

## WASHINGTON ROUNDUP

## Talks held, but no resolution yet

■ A GOP plan would raise the \$16.7 trillion debt limit while leaving the shutdown in place.

By DAVID ESPO  
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — The nation's economy on the line, President Barack Obama and congressional Republicans groped inconclusively Thursday for a compromise to avert an unprecedented U.S. default as early as next week and end the 10-day-old partial government shutdown.

"We expect further conversations tonight," House Majority Leader Eric Cantor said cryptically at nightfall, after he, Speaker John Boehner and a delegation of other Republicans met for more than an hour with Obama at the White House.

The White House issued a statement describing the session as a good one, but adding, "no specific determination was made."

Yet it seemed the endgame was at hand in the crises that have bedeviled the divided government for weeks, rattled markets in the U.S. and overseas and locked 350,000 furloughed

federal workers out of their jobs. Both sides expressed fresh hopes for a resolution soon.

The up-and-down day also featured a dour warning from Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, who told lawmakers that the prospect of default had already caused interest rates to rise — and that worse lay ahead.

Appearing before the Senate Finance Committee, Lew said the Treasury must pay Social Security and veterans benefits as well as salaries to active duty military troops during the second half of this month. He said failure to raise the \$16.7 trillion debt limit by Oct. 17 "could put timely payment of all of these at risk."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid advanced legislation to simply raise the debt limit and stave off the threat of an unprecedented federal financial default — a measure that Republicans are likely to block unless he agrees to change it.

Across the Capitol, Boehner left open the possibility of launching a rival measure in the House today.

As he described it for his rank



Obama



Boehner

and file in a closed-door morning session in the Capitol, it would leave the shutdown in place while raising the \$16.7 trillion debt limit and setting up negotiations between the GOP and the president over spending cuts and other issues.

At the White House, spokesman Jay Carney told reporters the president would "likely sign" a short-term extension in the debt ceiling, and did not rule out his doing so even if it left the shutdown intact.

Reid wasn't nearly as amenable. "Not going to happen," he said brusquely.

By the time House Republicans had returned from the White House hours later, Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky., said part of their hope was to "quickly settle" on legislation to permit the government to reopen.

Rogers, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, told reporters it was clear Obama would "like to have the shutdown stopped ... and we're trying to find out what he would insist upon in the (legislation) and what we would insist upon."

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### Notice of Request for Public Comment on Proposed Plans to Improve Water Quality in Pahsimeroi River Subbasin

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is seeking public comment on proposed plans to improve water quality in various water bodies in the Pahsimeroi River subbasin in east-central Idaho.

Certain segments of the Pahsimeroi River, East Fork Pahsimeroi River, North Fork Lawson Creek, and Short Creek have been identified as impaired by excess sediment and/or elevated temperature. Excess sediment in surface waters can alter flow patterns and negatively impact aquatic habitat and coldwater aquatic life. Temperature is also a key factor in the health of fish and other coldwater organisms.

The *Pahsimeroi River Subbasin Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Load 2013 Addendum and Five-Year Review* proposes to establish Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to control sediment and lower water temperature in the water bodies. The recommended actions seek to bring the water bodies into compliance with state water quality standards and restore them to conditions supporting their beneficial uses, which include aquatic life support, primary and secondary contact recreation, water supply, wildlife habitats, and aesthetics.

The document is available for review at DEQ's Idaho Falls Regional Office and on DEQ's website at [www.deq.idaho.gov/public-comment-opportunities](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/public-comment-opportunities).

Submit written comments by 5 p.m. MST, Tuesday, November 12, 2013, on DEQ's website or by mail or email to:

**Curtis Cooper**  
DEQ Idaho Falls Regional Office  
900 N. Skyline Drive, Suite B  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
[curtis.cooper@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:curtis.cooper@deq.idaho.gov)

**Tourists point out landmarks visible from the closed gate to Zion National Park on Wednesday near Springdale, Utah.**

Trent Nelson  
Associated Press



## States may pay to open nat'l parks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under pressure from governors, the Obama administration said Thursday it will allow some shuttered national parks to reopen — as long as states use their own money to pay for park operations.

Governors in at least four states — Utah, Arizona, South Dakota and Colorado — have asked for authority to reopen national parks within their borders because of the economic impacts caused by the park closures. All 401 national park units — including such icons as the Grand Canyon and Yosemite and Zion national parks — have been closed since Oct. 1 because of the partial government shutdown. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees have been furloughed, and lawmakers from both parties have complained that park closures have wreaked havoc on nearby communities that depend on tourism.

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said the government will consider offers to

## Wyoming won't use state funds to open Yellowstone

By BROOKS JOHNSON  
[bjohnson@postregister.com](mailto:bjohnson@postregister.com)

Although the shuttered federal government now is allowing states to fund National Parks, don't pack your bags for Yellowstone just yet.

"Wyoming cannot bail out the federal government and we cannot spend state money to do the work of the federal government," said Renny MacKay, a spokesman for Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead.

In a statement released Thursday, the U.S. Department of the Interior said it was willing to work with governors to direct state

funds toward fully funding National Park Service personnel. But that doesn't mean all governors are willing to work with the federal government.

"While the Department of Interior's position may have changed, Wyoming's position has not," MacKay said.

Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks likely remain closed until a budget passes Congress.

In early spring, Yellowstone's nearly delayed opening was aided by communities and businesses. And MacKay said that option is not off the table.

use state money to resume park operations, but will not surrender control of national parks or monuments to the states. Jewell called on Congress to act swiftly to end the government shutdown so all parks can reopen.

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert said his state would accept the federal offer to reopen Utah's five national parks.

Utah would have to use its own money to staff the parks, and it will cost \$50,000 a day to operate just one of them, Zion National Park.

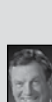
## Speak out



**Sen. James Risch**  
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**Sen. Michael Crapo**  
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**Rep. Michael Simpson**  
410 Memorial Drive,  
Suite 203, Idaho Falls, ID  
83402; (208) 523-6701;  
[www.simpson.house.gov](http://www.simpson.house.gov)

## Report hits Obama on leak prosecution

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's aggressive prosecution of leaks and efforts to control information are having a chilling effect on journalists and government whistle-blowers, according to a report released Thursday on U.S. press freedoms under the Obama administration.

The Committee to Protect Journalists conducted its first examination of U.S. press freedoms amid the Obama administration's unprecedented number of prosecutions of government sources and seizures of journalists' records. Usually the group focuses on advocating for press freedoms abroad.

Leonard Downie Jr., a former executive editor of The Washington Post, wrote the 30-page analysis entitled "The Obama Administration and the Press." The report notes President Barack Obama came into office pledging an open, transparent government, "but he has fallen short of his promise."

## Obama signs bill to pay death benefits

WASHINGTON (AP) — Families of fallen troops will be assured of receiving death benefits under legislation President Barack Obama signed Thursday amid a national firestorm after the Pentagon suspended the roughly \$100,000 payments during the partial government shutdown.

Obama signed the bill into law after it won final passage in the Senate earlier in the day.

But his chief spokesman, Jay Carney, had said the measure was unnecessary because a military charity had stepped in to continue the payments.

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**Talking points:**  
Attorney General Wasden will discuss, among other topics, legal issues relating to:

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