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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda
April 21, 2020 – 7:00pm
Groton Community Center

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Open Soda Bids
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. March Finance Report
6. Ordinance 734 Amending 4-4-1 Removing Fowl Restrictions
7. Remote Council Meetings
8. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
9. Adjournment

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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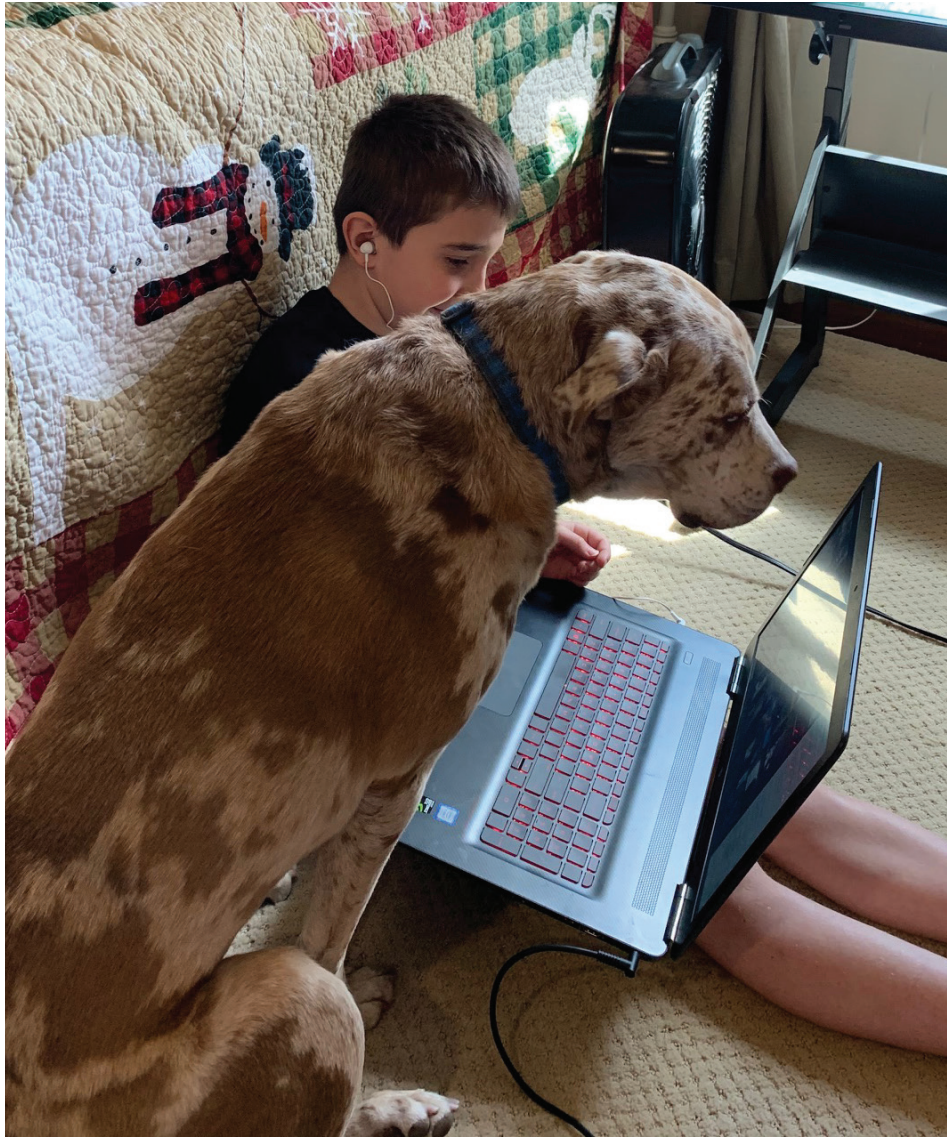
Sirens will sound on Wednesday

This Wednesday April 22 at 10:30 AM Brown County will sound/ test the outdoor warning sirens as part of severe weather awareness week. Siren all across Brown County will be activated for this test. This is a change from the previous news release.



Curbside Meals

BJ Clocksene, Groton Area's head cook, hands out the food in a drive-by fashion at the elementary school. He has the van loaded with the bags and they are distributed and put in your vehicle.



Can I help?

Jack, the family dog, looks at the computer screen as if wondering if you could help Kason with his home work. Students are working from home and many of the classes are done through Zoom. Kason is the grandson of Bruce and Karyn Babcock, Groton.

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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

I want to say something up front tonight because these updates are being shared more widely than I had anticipated when I made that first post just to explain a few things for a few friends. At that time, I was clear about my background, but since not everyone here has read every single update from the beginning, I thought I'd mention it again for newcomers. So here is what I am not: I am not a physician; the "Dr." you might see some folks use in front of my name is the academic kind, not the medical kind. I am also not an expert on coronaviruses. I'm just a former microbiologist who has a lot of practice translating science for folks who aren't scientists, doing my best to get the facts right and to explain them in an accessible way.

And now we have that out of the way, there were a few hitches in our steady downward progress, but at the moment they're only hitches. This is a day-by-day thing, so we'll see how tomorrow looks. I have no reason to be too worried yet.

We now have 780,330 reported cases in the US. While the raw number increase crept upward a bit today, the percentage increase declined for the fourth consecutive day. Leading states are as follows: NY – 247,543, NJ – 88,806, MA – 39,643, PA – 34,005, CA – 33,854, MI – 31,927, IL – 31,508, FL - 27,060, LA – 24,523, TX – 19,927. NY and NJ are still at 43% of cases, a percentage that has been slipping for a while now; they were at one time right about half of cases. NY continues a sixth consecutive day of decline in the rates of increase, and NJ resumed its own decline as well after edging a bit higher yesterday. The top 10 states have 74% of cases, also a slip from a high of 78%. This tells us that, while at least some of these states are making progress toward control, other states are showing up down the line with larger numbers. The overall numbers are increasing at a slower rate, but that is largely driven by NY and NJ because they represent such a large number of cases to begin with. There are 7 more states with over 10,000 cases, 7 more over 5000, 18 + DC and PR over 1000, 5 + GU over 500, 3 over 100, and just VI and MP under 100 cases.

There have been some large shifts in clusters of cases as prisons are showing the vulnerability of inmates and the inadequacy of efforts to protect them. The country's largest cluster is still the Marion Correctional Institution in Marion, OH, but the number of cases has grown by 68% to 1937. Smithfield Foods in Sioux Falls, SD, has no new associated cases reported today and holds at 733. The Cook County Jail is up to 673, followed closely by the USS Theodore Roosevelt, now on Guam, with 672. Then come the Pickaway Correctional Institution in Scioto Township, OH, the Neuse Correctional Institution in Goldsboro, NC, and the Parnall Correctional Facility in Jackson, MI. There are more such facilities on the cluster list. I think it's easy not to care about people in prisons because, after all, they've done bad things or they wouldn't be in there, right? But they are people. Human beings. And the way we treat them says more about us than it does about them. This is a concern.

Thus far, 37,782 people have died from this disease in the US. NY has lost 14,347. I had thought this number reflected the deaths added into the official totals in an adjustment made last week and meant to recognize deaths presumed to be from Covid-19, but not confirmed; however today my source indicates this does not include some 4500 presumed to have died from Covid-19. I am trying to sort out this discrepancy, but wanted to let you know it exists. Top states are as follows: NY – 14,347, NJ – 4377, MI – 2466, MA – 1809, PA – 1366, IL – 1359, CT – 1331, LA – 1328, and CA – 1223. There are 7 more states over 500, 16 more ++ DC over 100, 4 more over 50, 11 more + PR over 10, and 3 states + GU, VI, and MP under 10.

An article in Science, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has pulled together a group of articles, many in preprint (which means they have not yet been vetted by a panel of scientists), which seek to lay out just how SARS-CoV-2 does its damage in the human body. There's lots to consider here. The article quotes Harlan Krumholz, a cardiologist at Yale University and Yale-New Haven Hospital, thus: "[The disease] can attack almost anything in the body with devastating consequences. Its ferocity is breathtaking and humbling." It also acknowledges that the understanding of how the virus does its damage is still evolving. Almost 1000 articles per week are being published, at least in preprints. In the middle of this pandemic, there isn't a lot of time for taking the broad perspec-

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tive or to do controlled studies, so we're having to rely on this early and preliminary work. Here is some of what is showing up in fairly brief summary. I am focusing here on the cases which become severe, so this does not necessarily describe what's going on inside someone with no symptoms or only minor ones.

Something to note is that all of the organs mentioned below have cells equipped with ACE-2 receptors. You may recall from our earlier discussions that ACE-2 is the substance on the surface of cells that this virus uses to bind to and to enter the cell. This means, theoretically at least, the virus may be directly attacking and damaging any cells that display these receptors.

In the lungs, there is significant damage to the gas exchange apparatus deep in the lungs, little balloon-like structures called alveoli. These guys have super-thin walls (just a membrane really) between the air space and your blood vessels, which facilitates the exchange of oxygen (going into blood vessels from the air spaces) with carbon dioxide, a metabolic waste (going into the air spaces from the blood). That right there is the whole purpose for even having lungs, so if they can't do this, then you're in a lot of trouble. You might develop pneumonia, which is basically when fluid fills some of these little balloons, preventing gas exchange down there. If the lungs deteriorate, you can develop those serious problems we discussed a while back, acute lung injury (ALI) and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). You do not want either of these things. We are not 100% clear how much of the lung damage is directly caused by viral action and how much by cytokine storm (something else we've talked about), but lung injury is common in serious cases.

