

Angie Oxley  
Behrens  
won't forget  
her time at  
Nebraska,  
nor will  
leave her job  
at Creighton.  
Sports



Chefs bring  
joy to Omaha  
area homeless  
people, one  
holiday meal  
at a time.  
Midlands,  
Page A3

# Omaha World-Herald



**Bob Stubbe, the city's Public Works director, gives an update Wednesday on the streetcar construction taking place in Omaha. A big streetcar-related project at Turner Boulevard and Farnam Street will begin after the first of the year and close that intersection for about four months, he said. Omaha Mayor John Ewing, who is next to Stubbe, also spoke at the briefing.**

MATTHEW MUELLER PHOTOS, THE WORLD-HERALD

## Construction on Omaha's streetcar nears milestone

Work will shift to  
track-laying portion  
of project next year

**JULIE ANDERSON**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

While there is plenty more construction to come to replace aging infrastructure and lay rails for Omaha's streetcar, Mayor John Ewing said Wednesday that traversing the corridor will get easier once work shifts to the track-laying portion of the project next year.

Ewing provided an update on streetcar construction at a media conference ahead of an open house Thursday at the Durham Museum. Members of the public will be able

Please see **STREETCAR**, Page A2



**Omahans can pick up "passports" and collect stickers at participating businesses in the streetcar corridor for a chance to win prizes. The program, announced by Mayor John Ewing at the press conference Wednesday, is intended to support local businesses along the streetcar route.**

## Friend says shooter 'never showed signs'

South Omahan was in disbelief when co-worker was ID'd as man who shot 4 officers

**GRACE LEWIS**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

A South Omaha man said he was in disbelief when police identified his childhood friend and co-worker as the man who shot a gro-



**Melgar-Ayala**

cery shopper before injuring four police officers in a South Omaha gas station shootout on Dec. 3.

Marc Fuentes, 28, said he last worked with Juan Melgar-Ayala on a roofing job two weeks before the QuikTrip shooting.

"He never showed signs,"

Fuentes said. "So it was kind of crazy for me to hear that."

Police said family members reported that Melgar-Ayala suffered from mental health-related issues. Fuentes said, as a co-worker, Melgar-Ayala didn't give any signs he was unwell, but he also didn't know if he had a support system.

"I wish he would have reached out to me," Fuentes said.

Fuentes said when another

former classmate told him the shooter was Melgar-Ayala, he didn't believe it at first. He said he'd always known Melgar-Ayala as just "Juan Melgar," and didn't know he had a second last name. But when he saw the body camera footage of the shootout released to local and national media, Fuentes said he recognized his friend's blue Nike Air Force shoes.

Please see **SHOOTOUT**, Page A2

## OPS saw no reason to question state aid

Some state ed board members say district could have caught \$30M error

**LUNA STEPHENS**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

Omaha Public Schools officials say they had no reason to question a \$30 million increase in state aid that the Nebraska Department of Education now says was calculated incorrectly.

At a State Board of Education meeting Friday, Nebraska Education Commissioner Brian Maher offered further details about the origin of an error in state aid calculations that will result in \$30.5 million being subtracted from funding for OPS for the 2026-27 school year.

Maher emphasized the department's responsibility for the error even as some state board members argued OPS could have caught the mistake.

OPS officials have stated the district expects a \$61 million budget shortfall next school year due to the funding subtraction and a decrease in funding moving forward.

Part of the formula for determining state aid for school districts under Nebraska's Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act involves poverty allowances.

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, the Nebraska Department of Education began incorrectly calculating those allowances in relation to the Community Eligibility Provision, Maher said during Friday's meeting.

Please see **STATE AID**, Page A2

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### Climate change

EPA eliminates mention of fossil fuels in website on global warming's causes. **Page A5**

### Weather

**High:** 39  
Cloudy; breezy in p.m.  
**Low:** 26  
**Details:** A10

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