

Good Morning, here are today's top stories and the weather forecast for Friday April 16, 2010.

Albuquerque Weather: sunny High 72

Rio Rancho Weather: High 72

Espanola Weather: High 70

Santa Fe Weather: p/c High 65

Belen/Los Lunas high 72

and now the news:

(Albuquerque) The Albuquerque Tea Party drew at least several thousand people Thursday to line Menaul Boulevard in the latest citizen demonstration against government taxes and spending.

It was the second straight year the fledgling citizens group drew large numbers to an April 15 tax day protest, and people in the crowd were quick to talk about the strength of their numbers.

Albuquerque Tea Party organizers had volunteers who handed out stickers to try to estimate attendance. The group's estimate Thursday night was over 9,000, said Albuquerque Tea Party organizer Tina Carson.

People spread themselves along Menaul NE between San Pedro and Wyoming on Thursday evening, holding signs up for motorists who passed through the busy corridor during rush-hour traffic.

The signs were mostly dedicated to slogans against federal government spending, deficits, the President Barack Obama-supported federal health care legislation and denunciations of socialism.

One sign, apparently referring to Obama's theme of change in the 2008 presidential campaign, read: "We'll keep our Bibles and guns, you keep the Change."

Albuquerque Tea Party supporters said they continue to be fired up about the tea party movement because of concerns — and anger — they have about America's political direction. Obama and Congress were the big targets for demonstrators, with relatively few pointing toward state politicians as the problem in signs and slogans.

In Washington D.C., where several thousand protesters rallied in the shadow of the Ronald Reagan Building on Thursday, no members of the Republican congressional leadership spoke.

A sign in Washington seemed to reflect the sentiment of many demonstrators frustrated by government: "Re-elect No One."

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(Santa Fe) They are less than impressed with President Barack Obama. They want to return to "the values that made America great." They worry about the growing federal deficit. They vow to "repeal and replace" the new health care reforms.

And most of all, they hate taxes.

Hundreds of people who gathered on the Plaza for the second annual Santa Fe Tea Party cheered local party leader Sheryl Bohlander when she urged them to "Stop the madness in the Roundhouse, the White House and in the Halls of Congress."

The banner across the top of the Plaza bandstand said "Enough is Enough."

Unlike a common caricature of Tea Party members, there were no overt racist slogans or pictures on signs held by those attending. Some had signs that said "Political Dissent is Not Racism."

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>>Volcano-Related Flight Disruptions Could Last Six Months

(London) -- Vulcanologists say Iceland's fiery volcano could continue to wreak havoc with Europe's air traffic for up to six months. Today, Austria joins a long list of countries declaring their airspace a no-fly zone. Thousands of flights have been cancelled at Europe's busiest airports, including London Heathrow, Frankfurt and Geneva. The cancellations have left hundreds of thousands of passengers stranded. Pilots fear the wind-blown ash could cause poor visibility. The ash also contains small particles of glass and crushed rock that can damage airplane hulls and engines.

>>Jobless Benefits Extended Another Month

(Washington, DC) -- Unemployment benefits have been extended for another month. President Obama signed the bill after both the House and Senate voted to restore jobless benefits for the more than six-million Americans who now depend on them to help pay the bills while they're out of work. Those benefits had expired on April 5th. The new bill extends benefits through June second and will be retroactive for those who were cut off last week. The Congressional Budget Office puts the cost at 18-point-two-billion dollars.

>>Obama, Advisers Talk About Financial Reform

(Washington, DC) -- President Obama and his top economic advisers will meet today to discuss ways to boost financial regulatory reform. White House spokesman Bill Burton said the meeting will include discussion of regulating risky investment tools known as derivatives, which led to the near collapse of insurance giant AIG. Financial reform legislation is pending in the U.S. Senate following earlier approval by the House. Many Republicans oppose the sweeping Democratic reform legislation, saying it goes too far.

>>Census Forms Due Today

(Washington, DC) -- The deadline to mail back census forms is today. The brief questionnaire required by the U.S. Constitution is used to allocate federal funding and determine how many seats each state gets in the House of Representatives. Americans who don't meet the deadline can expect to see a census worker at their door soon. About 67-percent of households have already mailed back their census forms. The Census Bureau says each one-percent increase in the mail participation rate saves taxpayers 85-million dollars.

