

# News Digest

By The Associated Press

## Foreclosure

### Indebted farmer kills self minutes before sale

WAYNESBORO, Ga. — A 67-year-old farmer shot and killed himself moments before his property was to be auctioned for unpaid debts, the latest in a series of violent incidents linked to the farm crisis.

"He just couldn't stand to see his whole life go on the steps of the courthouse," Deborah Jennings said after her father, L.D. Hill III, shot himself Tuesday at his east Georgia home.

"He was trying his best to pay his bills."

The shooting occurred about 20 minutes before the 700-acre farm was scheduled to have been sold at 11 a.m. on the steps of the county courthouse, Burke County Sheriff Greg Coursey said Wednesday.

"He wanted to stop the sale, which in fact he did," Coursey said. Hill's death officially has been ruled a suicide, the sheriff said.

Hill owed \$62,000 on the land, Jennings said.

She said the family was proud that Hill had tried until shortly before the scheduled auction to repay the debt. "It showed his principles. It's given us new pride in our daddy," she said.

"It just tore us up when we heard about it," said David Morgan of Dublin, president of the Federal Land Bank of Central Georgia and the

Farmers Production Credit Association, a federal agency that held the note on the farm.

The association had loaned Hill money through the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank of Columbia, S.C., Morgan said.

Hill had visited FPCA officials in Waynesboro before the auction to see if he could sell part of his property to relieve the debt, Morgan said.

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"It wouldn't have been enough," he said. "We had been working with Mr. Hill for over a year, and it just got to the point where it looked like there was nothing he or we could do. Several attempts to help him had failed."

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tommy Irvin said he was not surprised by the death.

"I'm anticipating more of this, especially as foreclosures pick up in the next three or four months," he said. "It's a traumatic experience for

farmers to feel they're a failure, even when most of the time the failure is beyond their control."

The Federal Land Bank and the FPCA have begun foreclosure proceedings against 293 of Georgia's 50,000 farms, said Steve Rich, a spokesman for the state Agriculture Department.

The Farmers Home Administration plans to notify about 4,000 Georgia farmers that they may face foreclosure if they do not make plans to restructure their debt, Rich said.

Hill's death was the latest in a series of violent incidents among heavily indebted U.S. farmers, who have been faced for years with rising costs and falling prices for their crops.

On Dec. 9, 63-year-old Iowa farmer Dale Burr, described as distraught over his crumbling finances, shot his wife, a bank president and another farmer before killing himself.

In Minnesota, 45-year-old Ludwig Muller shot himself to death at his home Dec. 8, the day before he was to have made a final effort to stop foreclosure on his farm.

In March 1985, hay farmer Floyd Morgan of Veteran, Wyo., committed suicide after agonizing over how he could support his family and sustain his farm in the depressed agricultural community.

## In Brief

### Drunken-driving bill at standstill

LINCOLN — The Legislature refused to give second-round approval Wednesday to a bill that would let people convicted of first offense drunken driving apply for a permit to drive for work-related purposes.

Sen. Ernest Chambers of Omaha, the most vocal critic of LB626, introduced a series of amendments during the morning-long debate to expunge what he termed "elitist" portions of the measure and later to delay action on the measure.

The bill, sponsored by the Judiciary Committee, remained at the second stage of floor debate after a motion to advance it failed, 17-20.

Sen. Peter Hongland of Omaha, chief sponsor of LB626, said the bill tries to protect Nebraskans convicted of first-offense drunken driving from losing their jobs because they can't drive.

Nebraskans convicted of such an offense have their driver's license suspended under current law.

### Commonwealth reconsideration urged

LINCOLN — Gov. Bob Kerrey said Wednesday that a new investigative report on the collapse of the Commonwealth Savings Co. may give the Legislature a new perspective on whether the state owes more money to those who lost money when Commonwealth failed.

At a news conference, and again in testimony before the Legislature's Revenue Committee, Kerrey made reference to a confidential report compiled by the State Patrol. An edited version of the report will be released Friday, Kerrey said.