There appears to be heart damage in about 20% of hospitalized patients; some 44% develop arrhythmias—where the coordinated wringing-out action your heart uses to pump blood along gets out of whack (a precise scientific term). We also see abnormal blood clotting, and pieces of these clots can break away and float along in your blood until they reach a vessel too small to let them pass, at which point they clog the thing, shutting off blood flow to whatever tissue that vessel was heading for. This can cause serious, even fatal problems like pulmonary embolism and stroke, as well as more localized problems like tissue death. Additionally, some people experience blood vessel constriction, which means their vessels, being abnormally narrow, can't carry as much blood as needed. This can lead to decreased oxygen and nutrient supply to tissues, ending up with swelling, pain, and the death of inadequately supplied tissues. We know some folks are more likely to have serious problems, those with diabetes, obesity, older age, and high blood pressure; and a reason this is so might be that these people already have damaged blood vessels, making them more vulnerable to further damage. We don't yet know whether the vascular and heart damage are due to direct viral attack on the linings of blood vessels and the heart, to damage done by a deficient oxygen supply because of the other effects we've already mentioned, or due to cytokine storms. Maybe it's some combination of these things.

We've seen kidney damage; a good quarter of seriously ill Covid-19 patients are requiring dialysis to support kidney function, and over half are showing lab results which indicate some degree of kidney damage. Again, this may be an effect of direct viral action, but it could also be caused by other things: injury from mechanical ventilation, from drugs used to treat the infection, or from cytokines. We do know that those with chronic kidney disease are at higher risk for serious problems.

We see signs of brain and central nervous system damage in a small percentage of those with serious disease. There have been encephalitis (inflammation of brain tissue), seizures, and something called a sympathetic storm where certain nervous system functions become overactive, resulting in altered levels of consciousness; seriously increased blood pressure, heart rate, sweating, breathing rate, and body temperature; and abnormal stiffening and spasm of muscles. We have known for a while that a presenting symptom of Covid-19 is loss of the sense of smell or taste, which sort of indicates something neurologic is going on too. We know this virus likely can make its way into neurons, and it's been found in tiny amounts in cerebrospinal fluid (the watery liquid that surrounds and acts as shock absorber for your brain and spinal cord); but we do not have evidence whether it attacks these tissues or what we're seeing there is just more effects of a cytokine storm.

And we also have known for a while that some people with Covid-19 present with diarrhea and abdominal pain or vomiting, so there are some gastrointestinal things going on as well for some patients. We've seen

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fragments of viral RNA in stool, but we're not sure what it means; it could be incidental, or it might be important. There is, however, no evidence at all of transmission via fecal spread, which is one less thing to worry about anyhow. There have also been inflammation of the conjunctiva, the membranes covering the eyeball and lining the eyelids, and evidence of liver damage, although we're relatively sure that's probably not due to direct viral attack, but more likely from the drugs used in treatment or from cytokines.

Every additional piece of information that is gathered about how this virus works and what it does in the body is helpful in designing treatments to deal with these various effects. So while this information is not particularly useful for interrupting transmission or preventing disease, it can, when put together with what's being learned about treating damage and keeping patients alive, contribute to better outcomes for those who are sick.

So here we are, still working on staying safe and on keeping our fellow citizens safe too. A lot of people are depending on you for their safety these days, not just your family and friends, but people you'll never meet at all. You have so much power to do so much good every day; this difficult time offers you great opportunities to matter in the world, to be a big deal somewhere for someone. So while you're continuing to do that duty to change the trajectory of this pandemic, don't forget to look for little-deal ways you can change a life too. There are folks feeling pretty desperate or alone or bored or cooped up or sad. Find one of them, and change things just a little for them. You will like the way it makes you feel.

I hope you're hanging in there, being safe, and staying well so we can talk again tomorrow. Have a good night.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Apr. 8	Apr. 9	Apr. 10	Apr. 11	Apr. 12	Apr. 13	Apr. 14	Apr. 15	Apr. 16	Apr. 17
Minnesota	1,154	1,242	1,336	1,427	1,621	1,650	1,695	1,809	1,912	2,071
Nebraska	523	577	648	704	814	871	901	952	1,066	1,138
Montana	332	354	377	---	387	394	399	404	415	422
Colorado	5,655	6,202	6,510	6,893	7,303	7,691	7,941	8,280	8,675	
Wyoming	230	239	253	261	270	275	282	288	296	
North Dakota	251	269	278	293	308	331	341	365	393	439
South Dakota	393	447	536	626	730	868	988	1,168	1,311	1,411
United States	431,838	466,396	501,701	530,006	557,590	582,619	609,685	639,664	671,425	706,779
US Deaths	14,768	16,703	18,781	20,608	22,109	23,529	26,059	30,985	33,286	37,079

Minnesota	+85	+88	+94	+91	+194	+29	+45	+114	+103	+159
Nebraska	+45	+54	+71	+56	+110	+57	+30	+51	+114	+72
Montana	+13	+22	+23	---	+10	+7	+5	+5	+11	+7
Colorado	+226	+547	+308	+383	+410	+388	+250	+339	+395	
Wyoming	+9	+9	+14	+8	+9	+5	+7	+6	+8	
North Dakota	+14	+18	+9	+15	+15	+23	+10	+24	+28	+46
South Dakota	+73	+54	+89	+90	+104	+138	+120	+180	+143	+100
United States	+31,909	+34,558	+35,305	+28,305	+27,584	+25,029	+27,066	+29,979	+31,761	+35,354
US Deaths	+1,857	+1,935	+2,078	1,827	+1,501	+1,420	+2,530	+4,926	+2,301	+3,793

	Apr. 18	Apr. 19	Apr. 20
Minnesota	2,213	2,356	2,470
Nebraska	1,287	1,474	1,648
Montana	426	433	433
Colorado	9,433	9,730	10,106
Wyoming	309	313	317
North Dakota	528	585	627
South Dakota	1542	1635	1685
United States	735,287	758,720	786,638
US Deaths	39,090	40,666	42,295

Minnesota	+142	+143	+114
Nebraska	+149	+187	+174
Montana	+4	+7	0
Colorado	+379	+297	+376
Wyoming	+7	+4	+4
North Dakota	+89	+57	+42
South Dakota	+131	+93	+50
United States	+28,508	+23,433	+27,918
US Deaths	+2,011	+1,576	+1,629

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April 20th COVID-19 UPDATE

South Dakota:

Positive: +50 (1685 total) - 43 less than yesterday

Negative: +214 (10,641 total)

Hospitalized: +13 (87 total)

Deaths: No Change (7 total)

Recovered: +63 (709 total)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett 10, Brule +1 (36), Buffalo 7, Butte 13, Campbell 7, Custer 13, Day +1 (43), Dewey +1 (20), Douglas 21, Edmunds 18, Grant 30, Gregory 28, Haakon 10, Hand 18, Hanson 18, Harding 1, Jackson 3, Jones 4, Kingsbury +2 (55), McPherson 11, Mellette +1 (11), Perkins 0, Potter 27, Stanley 29, Tripp 49, Ziebach 3, unassigned +27 (1031).

Lincoln: +5 positive, +1 recovered (48 of 95 recovered)

Minnehaha: 43 positive, 59 recovered (514 of 1405 recovered)

Smithfield Update: +23 positive (748 total) plus an additional 143 with close contact.

Pennington: +1 positive, +1 recovered (7 of 11 recovered)

Sanborn: +1 recovered (2 of 3 recovered)

Union: +1 positive (7 total)

Walworth: +1 recovered (4 of 5 recovered)

The N.D. DoH & private labs are reporting 1,117 completed tests today for COVID-19, with 42 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 627. NDDoH reports 3 new deaths. (13 total deaths in North Dakota)

State & private labs have reported 14,747 total tests & 14,120 negatives.

189 ND patients are recovered.

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Total Positive Cases*	1685
Total Negative Cases*	10641
Recovered	709
Ever Hospitalized**	87
Deaths***	7

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	97	0
20-29 years	317	0
30-39 years	390	0
40-49 years	346	0
50-59 years	307	2
60-69 years	159	2
70-79 years	32	1
80+ years	37	2

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	1	1	33
Beadle	21	19	161
Bennett	0	0	10
Bon Homme	4	3	88
Brookings	9	9	271
Brown	20	11	401
Brule	0	0	36
Buffalo	0	0	7
Butte	0	0	13
Campbell	0	0	7
Charles Mix	4	3	62
Clark	1	1	44
Clay	5	4	102
Codington	13	12	372
Corson	1	1	7
Custer	0	0	13
Davison	3	3	246
Day	0	0	43
Deuel	1	1	59
Dewey	0	0	20
Douglas	0	0	21
Edmunds	0	0	18
Fall River	1	1	10
Faulk	1	1	14
Grant	0	0	30
Gregory	0	0	28
Haakon	0	0	10
Hamlin	2	1	49
Hand	0	0	18
Hanson	0	0	18
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	5	4	199
Hutchinson	2	2	69

Hyde	1	1	7
Jackson	0	0	3
Jerauld	4	4	24
Jones	0	0	4
Kingsbury	0	0	55
Lake	3	2	86
Lawrence	9	9	60
Lincoln	95	48	1006
Lyman	2	2	17
Marshall	1	1	33
McCook	3	2	77
McPherson	0	0	11
Meade	1	1	54
Mellette	0	0	11
Miner	1	0	16
Minnehaha	1405	514	4317
Moody	1	0	69
Oglala Lakota	1	1	21
Pennington	11	7	332
Perkins	0	0	0
Potter	0	0	27
Roberts	4	4	75
Sanborn	3	2	31
Spink	3	2	78
Stanley	0	0	29
Sully	1	1	12
Todd	1	1	32
Tripp	0	0	49
Turner	6	3	110
Union	7	3	99
Walworth	5	4	24
Yankton	23	20	358
Ziebach	0	0	3
Unassigned	0	0	1031