>>Man Charged In Chicago Quadruple Murder

(Chicago, IL) -- A Wisconsin man has officially been charged in the murder of his pregnant wife, his infant son and two nieces. Thirty-two-year-old James Larry faces charges including four counts of first-degree murder and two counts of intentional homicide of an unborn child. Relatives say Larry, who recently converted to Islam in prison, believed he was told to kill his family. The suspect's mother and her 13-year-old son were critically injured in the shooting. They're still in the hospital.

>>Pope Turns 83

(Vatican City) -- Pope Benedict the 16th celebrates his 83rd birthday today. He's scheduled to spend the day in Valletta, Malta, where some 500 children are expected to sing him Happy Birthday on Saturday. The Malta visit is the Pope's first international trip since the latest scandal over his response to child sexual abuse allegations against Catholic priests erupted. Breaking his silence on the matter, the Pontiff said at a Mass in the Vatican yesterday that the Catholic Church is, quote, "under attack from the world which talks to us of our sins." He said the Church must atone for the sex abuse scandal.

>>Anniversary Of CFL Bulb Saturday

(Undated) -- Saturday marks the 25th anniversary of the compact fluorescent light bulb. In the latest Sylvania Socket Survey, nearly 75-percent of respondents had swapped out bulbs in favor of a more energy efficient product, with 71-percent noting they now have CFLs. Nearly a third of respondents said they like CFLs because they consume less energy, 27-percent picked them for their longer life, and 24-percent think they provide the best value for the money.

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>>Lawyer Accused Of Running Over Wife, Turns Himself In

(Albuquerque, NM) -- An attorney who is accused of running over his wife with his car has surrendered to police. John Higgins is charged with aggravated battery. Police say he hit his wife with the car after having an argument in the parking lot of an office building. Witnesses told police Higgins struck his wife with the driver's door and then ran over her with one tire. Sylvienne Higgins stood up and walked into the building, but had to be hospitalized for her injuries. Higgins had been arrested and convicted for a DWI last year. He is currently appealing that conviction.

>>Man Found Dead On Elementary School Campus

(Los Lunas, NM) -- A man was found dead on the campus of Desert View Elementary School in Los Lunas. Valencia County deputies were called to the school yesterday morning by the man's mother. The mother found her 29-year-old son dead in a mobile home on the school's campus, which is lived in by the woman and her husband who is a maintenance worker for the school. Sheriff officials say the man was last seen Wednesday night and did not seem to be suffering from any ailments. Investigators have sent the body to the Office of the Medical Investigator in Albuquerque for an autopsy and toxicology test.

>>Burglar Gets 30 Years In Prison

(Albuquerque, NM) -- A man who was facing 31 felony counts of residential burglary will be spending 30 years in prison. Police say Shane Price is charged with committing property crimes from August to December 2008. Price was facing 57-years in prison, but it was reduced to 30 because of a plea agreement. The Albuquerque Police Department had Price listed as one of the top five property offenders. The case drew attention from city hall as Mayor Richard Berry and APD Chief Ray Schultz came out for the sentencing.

>>Some Liquor Stores Turning Away Customers With Ignition Interlock >>Licenses

(Albuquerque, NM) -- There are some liquor stores in Albuquerque that will not sell alcohol to a person who has an ignition interlock driver's license. The owner of Jubilation Wine & Spirits says he is just doing his part to keep drunk drivers off the road. People who are convicted of drunk driving are required to install an ignition interlock on their vehicles and they must get a special license which says they have the device. The liquor store owner says this new store policy will hopefully reduce his chances of being held liable if a repeat DWI offender causes a dangerous car accident.

>>Today Last Day To Mail Census Forms Back

(Undated) -- Today is the last day to mail back forms for the 2010 Census. As of yesterday, federal officials said they only had 59-percent of all New Mexico residents accounted for. Census officials say it's important for all U.S. residents to stand up and be counted, as federal dollars are distributed based on population. If forms aren't mailed back, Census takers will likely be going door-to-door starting May 1st.

