

## Top 10 Nebraska News Stories, 2015<sup>50</sup>

1. State lawmakers abolished the death penalty in Nebraska over the objections of Gov. Pete Ricketts. The vote galvanized death penalty supporters who launched a successful ballot drive to place the issue on the 2016 general election ballot.

2. President Barack Obama rejected a presidential permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, a project that would have crossed Nebraska on its way to Gulf Coast refineries.

3. A federal judge struck down Nebraska's ban on same sex marriage and civil unions as unconstitutional in March, prompting the state to appeal. The ban ultimately was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that same-sex couples have the right to marry nationwide.

4. A riot at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution left two inmates dead and four others injured and caused widespread damage to the facility.

5. Omaha police officer Kerrie Orozco was shot and killed in the line of duty.

6. Nebraska went 5-7 in Mike Riley's first regular season as head football coach, the Cornhusker's first losing season since Bill Callahan's 2007 team had the same record.

7. ConAgra Foods announced plans to move its headquarters to Chicago from Omaha, eliminating 1,500 jobs.

8. State regulators approved a disposal well that will allow a Colorado energy company to discard oil and natural gas wastewater underground in northwest Nebraska. The decision prompted state lawmakers to re-examine the state's oil and natural gas regulation.

9. Nebraska motorists will pay higher taxes at the gas pump to cover road and bridge repairs under a law passed over Gov. Pete Ricketts' objections.

10. The bird flu swept through Midwest farms in the spring, killing approximately 48 million birds that either died from the virus or were euthanized to prevent its spread.

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<sup>50</sup>Source: Associated Press; surveys of Nebraska newspaper editors and broadcast news directors.

## Top 10 Nebraska News Stories, 2016

1. Nebraska voters reinstated the death penalty by overturning the Legislature's 2015 decision to abolish capital punishment in the state.
2. University football player Sam Foltz, 2015 All-Big Ten punter and active community volunteer, was killed in a Wisconsin car accident in July.
3. Cabela's announced its sale to rival outdoor gear seller Bass Pro for \$4.5 billion. It remains unclear how many jobs may be lost in Cabela's hometown of Sidney, where the company employs approximately 2,000 people.
4. The 2-year-old son of an Omaha couple was dragged by an alligator from a Walt Disney World resort beach in Florida and killed.
5. The state's prison system continued to struggle with staffing shortages and a persistent lack of mental health and other treatment services for inmates.
6. Six people wrongfully convicted in the 1985 rape and killing of a southeast Nebraska woman were awarded \$28.1 million by a federal jury in July. The county has appealed the judgement.
7. State Sen. Bill Kintner paid a \$1,000 fine but refused calls to resign after admitting to using a state computer to engage in cybersex with a woman who later attempted to blackmail him.
8. Five incumbent state senators who faced challengers lost their seats in the November election, and one appointed lawmaker was defeated in the May primary.
9. The Nebraska Tourism Commission fired its executive director in the wake of a state audit that found questionable spending and a lack of oversight within the agency.
10. Gov. Pete Ricketts ordered agencies to restrict spending as state revenue fell dramatically short of expectations.