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	770	2
Male	915	5

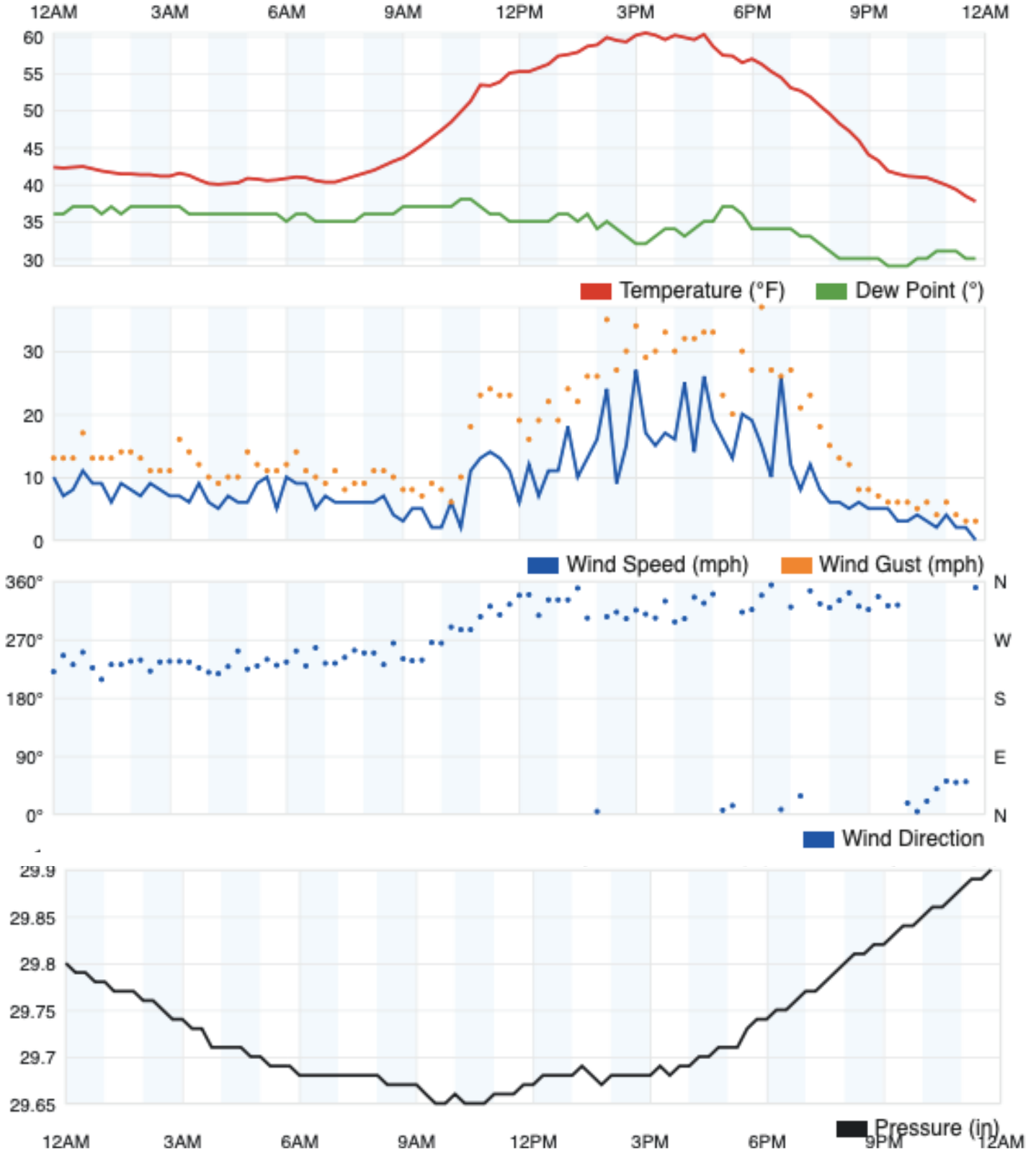
COVID-19 DEATHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	2
McCook	1
Minnehaha	3
Pennington	1

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Wednesday

Wednesday
Night

Thursday



Becoming
Sunny

Mostly Clear

Sunny

Partly Cloudy

Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers

High: 70 °F

Low: 44 °F

High: 72 °F

Low: 44 °F

High: 66 °F

Mild, Dry 'Till Thu

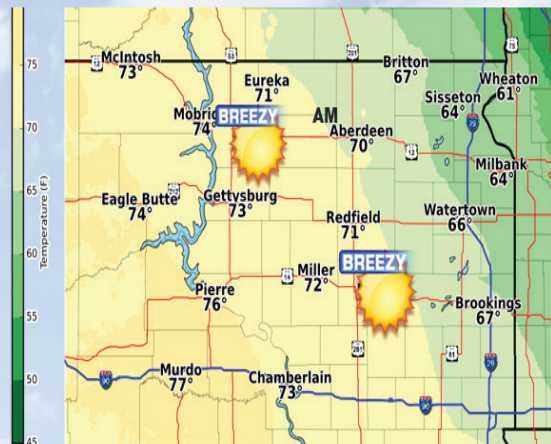
High temps Tue and Wed will be a good 5 to 15 degrees above average.

Closer to normal highs are expected for the rest of the week.

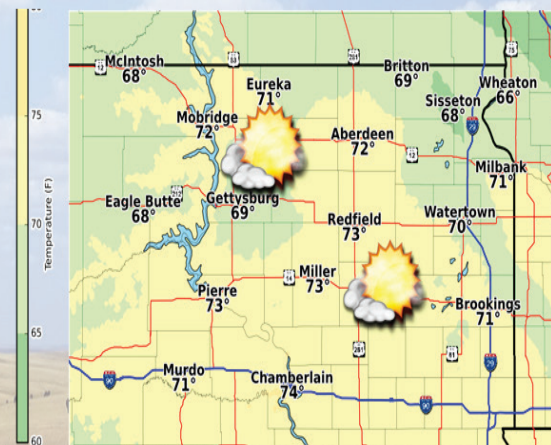
Best chance for rain is on Thursday, with a 30-50% chance. Slight chances for rain with a possible thunderstorm for Friday and Saturday afternoons as well.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

TUESDAY HIGHS



WEDNESDAY HIGHS



Winds will die down this evening, and temperatures will drop into the 30s and upper 20s tonight. Then, mild and dry weather continues through mid-week until low pressure provides the opportunity for rain showers on Thursday.

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Today in Weather History

April 21, 2007: Heavy rains of 2 to 2.50 inches caused flash flooding in and around Watertown. Many streets were flooded in town, along with several roads outside of town. A warm front extending across the region was the focus for heavy rain, along with severe weather, during the evening across far north-east South Dakota. Hail up to the size of quarters, along with heavy rains of over 2 inches, caused some flooding mainly in Codington and Hamlin counties.

1885: A tornado struck the town of Denison, Texas in 1883 that destroyed a church. The congregation rebuilt the church. On this date, a second tornado destroyed the newly rebuilt church.

1958 - Portions of Montana were in the midst of a spring snowburst. Snowfall amounts ranged up to 55 inches at Red Lodge, 61 inches at Nye Mine, and 72 inches at Mystic Lake. (David Ludlum)

1967 - Severe thunderstorms spawned 48 tornadoes in the Upper Midwest. Hardest hit was northern Illinois where sixteen tornadoes touched down during the afternoon and evening hours causing fifty million dollars damage. On that Friday afternoon tornadoes struck Belvidere IL, and the Chicago suburb of Oak Lawn, killing 57 persons. (David Ludlum)

1980 - The temperature at International Falls MN hit 90 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed from the Gulf of Mexico to New England and the Great Lakes Region, with twenty-nine cities reporting record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 82 degrees at Caribou ME, 94 degrees at Mobile AL, 95 degrees at Monroe LA, and 93 degrees at New Orleans LA, were records for the month of April. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - After having had just twelve rainouts in the previous twenty-six years at Dodger Stadium, a third day of heavy rain in southern California rained out a double-header at Dodger Stadium which had been scheduled due to rainouts the previous two days. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - The temperature at Las Animas, CO, soared to 100 degrees to establish a state record for April. Twenty-two cities in the central and southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Eight cities equalled or exceeded previous April records. (The Weather Channel) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail in Oklahoma, and also caused some flash flooding in the state. Thunderstorms over the Southern High Plains produced golf ball size hail at Roswell NM and El Paso TX. Easterly winds and temperatures near zero produced wind chill readings as cold as 50 degrees below zero for the spring festival (Piuraagiaqta) outdoor events at Barrow AK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2007 - The South Plains and Panhandle of West Texas were hit by an outbreak of severe thunderstorms. Between the hours of 5 and 6 pm, several thunderstorms developed across the western South Plains. Around 7 pm, a supercell produced a tornado which touched down around Fieldton (southwest of Olton) and then moved just south and east of Olton, doing damage to several structures and equipment. The thunderstorm continued to move northeast across northeast Lamb, northwest Hale, southeast Castro and southwest Swisher Counties, producing a long-lived tornado (along with hail up to the size of tennis balls). By 7:45 pm, the storm approached the town of Tulia in Swisher County. A tornado touchdown was reported in the town, causing major damage. The tornadic thunderstorm continued to move northeast across Swisher County over open country through about 8:30 pm. (NWS Lubbock, TX)

