn harvest is almost done, except in south-central Iowa ...](#) [Judge limits Montana wolf trapping season over threat to grizzly bears ... \(South Dakota\)](#) [From threatened to managed population: Fourth river otter trapping season concludes ... \(Minnesota\)](#) [Court rules against Winona county dairy expansion; owner will appeal](#)



Also Trending



*Celeste Maloy thanks the crowd at a Republican results party in West Valley City, Utah, after being declared the winner of a special election to fill Utah's 2nd Congressional District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2023.
(Photo by McKenzie Romero/States Newsroom)*

Utah voters sent a former congressional staffer to Washington on Tuesday, to fill a vacant seat left open when Republican Rep. Chris Stewart stepped down to attend to his wife's health, [our soon-to-be-launched Utah outlet reported](#).

The final vote tally won't be confirmed until Dec. 5, but Republican Celeste Maloy led Democrat Kathleen Riebe with 56% of the vote in early results, compared with Riebe's 35%, making it certain that Maloy would be the victor in the Republican-leaning district. The remainder of the votes were split among five minor party or independent candidates.

Maloy says she took an unlikely journey to Capitol Hill. She started her career as a land use consultant to farmers and ranchers and later attended law school, specializing in land use and conservation and working for various local governments or related organizations. She eventually became Stewart's chief legal council.

When Stewart announced his resignation, Maloy said, she began polishing her resume, thinking she would need to look for a new job. But then the congressman had a startling suggestion: How about she run for the seat? Had it not been for her work on Capitol Hill, she said “I never would have dared run for Congress — I’m still kind of surprised I did run for Congress.”

Although it was just a single seat in the 435-member House of Representatives, the election has national implications, said Jason Perry, director of the Hinckley Institute of Politics at the University of Utah.

“Right now, the Republicans control the House of Representatives, and the majority is slim. And we’ve seen that a small number of representatives have been able to have outsized influence in those votes of Speaker of the House and on the budget negotiations,” Perry said before the polls closed. “So if Celeste Maloy wins this election, and Republicans are wanting to add to their majority, every one of these votes have proven to be significant.”

More from It’s All About Politics file: [Kansas clergy place faith in state legislators embracing ‘moral truth’ of Medicaid expansion ... \(Florida\) Biden campaign to advertise in key battleground states during Thanksgiving football opener ... \(Alabama\) Autauga County Commission chooses new library board member amid ongoing battles ... \(Wisconsin\) School chief resigns from rural Racine County district after months of controversy, division ... Arkansas Corrections Board chair responds to criticism from governor, attorney general](#)



From The Newsrooms

- [Israel and Hamas agree to temporary cease-fire, hostage release deal](#)
- [Indiana abortions drop steeply after ban goes into effect — but don’t hit zero](#)
- [Proposal to expand MaineCare to immigrants voted down by legislative council](#)
- [\(Tennessee\) Sean Williams, Johnson City man linked to more than 50 sexual assaults, apprehended in Florida](#)
- [Investigation of North Carolina Supreme Court Justice Anita Earls may continue](#)



One Last Thing

Normally we write about politics and policy, but sometimes we like to just tell a good story.

A great example today is from [the Nebraska Examiner](#), which visited with a new community in the state, a group of Amish people who moved in recently from Michigan and Kentucky. They're enjoying their new home, but they are still adjusting to the wide open spaces they have settled.

The first family, the Millers, moved from a 160-acre farm in Michigan to a 5,038-acre ranch along the Niobrara River south of Kilgore, Nebraska. Once the community is fully built out, they expect to be joined by 15 or 20 other families.

"I've had itchy feet for a long time, and I like the West," said Reuben Miller, the 46-year-old bishop of the Kilgore Amish community. "I wanted to get away from people."



It's a long and lonely road to Nebraska's newest Amish community, located about 15 miles south of Kilgore in Cherry County.

(Photo by Paul Hammel/Nebraska Examiner)

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