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REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

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Transportation and Infrastructure

(Idaho) Governor signs bike and pedestrian safety proclamation ([KTVB](#)) – It's a big day for bicycle and pedestrian safety in Idaho. Governor Butch Otter proclaimed May 2016 as Idaho Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety and Awareness Month. Along with that, at least one mandatory question is now on all Idaho driver's license exams about bicycle and pedestrian safety. The push came from the Boise Bicycle Project and "The Max" public awareness campaign, and it's an effort we've been reporting on now for a while.

Economic Development

Gov. Scott signs agritourism bill in Lakeland ([The Ledger](#)) – Gov. Rick Scott stopped by Lakeland this week to shine a light on some positive developments for the state's farmers and struggling citrus industry. Scott visited C&W Farms of Central Florida – 5710 Hendricks Road – where he ceremonially signed House Bill 59, which allows farmers to participate in agritourism without interference from local governments. The governor also highlighted more than \$25 million in the Florida First budget for citrus research and programs to help the industry fight citrus greening. "I am proud today to highlight additional funding and legislation, which support Florida's agricultural communities and also ensure the future of the citrus industry," Scott said Monday. "Florida's geography, economy and quality of life are all defined by our natural and agricultural resources."

Gov. Baker pushing for reform of state earned sick time ([WWLP](#)) - Governor Baker wants to reform the state's sick time policy. He said changing the sick time policy for state employees is the fiscally responsible thing to do. The governor wants to save the state \$3.5-million each year by reforming the sick time policy. Currently, a state worker can accrue a maximum 15 sick days each year. When they retire, they can get paid for 20% of their unused time. In 2015 nearly 400 state workers accrued more than 1,000 hours of paid sick time. Gov. Baker's plan is to cap the accrual at 1,000 hours or 6 months of work.

Tennessee Now Has 'Triple-AAA' Credit Rating ([WKMS](#)) - Tennessee now holds the highest bond rating issued by the three major credit rating agencies. Standard and Poor's upgraded Tennessee from AA+ to AAA status after conducting their mid-year review. The state has had a triple-A rating from Moody's Investors Services and Fitch Ratings since 2010. S&P's report cited a strong economy, growing reserves, performance and sound management of long-term liabilities. Governor Bill Haslam said in the release that Tennessee is one of 11 states to receive the triple-AAA rating. He said the Rainy Day Fund as being more than double what it was in 2011, when he assumed office. He added that the state has the lowest debt per capita, no transportation debt and the lowest interest rate in the state's history.

Public Safety

46 States Made Prison-Related Reforms In 2014-15 ([AP](#)) – A new analysis has found that nearly every state made prison-related reforms in 2014 and 2015. The Vera Institute of Justice report released Thursday finds that in those two years, 46 states enacted 201 bills, executive orders and ballot initiatives. The fixes ranged from improving bail systems to supporting recently released former prisoners to curbing the use of solitary confinement. Other states created specialty courts for veterans, the homeless and drug addicts.

Education

Governor says Florida higher ed efforts 'about building a workforce' ([The Tampa Bay Business Journal](#)) – Gov. Rick Scott on Thursday wrapped up a two-day higher education conference in Orlando with a list of goals that included making colleges and universities more affordable and more responsive to the needs of businesses. The second day of the "Degrees to Jobs Summit" included sessions about trying to make Florida first in jobs for university and college graduates, along with discussions about keeping students in the state after they graduate.

Gov. Deal Creates Teacher Group To Address Education Reforms ([WABE](#)) - Gov. Nathan Deal has put together a group of 90 teachers across the state to weigh in on recommendations on how to reform the state's education system as part of an advisory committee. Deal has said he'll include funding to implement final recommendations in next year's budget. "Last year, I charged the Education Reform Commission with studying the state's education system and making recommendations on how it can more effectively prepare our students for postsecondary programs and the workforce," Deal said in a statement. "The responsibility of the commission was to think beyond the confines of the current system, look into the future and recommend changes that will make that level of educational preparation possible in Georgia. They fulfilled that responsibility and I'm grateful for their hard work and diligent efforts. Now I would like to hear from those on the front lines," he continued.

Governor Branstad signs education bill ([KWWL](#)) - Governor Branstad signed a new bill this morning at Hawkeye Community College. The Future Ready Iowa Initiative's main goal is to have 70% of Iowa's work force educated or trained beyond high school by the year 2025. Community colleges and high schools are working together to meet this goal. Governor Branstad says it is going to give Iowa young people great opportunities to learn about the careers in Iowa. The governor also says this bill passed unanimously and both teachers and business owners are very excited. The governor wants students to be prepared to enter the workforce after graduating.

First lady Dalrymple helps jump-start early-age reading ([The Bowman Extra](#)) - An initiative that provides new, free books to children in an effort to get them started reading at an early age brought first lady Betsy Dalrymple to southwest North Dakota this week. Over 40 million books have been given to children across the country and around the globe since her initial launch more than two decades ago. The books go directly to the children at their home each month. "What better way to get kids to love books," Dalrymple said. "It's the gift that keeps on giving." Research from control groups in Tennessee, Georgia and Michigan have released findings that children involved with Imagination Library become better readers and more prepared for schooling.

Healthcare

First drug-resistant 'superbug' confirmed in US ([The Hill](#)) - Antibiotic-resistant bacteria has been discovered for the first time in the U.S., which health officials say could mean the end of the antibiotic era. The new strain was confirmed by Department of Defense researchers in an alarming study published Thursday. The researchers called it "the emergence of a truly pan-drug resistant bacteria." The discovery is likely to spark new fears nationwide about the ability to fight normally routine infections without antibiotics. Some experts have said antibiotic resistance poses as big of a risk as terrorism. The bacteria was found in the urine sample of a 49-year-old woman in Pennsylvania.