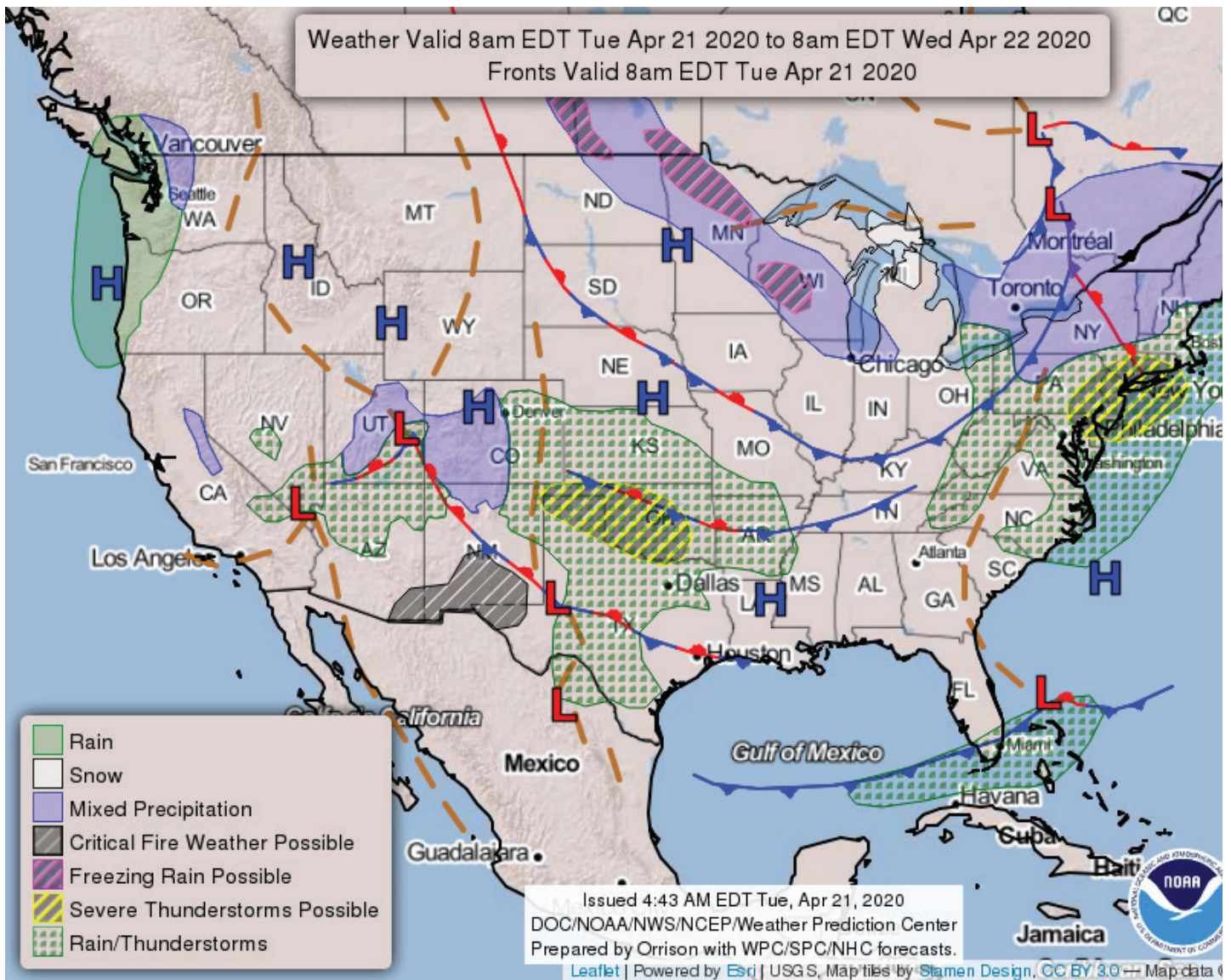
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 61 °F at 3:35 PM
Low Temp: 37 °F at 11:53 PM
Wind: 37 mph at 6:10 PM
Precip:

Record High: 97° in 1980
Record Low: 16° in 1936
Average High: 60°F
Average Low: 34°F
Average Precip in April.: 1.04
Precip to date in April.: 0.94
Average Precip to date: 3.22
Precip Year to Date: 1.29
Sunset Tonight: 8:28 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:35 a.m.



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ALL TOGETHER – NOW – SMILE!

It was her first day at work, and the manager was carefully going over the responsibilities of being his secretary with her. After thoroughly explaining her tasks, he said, "Now I'd like to tell you a few things about myself so you will know what kind of person I am."

He then began telling her about his college career - how he excelled in academics and athletics. He then started to talk about his accomplishments with the company, how he received one promotion after another and was rewarded with raises and bonuses. He spent a great amount of time bragging about himself.

Finally, in her frustration, she asked, "Tell me, sir, have you ever had a group photo taken of yourself?"

Many worry about being properly recognized for their position and status. We want others to know what we can do and how well we can do it - whether they are interested in us or not. We want others to look to us and stand in awe of our accomplishments.

However, Peter warns us to remember that it is God's recognition that matters most. Human praise is one thing but God's approval is really all that counts. In His own time, God will bless our efforts and honor our work. We must also remember that His recognition may not come in this lifetime. But, if we are faithful to Him and give Him the glory, He will surely reward us in heaven. And, that's what matters most!

Prayer: Lord, whatever we do in life is because of Your gifts and grace. Our talents and skills, abilities and strength come to us to give back to You in serving others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 1 Peter 5:6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
 - **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
 - **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
 - **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
 - 06/05/2020 Athletic Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
 - 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/20/2020 Shriner's Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/22/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ladies Invitational
 - 06/26/2020 Groton Businesses Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
 - 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
 - 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
 - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
 - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
 - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
 - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
 - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
 - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
 - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
 - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
-
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
-
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

News from the Associated Press

States work to keep meat plants open despite virus outbreaks

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — Governors in the Midwest are working to keep large meatpacking plants operating despite coronavirus outbreaks that have sickened hundreds of workers and threaten to disrupt the nation's supply of pork and beef.

In Kansas, Gov. Laura Kelly sent personal protective equipment and testing supplies to counties with meat processing plants. Gov. Kristi Noem said she didn't think it would be difficult to fulfill federal requirements to reopen a shuttered facility in South Dakota. And Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds warned of the dire cost of closing plants, even as she acknowledged the certainty of more clusters of infection at the facilities.

JBS USA said Monday it was suspending operations at a large pork processing plant in southwestern Minnesota because of an outbreak of COVID-19 among workers — the latest facility to be closed in the public health crisis.

Minnesota Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said 33 JBS employees and six close relatives had tested positive as of Saturday.

Meat processing workers are particularly susceptible to the virus because they typically stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the line and congregate in crowded locker rooms and cafeterias.

The JBS plant in Worthington employs more than 2,000 people and normally slaughters 20,000 hogs per day.

"We don't make this decision lightly," Bob Krebs, president of Colorado-based JBS USA Pork, said in a statement. "We recognize JBS Worthington is critical to local hog producers, the U.S. food supply and the many businesses that support the facility."

Iowa's governor has also warned of the threat to food supply if authorities clamp down too hard on facilities with outbreaks, and has refused to shutter a sprawling Tyson Foods pork processing facility in Waterloo where dozens of workers are infected.

Reynolds said the state is working with meat companies to test workers and prevent outbreaks from growing too large, even as she acknowledged that more "clusters of positive cases" are certain.

"These are also essential businesses and an essential workforce," she said. "Without them, people's lives and our food supply will be impacted. So we must do our part to keep them open in a safe and responsible way."

Reynolds noted that Iowa produces about one-third of the nation's pork. If hogs can't be processed, farmers will have to euthanize them, the governor warned.

"We're not that far from it and it will be devastating, not only for the food supply but for the cost of food moving forward," she said.

Advocates for workers said Reynolds has little regard for a vulnerable workforce that includes many refugees and immigrants.

"It's sickening," said Democratic state Sen. Bill Dotzler of Waterloo, who has called for a temporary closure and stronger worker protections. Hospitals and medical clinics in his city reported a surge in patients Monday, and many of them were Tyson employees.

A National Beef plant in Tama, Iowa, that had been closed for two weeks resumed production on Monday as scheduled. A day earlier, Reynolds announced that 177 workers out of more than 500 tested were positive for the coronavirus. The Kansas City, Missouri-based company didn't return messages.

Cargill and National Beef have reported infections among employees at plants in southwest Kansas, prompting Gov. Kelly to direct an influx of federal tests and safety equipment to counties in that region. Tyson also has plants there but has not confirmed infections.

Controlling those outbreaks is crucial: Plants in southwest Kansas account for 25 to 30% of beef processing in the U.S.

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"It would be a disaster if we had to shut down, so we're trying to do everything that we can to keep those plants online," Kelly told The Associated Press.

South Dakota's governor said the temporary closure of a Smithfield Foods pork plant that produces about 5% of the U.S. pork supply has already been "devastating" for regional producers.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for safely reopening the Sioux Falls plant will be made public soon, Noem said. Its report will call for improved social distancing, expanded use of face shields and other protective equipment, and better communication between the company and workers.

"There's nothing in this report that I think will be difficult to accomplish," said Noem. She declined to say how soon it might reopen.

Smithfield Foods has said the indefinite closure disrupted its supply chain, forcing the closure of a facility in Martin City, Missouri. Smithfield also shuttered a plant in Cudahy, Wisconsin, after employees tested positive for the virus.

Also in Wisconsin, a surge of infections has been linked to the JBS Packerland plant in Green Bay. Health officials said they didn't have an exact number of infections connected to the plant, but infections spiked by more than 100 in the surrounding county over the weekend. The plant remains open.

In western Michigan, a JBS meat packing plant that was closed over the weekend reopened Monday. Sixty people there have tested positive for the coronavirus, Allegan County health spokeswoman Lindsay Maunz told WOOD-TV.

Associated Press reporters Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis; Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls; and Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, contributed to this story.

South Dakota racetrack plans car races amid pandemic

NORTH SIOUX CITY, S.D. (AP) — The owners of a South Dakota racetrack plan to hold car races Saturday amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Park Jefferson International Speedway tweeted that all 700 tickets to the open-wheel racing event are sold out.

The track plans to limit spectators as well as limiting entries. KELO-AM reports no more than 10 people will be allowed in a team's pit area.

Organizers advise people who may be susceptible to COVID-19 to stay home.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said at her daily briefing Monday that she did not know about the planned races and would check into it.