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>>Charges Dropped Against American Missionaries In Haiti

(Undated) -- Charges have been dropped against nine American missionaries who had been accused of trying to take children out of Haiti illegally. The leader of the group, Laura Silsby, remains jailed in Haiti. KTVB TV reports a judge in Haiti told the U.S. government all charges are

being dismissed. The missionaries were arrested after a massive earthquake destroyed much of Port-au-Prince and left countless Haitians homeless. They were caught trying to cross the border to the Dominican Republic with 33 children to open an orphanage. It turned out not all of the youngsters had been orphaned. The missionaries are from Idaho, Kansas and Texas.

>>British Catholic Church Critical OF Vatican Leader's Statement

(London) -- The Catholic Church in England expressed criticism of the Vatican's second-in-command's statement regarding homosexuality. England's "The Daily Mail" says the controversy followed Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone linking of pedophilia to homosexuality. The general secretary of the Bishops' Conference of England, Father Marcus Stock, said there was no empirical data supporting Bertone's comment. Since Bertone's statement, the Vatican has tried to distance itself from the issue by "clarifying" the remarks, saying it was not up to Church authorities to make assertions of a "psychological or medical nature."

>>Evangelicals Send Atomic Fireballs To Congress

(Undated) -- An evangelical group supporting U.S. moves to reduce nuclear arsenals sent a packet to President Obama and other government leaders stuffed with the confection called Atomic Fireballs. The package from the Mathew 5 Project included the slogan, "Atomic Fireballs are great candy, but terrible foreign policy," and cited Jesus, scripture, and foreign policy experts like George Shultz. The organization believes nuclear weapons are a moral threat that must be eventually eliminated.

>>Christianity Growing In Asia

(Jakarta) -- Christianity is surging in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation. "Time" magazine reports Christianity has officially become Indonesia's second-largest faith even as Muslims in that country are embracing a more conservative brand of Islam. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life says Christianity is growing through Asia with 351-million followers in 2005, up from 101-million in 1970. Most of the Christian growth comes from Pentecostal and evangelical influence. The spreading of Christianity around the world brings estimates that by 2050 a majority of Christians will be living in developing nations.

>>Christian Student Volunteers Needed In Haiti

(Undated) -- The Southern Baptist mission agency is looking for students willing to spend two weeks serving in Haiti this summer. The International Mission Board is looking for 275 Christian students to work with children displaced by January's earthquake. Baptist Press says IMB will be sending teams of 25 student volunteers to minister to children in refugee camps, orphanages, schools and villages near Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic. Some of the opportunities the volunteers will be involved with include recreation, sports, music, art, English and math tutoring as well as some manual labor.

>>Researcher Convinced Religion And Media Converging

(Undated) -- Experts attending a recent international conference on religious communication claim religion and the media are increasingly converging. Ecumenical News International

reports the cause of the convergence is the changing nature of an integrated and globalized world. Stewart Hoover of the University of Colorado said at the Religion Communication Congress 2010 that religion and media are integrated because they are both part of the fabric of everyday life.

>>Pope Says Church, Under Attack, Must Do Penance

(Vatican City) -- The Catholic Church must do something, some form of penance, to atone for the sex abuse scandal its currently facing. That was the word from the Pontiff himself. Pope Benedict the 16th addressed the faithful at Mass in the Vatican saying, quote, "Now, under attack from the world which talks to us of our sins, we can see that being able to do penance is a grace." He went on to say, "we see how necessary it is to do penance and thus recognize what is wrong in our lives."

>>Virginia Governor Approves Pro-Choice License Plate

(Richmond, VA) -- The Virginia Governor's Office will allow a pro-choice license plate. The plates, which will read "Trust Women, Respect Choice," would raise money for Planned Parenthood. Governor Bob McDonnell amended the bill to include language that would not allow any of the funds to go towards abortion services. Instead, 15-dollars of the 25-dollar plate fee would be spent on pregnancy prevention services and testing. McDonnell's approval could curb potential legal action by the ACLU, which argued a pro-choice license plate was needed after last year's "Choose Life" license plate passed.

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That's the news, I'm Frank Haley, cjf, for God's Glory Alone!!