"My hope is that this report will provide us with the basis for saying that we owe these depositors more than \$8.5 million," Kerrey said, referring to a settlement previously approved by lawmakers.

Kerrey told reporters, "When you read this, if it doesn't make you physically sick, you have no sensitivity for anyone outside yourself."

### Cameras find possible shuttle remains

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA trained undersea robot cameras Wednesday on an object that could be Challenger's suspect right rocket booster, as agency officials prepared to disclose for the first time what they think caused the shuttle to explode in flames.

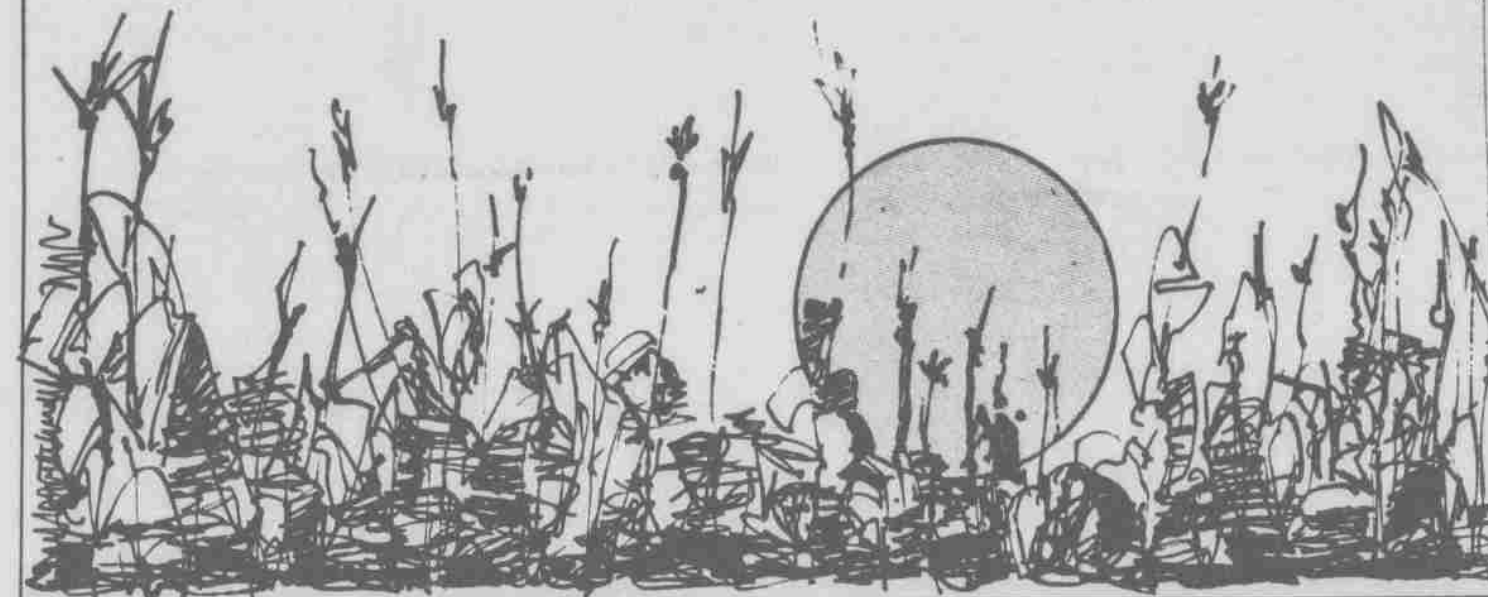
Sources reported, meanwhile, that ships had recovered 17 feet of explosives from a "destruct package" that was on the side of Challenger's main fuel tank when it lifted off. The explosives had not been detonated, the sources said, removing them from the list of possible causes of the catastrophe.

Members of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's interim review board are to be witnesses in Washington today when a presidential investigating commission has its first hearing.

Their testimony will provide the first substantive public information about the accident from NASA since Challenger exploded in a fireball on Jan. 28, killing all seven in the crew.