Noem has not ordered businesses to close or issued a stay-at-home order like most other governors have as a way to stem the spread of the coronavirus. But the Republican governor has stressed following precautions to slow the spread of the disease for "several more weeks."

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

The Huron Daily Plainsman, April 17

Can Noem issue a shelter-in-place?

The social media call has become nearly deafening, so much so that it's bled into her daily press briefings ... Why hasn't Gov. Kristi Noem ordered a shelter-in-place?

From the early points of the COVID-19 virus in the state of South Dakota, Noem has expressed that she doesn't have the direct power to make such an order. Her office put forth a number of temporary bills on veto day, and the two that got rejected by the legislature intended to put more power in the hands of counties and in the hands of the Department of Health, specifically in the case of a Public Health Emergency.

So what is the truth behind the powers the governor has?

To first understand how powers are divided within the state's original constitution, one has to consider

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the era when the constitution was written.

The state placed the lion's share of governing power over local population over local government. The direct section in the original state constitution is Article 9, Section 2, specifically this paragraph:

"A chartered governmental unit may exercise any legislative power or perform any function not denied by its charter, the Constitution or the general laws of the state. The charter may provide for any form of executive, legislative and administrative structure which shall be of superior authority to statute, provided that the legislative body so established be chosen by popular election and that the administrative proceedings be subject to judicial review."

To put that into common language, cities and counties were to create a charter when they were founded. That charter gave them all the powers to govern their own residents, private and business. Local authority was the preferred way to distribute governing power so as to avoid a state government that wielded too much power over the state.

Then what about specifically in a crisis or disaster moment? South Dakota has a codified law for that, specifically, 34-48A-5. That statute lays out the power of the governor in times of disaster or emergency.

The specific area in question that would allow Gov. Noem to act, which perhaps she's not utilized at this time, is section 5. Here's the exact wording of that section:

"May control the ingress and egress in a designated disaster or emergency area, the movement of vehicles upon highways within the area, the movement of persons within the area, and the occupancy of premises within the area"

So what exactly does that mean?

Once a disaster area or emergency area has been declared — President Trump declared South Dakota a disaster area due to COVID-19 on April 5 — the governor can order travel restrictions and restrict the amount of people in a business or direct people not to be in a particular business.

What is missing from that line, and the entire rest of the emergency powers of the governor, is any directive giving power to the governor to order residents in their homes, even if for their own safety. This was what the governor hoped to do by expanding the depth of a public health emergency, which is applicable to just one person or one group of people, not the entire state as presently written into state law.

Expanding the ability of the Department of Health to utilize public health emergency powers would have allowed for stay-at-home directives to potentially come through that department, but the legislature rejected that temporary expansion of powers.

Right now, those calling upon the governor for a shelter-in-place or a stay-at-home order really ought to look to their local municipal or county governments.

Within South Dakota, that's where those orders come from, and for some counties, those ordinances have been in place since March 22.

Only three states and Puerto Rico acted sooner among the United States and its territories.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, April 16

In case you miss it

I miss spring.

Of all the things that have been derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the last month (and it sure seems a lot longer than that), I think the loss of spring bugs me the most. OK, I realize we're only about a month into the season, the tree branches are still bare and I'm still wearing a parka on some days, but really, spring — or, at least, my usual springtime — never arrived this year.

At our newspaper, a lot of what we do and deal with is dictated by the calendar. So much changes with the seasons, and after a while, those changes serve as my best measure of the flow of time.

However, COVID-19 has wiped out almost every marker and signpost that tells me, as a journalist in Yankton, that it's spring. For instance, we should have had a city election last Tuesday, but the pandemic has pushed it to June. Thus, Tuesday was just another day in a dreary blur of faceless days and weeks as we stumble through this unfamiliar, unmarked territory.

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So, yeah, I really miss spring ...

I miss taking photos at school concerts. By now, those programs would be winding down as the school year inched towards its end.

Our sports department certainly misses the track season. Back when I was covering sports, spring felt so liberating because track meant more time outdoors and a set schedule of annual meets to chart a course through the busy season. But this year, there are no track meets, no days in the warming sun and no performances to catch, and there's no Press & Dakotan Leader Board to study. (To be sure, the sports staff also misses the baseball, tennis and golf seasons.)

I'll probably miss shooting photos at the Yankton High School prom's grand march, which was to happen next weekend. It was always basic, repetitive shooting, but at least it was a sign that the end of the school year was within sight. (I wonder if the students and teachers have also lost that same sense of progression. It just feels like the world has been frozen in place since mid-March.)

I miss the crowds, even though I don't miss dealing with the crowds.

I miss shooting photos of plays.

I miss regular photo assignments with actual people. This week, I shot a general set-up photo involving another person for the first time in at least a month, and I really can't describe how pleasant it was to interact — albeit with six-foot distancing — with others again.

I miss the growing tide of press releases we would normally be getting for upcoming spring and summer events. This week's cancellation of Czech Days made it the latest victim of a creeping uncertainty that has devoured the spring and is now encroaching on summer.

I miss having a variety of stories in any given edition of the P&D that aren't somehow all tied to the same underlying theme ...

Of course, we all miss things these days — from church to shopping trips to social gatherings — that we took for granted not too long ago. Even normal, everyday activities have been lost or altered.

For instance, I miss going into a store without feeling like I'm walking into a minefield.

In fact, I miss going into a store and seeing every shelf stocked.

I miss listening to baseball games on the radio.

I miss going into fast-food places to casually grab a bite to eat. Most eateries now limit you to the drive-thru, which isn't the same. One particular place in town makes you work off an automated board, so you don't get to talk to a real person. That adds a lot of pressure.

I miss movie theaters.

I can't say I miss NOT washing my hands, but I do miss not feeling like I have to thoroughly scrub them as if my life depended on it.

I miss the concept of self-isolation being considered a bad thing.

I miss the New York Mets — which is also a sentiment expressed in "Avengers: Endgame," a coincidence that feels somewhat unsettling right now.

I actually miss the waves of bustling traffic on Yankton's streets.

I miss not having dreams about viruses and death tolls, which I get now all the time.

I miss the way things were.

I miss all that and more.

Some day — whenever that day is — this pandemic will subside and the threat will be gone. We'll piece the world back together, learn from it, perhaps grieve over it, and we will definitely be ready to move on from it. And I can guarantee one thing: I will not miss any of this at all.

Black Hills Pioneer, Spearfish, April 18

Test everyone

If you take the \$2.2 trillion that Congress has authorized as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and divide it by the nation's population (330 million Americans), that comes out to roughly \$6,600 per man, woman and child.

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That per-capita figure is likely to grow as Congress considers more relief measures when it returns to work later this month.

All that borrowed money, which will be tacked onto the national debt, is to deal with government-imposed symptoms of the pandemic — layoffs, unemployment claims, industry bailouts, shuttered businesses, etc. — arising from public health orders restricting day-to-day activities to the bare essentials.

It's a self-imposed economic recession that could leave up to a quarter of the nation's workforce unemployed for an extended period. These policy decisions were made as a last resort because the federal government failed — spectacularly — to make aggressive testing its No. 1 priority as soon as epidemiologists realized the virus would infiltrate the United States.

Obviously that didn't happen, leaving us in an open-ended economic crisis.

Common sense has left the building, and we forgot how cool he was.

This virus isn't going away anytime soon. Not until we have a vaccine, which — best case — is a year away. We can't suffer like this for that long. It will wreck the country. We have to change directions ASAP.

We need to ramp up testing now. Spectacularly so.

The consequence of a lack of testing in the U.S. has been that governments have to shut down everything in order to keep everybody away from each other.

"Social distancing" is a logical response, under those circumstances, in order to keep from overwhelming the health care system. Citizens have to do their part by following those rules, and nothing we're saying here is intended to undermine that. In other words, stay home. It's our best shot right now.

But it's a very costly, short-term solution.

Authorities have doled out the tests in a miserly manner because of short supplies. We can't blame local authorities for setting priorities in testing under these circumstances.

Other countries are taking a far more aggressive approach: In Germany, they're testing 500,000 people a week, and they're looking to ramp up to 200,000 per day. England is aiming for 25,000 people a day by the end of April. Sweden and Austria are at 15,000 tests per day.

President Donald Trump announced Thursday that 2 million tests have been administered. But that's only .61% of the U.S. population. Other countries are doing better. Newsweek reports that Italy has administered tests to approximately 1.4% of its population, and South Korea, which flattened its infection curve with widespread testing, has reached .9 percent of its population.

We can do better. Trump must throw the full weight of the federal government at this problem and direct every public, private and university laboratory in the nation to do nothing other than produce test kits to detect both infection and antibodies in every American. Within weeks, we could get almost everyone back to work quickly without endlessly throwing money at the problems the lack of testing has created.

Mass testing could allow us to quarantine people who actually have the virus or who've been in contact with people carrying it.

That would prevent infected people who don't yet show symptoms from giving it to others. This country turned a theoretical technology into reality to end WWII. We can test everyone within 2-4 weeks with a singular focus on doing so.

What would such a testing program cost? We have no idea, but if it can be done for less than \$6,600 per person, it proves how wrong-headed the current response has been.

Some of our leaders think widespread testing is unnecessary. How they think certain parts of the country can be "reopened" without it in the coming weeks is beyond us. The New York Times cited federal projections that lifting shelter-in-place order after 30 days will lead to a summer infection spike. We're on a treadmill we can't get off until at the earliest April 2021 without widespread testing.

Let's put this in terms that most people can relate to.

If we have universal testing, we have football in the fall.

If we don't, we won't.

It's not too late.

Noem: CDC advice for Smithfield won't be hard to implement

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem on Monday said she was hopeful for a quick reopening of the Smithfield pork processing plant where a coronavirus outbreak infected over 700 employees, though she declined to give an exact date.

After reviewing initial findings from a team from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that toured the Sioux Falls facility last week, the Republican governor said, "There's nothing in this report that I think will be difficult to accomplish."

Noem has often stressed keeping businesses at least partially open during the global pandemic, and she underscored the economic pain felt across the agriculture industry in her Monday briefing. Hog producers have been "devastated" by the shutdown of the Smithfield pork processing plant, she said, while announcing an executive order to allow them to exceed limits on how many animals can be kept at their facilities.

The governor said the report on the Smithfield plant from the CDC will be posted "real soon." She said it will call for improved social distancing, expanded use of face shields and other protective equipment, and better communication between the company and workers.

Noem's spokeswoman Maggie Seidel said the Department of Health is waiting for a final sign off from the CDC to release the report.

Coronavirus cases tied to the Smithfield plant account for over half of confirmed cases statewide. In total, 748 employees at the plant and 143 of their close contacts have tested positive.

Health officials reported 50 new confirmed coronavirus cases on Monday, the smallest increase of cases in over a week. All but seven of the new cases were reported in Minnehaha County, where the Smithfield plant is located. The tally of cases statewide rose to 1,685. Seven people have died from COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

State epidemiologist Josh Clayton said the downturn in new cases did not necessarily mean that the spread of infections is slowing. The state would need to see several days of fewer confirmed cases to point to a downturn.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

Noem responded to President Donald Trump's push for state's to reopen their economies by announcing a committee of medical experts that would evaluate how South Dakota can ease back into regular activity.

But the governor said the state still needs the federal government to send more testing supplies, an important tool to mitigating widespread infections. She said the state has received machines that can rapidly produce a single test result, but has yet to get the supplies to actually run the machines.

Pierre man arrested in death of toddler

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Pierre man has been arrested in the death of a toddler this past weekend.

Police Captain Brian Walz says officers were called to Avera St. Mary's last Thursday after the two-year old child arrived at the hospital suffering from what Walz calls suspicious injuries. The toddler was later flown to a Sioux Falls hospital where the child died on Saturday.

KCCR reports the man is being held in the Hughes County Jail on a possible charge of first-degree manslaughter. The victim was not identified.

The South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation is assisting Pierre police with the case.

This story has been corrected to correct 'Department' to 'Division.'

Sanford Health treats first coronavirus patient with plasma

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sanford Health says a critically ill patient has received a transfusion of plasma from a recovered coronavirus patient, the first use of the therapy by the health care provider.

Sanford's treatment is part of a national clinical trial to test the effect of blood plasma in treating COVID-19. The use of plasma is for hospitalized patients with severe cases of coronavirus. The plasma may lessen severity or shorten the length of the illness caused by the virus.

"This is another step forward in our efforts to find effective treatments for this virus," said Dr. Allison Suttle, chief medical officer for Sanford Health. "It's still early, but we are optimistic that the disease-fighting antibodies found in plasma could potentially slow the progression of the disease in our sickest patients."

Because the therapy is still considered experimental, the plasma is being administered under a program led by Mayo Clinic.

Sanford's first patient receiving the therapy is in Fargo, North Dakota. A number of Sanford Health sites are participating in the program.

FBI offers reward for conviction in South Dakota murders

EAGLE BUTTE, S.D. (AP) — The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information that leads to an arrest and conviction in a double murder case on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation.

The agency said Monday 63-year-old Delmas Traversie Jr. and 39-year-old Carmen Charger were killed at a house in Eagle Butte during a snowstorm in March 2019. No cause or manner of the deaths was released.

The FBI is asking anyone who was in or around House 717 from March 13-15 last year to contact the agency at the Minneapolis Field Office.

Eagle Butte is the headquarters of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Man arrested after firing at officers in Brandon

BRANDON, S.D. (AP) — Minnehaha County sheriff's officials say a man has been arrested for shooting at another person and at law enforcement officers responding to the scene.

The Argus Leader reports authorities say the man shot several times at a victim Sunday morning in Brandon and then fired at officers. There was no word that anyone was injured.

The 74-year-old man was arrested on possible charges of aggravated assault and aggravated assault against law enforcement. He's also in custody on a mental illness hold.

Brandon police and the South Dakota Highway Patrol also responded to the call.

Q&A: Oil prices go negative. What does that mean?

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The world is awash in oil, there's little demand for it and we're running out of places to put it.

That in a nutshell explains Monday's strange and unprecedented action in the market for crude oil futures contracts, where traders essentially offered to pay someone else to deal with the oil they were due to have delivered next month.

The price of U.S. benchmark crude that would be delivered in May was selling for around \$15 a barrel Monday morning, but fell as low as -\$40 per barrel during the day. It was the first time that the price on a futures contract for oil has gone negative, analysts say.

"It's the worst oil price in history, which shouldn't surprise us, because it's the inevitable result of the biggest supply and demand disparity in history," said Ryan Sitton, commissioner at the Texas Railroad Commission, which regulates the state's oil industry.

There's little mystery as to why there's so little demand for oil: Efforts to limit the spread of the coronavirus have major cities around the world on lockdown, air travel has been seriously curtailed, and millions of people are working from home, leading to far fewer commuters on the roads.

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But pumps are still running, extracting oil from the ground, and all that oil has to go somewhere. Here are some questions and answers about the latest developments in the oil patch:

HAS THE PRICE OF OIL EVER GONE NEGATIVE BEFORE?

Sometimes, the price on the future delivery of oil will get skewed by a surprise event, say an oil pipeline bursts. That can cause the price of a futures contract for a given month to be sharply higher or lower than that of the futures contract for the next month.

Usually, this is smoothed out by the market, but the sharp pullback in demand combined with a glut of oil has led to a dearth of oil storage capacity. That made it hard for traders with contracts for crude delivery in May to find buyers, which sent the contract price into negative territory.

"This has never happened before, not even close," said Tim Bray, senior portfolio manager at GuideStone Capital Management in Dallas. "We've never seen a negative price on a futures contract for oil."

ARE OIL COMPANIES PAYING PEOPLE TO TAKE AWAY THEIR CRUDE?

While some companies may be paying others to take away their crude oil, that does not appear to be widespread.

Many analysts described the dip in crude oil prices as technical, related to the way futures contracts are written. Most buyers are currently purchasing oil that would be delivered in June, not May.

Even so, there were more than 150,000 of those futures contracts that traded hands, enough volume to make it meaningful, said Ryan Fitzmaurice, energy strategist at Rabobank.

"In my view, today's move was more technical in nature and related to the futures contract expiration," Fitzmaurice said. "We could see isolated incidents where oil companies pay people to take their oil away as storage and pipeline capacity become scarce but that is unlikely on a sustained basis."

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH OIL STORAGE?

With far less gasoline and jet fuel being consumed, oil tanks are starting to fill up. Experts have been warning that global storage could fill up in late April or early May.

That's led some producers to decide to move oil now, because the space may become more valuable than the oil, Sitton said.

"There's so much oversupply, and storage is fulling up," Sitton said. "Eventually you go to a point where literally there's so much of a valuable commodity in the world that the commodity no longer has value. And that's what we're seeing."

WHERE WILL THE OIL GO?

With many oil tanks filling up, the federal government is negotiating with companies to store crude oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. But if all the storage tanks are full, oil companies will begin shutting in wells, which can damage oil fields. Many tankers are full of oil and floating at sea.

WHY DIDN'T THE OPEC DEAL FIX THIS?

Earlier this month, OPEC and its allies, with political pressure from the U.S. government, agreed to cut production by nearly 10 million barrels per day — about 10% of current global output. But some analysts feel the deal didn't go far enough to curb massive oversupply. It kept prices from falling farther for the time being, but there's still too much oil in the world.

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT THE PRICE OF GASOLINE?

Cheap oil leads to cheaper prices at the pump, which are often viewed as a boon for consumers. The average price in the U.S. for a gallon of regular gasoline fell to about \$1.49 or less, more than \$1 less than a year ago, according to AAA. But this time around, it's not good for anybody, said Jim Burkhard, vice president at IHS Markit.

"Typically when oil prices fall, gasoline prices fall and that benefits consumers," Burkhard said. "But prices

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are falling today because hardly anyone driving, they're driving a lot, lot less. So it's difficult for anyone to take advantage of these lower gasoline prices if they're not driving. So there's no winner in this situation today."

AP Video Journalist Terry Chea in Alameda, Calif., and AP Business Writer Alex Veiga in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

World shares skid after oil prices plunge below zero

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — World share prices skidded Tuesday after the price of U.S. crude oil plunged below zero, with demand collapsing as the pandemic leaves factories, automobiles and airplanes idled.

Germany's DAX lost 2.2% to 10,443.42 in early trading and the CAC 40 in France shed 2.4% to 4,420.53. Britain's FTSE 100 declined 1.5% to 5,724.68.

Wall Street looked set for losses, with the future contract for the S&P 500 down 0.6%, while the contract for the Dow industrials lost 1%.

While share prices have gradually stabilized after wild swings earlier this year, uncertainty over growing numbers of coronavirus cases in Japan and in some Southeast Asian countries has left investors wary.

Unconfirmed reports Tuesday that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was in fragile condition after surgery added to the jitters. But South Korea's government said Kim appeared to be handling state affairs as usual.

Overhanging the markets has been the plunging price of crude oil as a growing glut pushes storage capacity to its limits. As of early Tuesday, the cost to have a barrel of U.S. crude delivered in May was at negative 2.58 per barrel.

That was still an improvement over the U.S. benchmark's settlement at negative \$37.63 per barrel on Monday. Traders are still paying about \$20 per barrel for U.S. oil to be delivered in June. Analysts consider that to be closer to the "true" price of oil.

The tumult in the oil market mirrors volatility in many others and reflects uncertainty over where the world economy will head as governments begin to loosen controls imposed to contain the coronavirus.

"We could merely be in the eye of the hurricane as the epicenters of its rage remain centered around demand devastation and crude oil oversupply," Stephen Innes of AxiCorp. said in a commentary.