NASA on Wednesday sent ships to a spot in the Atlantic Ocean where sonar indicates one of the shuttle's solid rocket boosters splashed down after it separated from the fireball. The ships put robot submarines overboard to photograph the object, which officials hoped was the right booster — the chief suspect in the explosion.

Depending on how much of the 149-foot booster remains, it might take weeks to raise the wreckage.



## Daily Nebraskan

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## Reagan budget spares few

WASHINGTON — President Reagan, beginning a five-year drive to eliminate federal budget deficits, proposed a \$994-billion fiscal 1987 spending plan that would cut deeply into domestic programs but continue increases in military spending. It projects a deficit of \$144 billion, the fourth largest in history.

Here, at a glance, are highlights of Reagan's budget submitted to Congress on Wednesday.

### DEFENSE

Reagan proposed a \$320 billion military budget that would dramatically increase space-defense spending and maintain virtually every other major weapons program intact.

The plan includes a nearly 6.2 percent boost in actual outlays for the Pentagon to \$274.3 billion, but Congress is likely to focus on his request for \$311.6 billion in budget authority, which includes long-term money to buy ships, planes and missiles. This sum represents an 11.9 percent increase over current levels.

When the money earmarked for nuclear weapons production by the Department of Energy is added to that amount, defense outlays would climb to \$282.2 billion and overall budget authority would hit \$320.3 billion.

### SOCIAL WELFARE

Reagan moved to require employable adult welfare recipients to look for jobs, increase premiums for Medicare insurance and put a cap on Medicaid spending for the poor.

He proposed to boost spending for Medicare and Medicaid and allow for a 3.7 percent cost-of-living increase for Social Security beneficiaries next January. But the budget includes a \$23.6 billion cap on Medicaid spending, an estimated \$1.3 billion less than what is projected for 1987 spending under current law, and would increase premiums and deductible payments for Medicare coverage of doctors' bills.

Many other health, welfare and education programs would face cuts.

### FARM

Reagan proposed a 17 percent cut in the Agriculture Department's budget, including substantial reduction in direct farm lending, crop insurance and agricultural extension. He also called for trimming the most expensive item of farm spending — commodity price and income supports — and proposed savings in the food stamp and other nutrition programs. Overall, the budget would provide spending \$44.6 billion next year for

all food and farm programs, down from the estimated \$54.1 billion this year.

### EDUCATION

Reagan proposed cutting federal spending on school aid from \$18 billion to \$15.4 billion next year, including an end to all financial assistance for 1 million college students and a halt to interest-free loans for students still eligible to borrow.

He asked Congress for an immediate \$1 billion cut in the Department of Education's spending authority for fiscal 1986 and further cuts to save a total of \$2.6 billion in fiscal 1987. Most of the actual spending cuts would come primarily from student aid and vocational education programs.

### JOBS

With the unemployment rate dipping below 7 percent for the first time in almost six years, Reagan proposed to cut federal spending for job training by 15 percent next year. He would eliminate the 19-year-old Work Incentive program aimed at helping welfare recipients find jobs, cut the Summer Youth Employment Program by one-third and slash the Job Corps by one-half.

Altogether, the proposed budget cuts would reduce the number of people who get some form of federal job training assistance to slightly fewer than 2 million from the 2.2 million this year.

### FOREIGN AID

Reagan proposed a \$1.2 billion increase in international security assistance to help friendly nations acquire "modern military equipment necessary for their defense," and recommended a 16 percent cut in spending for the United Nations and affiliated agencies.

He also sought a modest \$76 million increase in development and humanitarian assistance to \$4,978,000 in fiscal 1987. Overall, his foreign aid request totals \$15.9 billion, compared with \$14.6 billion this year. Israel and Egypt would remain the biggest aid recipients.

### ECONOMIC FORECAST

Using optimistic assumptions in fashioning his budget plan, the president predicted robust economic growth into the next decade, with unemployment dropping and inflation remaining well under control.

He also said that if Congress approved his budget plan, he could meet the new budget-balancing law's target of reducing the federal deficit to \$144 billion next year and produce a budget surplus of \$1.3 billion in fiscal 1991.