"At a minimum, oil prices will be the last asset class to recover from lockdown" and only when travel restrictions are lifted, he said.

When trading of contracts for U.S. oil to be delivered in May expire on Tuesday, the earliest delivery available will be for June.

On Tuesday, it was down 28 cents at \$20.15 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Brent crude, the international standard, dropped \$2.91 to \$22.66. It fell nearly 9% on Monday to \$25.57 per barrel.

"The historic drop in WTI prices is an indication of the downward pressure which many other crude oil grades could face, given the oversupply situation," Sushant Gupta of Wood Mackenzie said in a report.

On the bright side, given the very low prices right now, "It also provides an opportunity for large consuming nations in Asia such as China and India to expedite filling up their petroleum reserves."

Gupta said India, for example, still has up to 13 million barrels of spare capacity out of a total of 39 million barrels of storage capacity.

In share trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 2% Tuesday to 19,280.78 while the Hang Seng index in Hong Kong lost 2.2% to 23,793.55. South Korea's Kospi slipped 1%, to 1,879.38.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 2.5% to 5,221.30 and the Shanghai Composite index gave up 0.9% to 2,827.01.

In a sign of continued caution in the market, Treasury yields remained extremely low. The yield on the 10-year Treasury slipped to 0.61% from 0.62% late Monday.

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In currency trading, the dollar rose to 107.80 Japanese yen from 107.63 on Monday. The euro fell to \$1.0825 from \$1.0862.

Stocks have been on a general upward swing recently, buoyed by promises of massive aid for the economy and markets by the Federal Reserve and U.S. government.

More recently, countries around the world have tentatively eased up on business-shutdown restrictions meant to slow the spread of the virus, which has killed more than 170,000 people and infected more than 2.4 million.

Health experts warn the pandemic is far from over and new flareups could ignite if governments allow a premature rush to "normal" life. Many analysts also say some of the recent rally for stocks is based on overly optimistic expectations for a fast economic rebound once shutdowns end.

UK Parliament to hold virtual debates amid virus lockdown

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's Parliament is going back to work, and the political authorities have a message for lawmakers: Stay away.

U.K. legislators and most parliamentary staff were sent home in late March as part of a nationwide lockdown to slow the spread of the new coronavirus. With more than 16,500 virus-deaths in Britain and criticism growing of the government's response to the pandemic, legislators are returning Tuesday — at least virtually — to grapple with the crisis.

House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle plans to preside over an almost-empty chamber, with space being made for a maximum of 50 of the 650 members of Parliament. Other lawmakers can ask questions from home using videoconferencing program Zoom, beamed onto screens erected around the wood-paneled Commons chamber.

Hoyle acknowledged "there are bound to be bumps along the way" as the tradition-steeped 700-year-old institution takes a leap into the unknown. But he urged lawmakers not to travel to Parliament.

"I do not want members and House staff putting themselves at risk," Hoyle said.

A small number of legislators will meet in person Tuesday to approve the new digital arrangements. Tape has been put on the floor to ensure they keep 2 meters (6.5 feet) apart.

The virtual Parliament will have its first big test Wednesday during the weekly Prime Minister's Questions session. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab will stand in for Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is still recovering from COVID-19.

Lawmakers' return to work comes amid mounting criticism of the government's response to the pandemic, heightened by the absence of the prime minister. Johnson spent a week in the hospital this month, including three nights in intensive care, after contracting the coronavirus.

Opposition politicians have been largely supportive of the national lockdown that was imposed March 23 and extended last week until at least May 7. But political unity has frayed as Britain's coronavirus death toll mounts.

Opponents are attacking the government over a lack of testing for the virus, shortages of protective equipment for medics and an elusive strategy for ending the lockdown.

The government says it is too soon to consider easing the restrictions. But it acknowledges that widespread testing — so that infected people can be identified and their contacts traced and isolated — will be a key part of ending the lockdown. The number of tests being performed has grown from about 5,000 to near 20,000 a day — still a long way off the government's promise of hitting 100,000 a day by the end of April.

Countries around the world are grappling with how to conduct politics during the pandemic. The U.S. Congress has postponed its return until May, while Canadian lawmakers have agreed to a mix of digital and in-person sittings starting next week.

It's unclear how fully British lawmakers will be able to scrutinize the Conservative government under the new digital arrangements. Not everything can be done from a distance. Approving legislation is on hold because there is not yet a way for lawmakers to vote. In the House of Commons, that is done by

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the time-honored and time-consuming method of having legislators traipse out of the Commons chamber and walk through "yes" or "no" lobbies.

Hoyle said Commons authorities are "urgently" seeking a way that voting can be done remotely.

The pandemic has already upended everyday activity in the cramped, crumbling parliamentary complex, where several thousand people work, served by multiple bars and restaurants, a post office and a hairdresser. Even before parliamentarians were sent home on March 25, Hoyle had suspended the sale of alcohol on the premises, to encourage staff not to linger.

The virtual arrangements are likely to curb Parliament's spontaneity and subdue its often raucous atmosphere. Jacob Rees-Mogg, the Conservative lawmaker who serves as leader of the House of Commons, accepted that "the new digital Parliament will not be perfect." But he said "we must not let the perfect be the enemy of the good."

And, he added, things have been worse.

"In 1349, the Black Death forced Parliament not to sit," Rees-Mogg wrote. "Today, we can do better thanks to technology, Mr. Speaker and a determination to keep our democracy going."

Meg Russell, director of the Constitution Unit at University College London, said the new arrangements were "unique and unprecedented." But she said politics would be more difficult without "face to face and informal contact."

"Politics is a lot more consultative than people think," she said. "Informal conversations and things which go on out of the public eye are really crucial to the way that Parliament runs."

"With everybody dispersed all around the country, it's really difficult for anybody to get a sense of the mood," she added.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Conspiracy theorists burn 5G towers claiming link to virus

By **KELVIN CHAN, BEATRICE DUPUY and ARIJETA LAJKA** Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The CCTV footage from a Dutch business park shows a man in a black cap pouring the contents of a white container at the base of a cellular radio tower. Flames burst out as the man jogs back to his Toyota to flee into the evening.

It's a scene that's been repeated dozens of times in recent weeks in Europe, where officials are pushing back against conspiracy theories linking new 5G mobile networks and the coronavirus pandemic are fueling arson attacks on cell towers.

Popular beliefs and conspiracy theories that wireless communications pose a threat have long been around, but the global spread of the virus at the same time that countries were rolling out fifth generation wireless technology has seen some of those false narratives amplified.

Officials in Europe and the U.S. are watching the situation closely, concerned that attacks will undermine vital telecommunications links at a time they're most needed to deal with the pandemic.

"I'm absolutely outraged, absolutely disgusted, that people would be taking action against the very infrastructure that we need to respond to this health emergency," Stephen Powis, medical director of the National Health Service in England, said in early April.

Some 50 fires targeting cell towers and other equipment have been reported in Britain this month, leading to three arrests. Telecom engineers have been abused on the job 80 times, according to trade group Mobile UK, making the U.K. the nucleus of the attacks. Photos and videos documenting the attacks are often overlaid with false commentary about COVID-19. Some 16 have been torched in the Netherlands, with attacks also reported in Ireland, Cyprus, and Belgium.

Posts threatening to attack phone masts were receiving likes on Facebook. One post in an anti-vaccine group on April 12 shared a photo of a burned phone mast with the quote, "Nobody wants cancer & covid19. Stop trying to make it happen or every pole and mobile store will end up like this one."

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The trend received extra attention in Britain when a tower supplying voice and data traffic to a Birmingham field hospital treating coronavirus patients was among those targeted.

"It's heart-rending enough that families cannot be there at the bedside of loved ones who are critically ill," Nick Jeffery, CEO of wireless carrier Vodafone UK, said on LinkedIn. "It's even more upsetting that even the small solace of a phone or video call may now be denied them because of the selfish actions of a few deluded conspiracy theorists."

False narratives around 5G and the coronavirus have been shared hundreds of thousands of times on social media. They vary widely from claims that the coronavirus is a coverup for 5G deployment to those that say new 5G installations have created the virus.

"To be concerned that 5G is somehow driving the COVID-19 epidemic is just wrong," Dr. Jonathan Samet, dean of the Colorado School of Public Health who chaired a World Health Organization committee that researched cell phone radiation and cancer. "I just don't find any plausible way to link them."

Anti-5G activists are undeterred.

Susan Brinchman, director of the Center for Electrosmog Prevention, a nonprofit campaigning against "environmental electromagnetic pollution," says that people have a right to be concerned about 5G and links to COVID-19. "The entire 5G infrastructure should be dismantled and turned off," she said by email.

But there's no evidence that wireless communications - whether 5G or earlier versions - harm the immune system, said Myrtil Simko, scientific director of SciProof International in Sweden, who has spent decades researching the matter.

The current wave of 5G theories dates back to January, when a Belgian doctor suggested a link to COVID-19. Older variations were circulating before that, mostly revolving around cellphone radiation causing cancer, spreading on Reddit forums, Facebook pages and YouTube channels. Even with daily wireless use among vast majority of adults, the National Cancer Institute has not seen an increase in brain tumors.

The theories gained momentum in 2019 from Russian state media outlets, which helped push them into U.S. domestic conversation, disinformation experts say.

Ryan Fox, who tracks disinformation as chief innovation officer at AI company Yonder, said he noticed an abnormal spike last year in mentions around 5G across Russian state media, with most of the narratives playing off people's fears around 5G and whether it could cause cancer.

"Were they the loudest voice at that time and did they amplify this conspiracy enough that it helped fuel its long-term success? Yes," he said.

The conspiracy theories have also been elevated by celebrities including actor Woody Harrelson who shared a video claiming people in China were taking down a 5G tower. It was actually a Hong Kong "smart lamppost" cut down by pro-democracy protesters in August over China surveillance fears. British TV host Eamonn Holmes gave credence to the theories on a talk show, drawing a rebuke from regulators.

"I want to be very clear here," European Commission spokesman Johannes Bahrke said Friday, as the arson toll rose daily. "There is no geographic or any other correlation between the deployment of 5G and the outbreak of the virus."

Dupuy and Lajka reported from New York. Menelaos Hadjicostis contributed to this report from Nicosia, Cyprus.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Seoul says Kim Jong Un handling North Korea affairs as usual

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appeared to be handling state affairs as usual, South Korea's government said Tuesday after unconfirmed rumors described him as in fragile condition after surgery.

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The presidential Blue House said no unusual activity has been detected in North Korea and it had no information about the rumors on Kim's health. Speculation often surfaces about North Korea's leadership based on attendance at important state events. Kim, who is in his mid-30s, missed the celebration of his late grandfather and state founder Kim Il Sung on April 15, the country's most important holiday.

But he had presided over a meeting April 11, discussing coronavirus prevention and electing his sister as an alternate member of the political bureau of the ruling Workers' Party. And state media have since reported Kim sent greetings to Syrian President Bashar Assad and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel as well as "birthday spreads" to two North Korean officials and a new centenarian.

"We have no information to confirm regarding rumors about Chairman Kim Jong Un's health issue that have been reported by some media outlets. Also, no unusual developments have been detected inside North Korea," Blue House spokesman Kang Min-seok said in the statement.

The Blue House later said Kim was believed to be staying at an unspecified location outside of Pyongyang with some of his close confidants. The office said Kim appeared to be normally engaged with state affairs and there weren't any unusual movement or emergency reaction from the North's ruling party, military or cabinet.

A U.S. official said the White House was aware before the reports appeared late Monday that Kim's health might be precarious. The official said the U.S. had information that Kim may have undergone surgery and that complications may have rendered him "incapacitated or worse." But, the official stressed that the U.S. had nothing to confirm the surgery had taken place or that any complications had occurred.

The U.S. official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, would not elaborate on where the information came from or when it had been received. The White House and State Department had no comment.

Conservative South Korean lawmaker Yoon Sang-hyun, chairman of the National Assembly's foreign affairs and unification committee, said he was told by unspecified non-government sources that Kim had surgery over cardiovascular problems. But an official from Seoul's National Intelligence Service, who didn't want to be named, citing office rules, said the spy agency couldn't confirm whether Kim had surgery.

Kim In-chul, spokesman of South Korea's Foreign Ministry, said Seoul and Washington are maintaining close communication but didn't provide a direct answer when asked whether the allies exchanged any meaningful intelligence about Kim's health.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said his government was monitoring the situation.

A political upheaval in North Korea would be unlikely even if Kim became sidelined by health problems, according to analyst Cheong Seong-Chang at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea.

Cheong said Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, is already exercising significant influence within the government and that most members of Pyongyang's leadership share an interest with the Kim family in maintaining the North's system.

Outside governments and media have a mixed record on tracking developments among North Korea's ruling elite, made difficult by Pyongyang's stringent control of information about them.

In 2016, South Korea media quoted intelligence officials as saying Kim Jong Un had had a former military chief executed for corruption and other charges. But North Korea's state media months later showed Ri Yong Gil alive and serving in new senior posts.

Kim's absence from state media often triggers speculation. In 2014, Kim vanished from the public eye for nearly six weeks before reappearing with a cane. South Korea's spy agency said days later that he had a cyst removed from his ankle.

Kim, believed to be 36, took power upon his father's death in December 2011 and is the third generation of his family to rule the nuclear-armed country.

Kim met President Donald Trump three times in 2018 and 2019 and had summits with other Asian leaders as he pursued diplomacy in hopes of ending crippling sanctions and getting security guarantees. But he maintained his right to a nuclear arsenal and most diplomacy has stalemated since.

AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

Muslims try to keep Ramadan spirit amid virus restrictions

By SAMY MAGDY and LEE KEATH Associated Press

BAHTIM, Egypt (AP) — Every year during Ramadan, the Light of Muhammad Mosque sets up long tables on the street and dishes up free meals at sunset for the poor to break their daily fast. It's a charity that many rely on in this impoverished district on the edge of the Egyptian capital.

But it's too dangerous in this era of the coronavirus — in Egypt and in many Muslim countries, such as "Tables of the Compassionate" have been barred.

So the mosque, which like others in Egypt had to shut its doors as a precaution against the virus, will use the funds that would have gone into the free communal tables to distribute packed meals and cash to those in need.

"We hope this could ease their suffering," said Sheikh Abdel-Rahman, the muezzin of the mosque in the district of Bahtim.

As Ramadan begins with the new moon later this week, Muslims around the world are trying to maintain the cherished rituals of Islam's holiest month without further spreading the outbreak.

At the heart of Ramadan is the sunrise-to-sunset fast, meant to instill contemplation of God. But alongside the hardship of abstaining from food and drink for hours every day, the month sweeps everyone up into a communal spirit. Families and friends gather for large meals at sunset, known as iftars. In some countries, cafes and cultural events are packed late into the night. Worshippers go to mosques for hours of evening prayers known as "taraweeh." Many devote themselves to charity.

Muslims now find themselves cut off from much of what makes the month special as authorities fight the pandemic. Many countries have closed mosques and banned the taraweeh there to prevent crowds. Prominent clerics, including in Saudi Arabia, have urged people to pray at home.

Governments are trying to balance restrictions with traditions.

Lebanon and Egypt, for example, have loosened their curfew, moving it back to start at 8 p.m. — about an hour or 90 minutes after sunset. That gives some leeway for Iftar gatherings, but not much: people can't go too far to visit others for the meal unless they're prepared to stay the night.

Other countries have banned long internal travel, while Syria eased its ban to allow travel between provinces two days a week.

In Malaysia, Mohamad Fadhil said he was resigned to missing out on the surge in business at the Ramadan bazaar, where he and other sellers hawk food and drinks in crowded open-air markets. The bazaars have been shut down.

But he hoped the country's lockdown will be eased so he can bring his 7-year-old daughter home. She was at his parents about an hour away when the lockdown began six weeks ago, trapping her there.

"I hope we can be together as a family during Ramadan," he said.

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, the government has banned millions of government employees, soldiers and police from travelling home during the Eid al-Fitr, the holiday marking the end of Ramadan.

"Fear of coronavirus has blocked us from celebrating Eid with my parents," said Rachmad Mardiansyah, a civil servant in Jakarta.

The loss of communal charity meals will particularly hurt as people lose jobs under coronavirus restrictions. Some are rushing to fill the void.

In Kashmir, the Muslim-majority territory contested by India and Pakistan, volunteers wearing masks and gloves drop off sacks of rice, flour, lentils and other staples for Ramadan at the doorsteps of those in need in the city of Srinagar.

They try to do it quietly, so that not even the neighbors know they are receiving help.

"We have to take care of these people's self-respect," said one volunteer, Sajjad Ahmed.

Taïb Socé, a famous Muslim preacher on Rfm, a private radio station in the Senegalese capital, Dakar,

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said that while the government is taking action, "the rich must also help the poor."

"Solidarity must be in order. This is what the Prophet Muhammad did during times of war. COVID-19 is like a war," he said.

Donors can't help everywhere when need surges so quickly.

In the Gaza Strip, the group Salam Charitable usually receives donations from Turkey, Malaysia, Jordan and elsewhere for its Ramadan relief projects. Last year, it was able to distribute 11,000 food parcels and clothes for children. Charities are vital in Gaza, which has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade for 13 years, leaving more than half the population of 2 million under the poverty line.

This year, giving has dried up.

"This time last year, we had already three contracts to give food parcels to the poor. This year we don't have any," said Omar Saad, spokesman for the charity. "I think we missed the opportunity because Ramadan is starting soon."

In Pakistan, powerful Muslim clerics forced the government to leave mosques open throughout Ramadan. Mullah Abdul Aziz of the Red Mosque in the capital, Islamabad, ordered adherents to pack communal prayers. Last Friday, worshippers were shoulder-to-shoulder.

Still, calls by influential Saudi clerics to stay home also have an effect.

"We hear on TV what the big imams say," said Zaheer Abbas, an Islamabad resident who has been praying at home. "Praying is praying. God isn't only in the mosque."

In Somalia, where people lament the loss of community, Mogadishu resident Osman Yusuf tried to find optimism. The new restrictions "keep you closer to your loved ones for comfort," he said.

Not all Ramadan traditions are rooted in religion. Egypt is known for the TV comedies and drama series it churns out for the month, which are broadcast between the iftar and the pre-sunrise meal. A new batch is being produced for this year, despite coronavirus restrictions.

Iraqis have to give up a unique Ramadan tradition: tournaments of a game called "Mheibes." In the game, teams of up to several dozen people each line up and one member hides a ring in his hand. A member of the other team must guess who has the ring, usually by going up and down the line, trying to read facial tics or other "tells." The long tournaments are accompanied by sweets and tea and singing.

Health authorities pleaded with Jassim al-Aswad, the longtime Mheibes champion and tournament organizer, to call it off for the sake of public safety — while praising his "preternatural abilities and unrivaled powers of discernment."

The 65-year-old al-Aswad reluctantly agreed.

"I feel very sad," he said. "Ramadan will be devoid of these popular rituals this year ... May God wreak vengeance on corona, which deprived us of our most beautiful hobby."

Keath reported from Cairo. Associated Press writers Aijaz Hussain in Srinagar, India; Babacar Dione in Dakar, Senegal; Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Niniek Karmini in Jakarta, Indonesia; Abdi Guled in Nairobi, Kenya; Fares Akram in Gaza City, Gaza Strip; Qassim Abdul-Zahra in Baghdad; Kathy Gannon in Islamabad; Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

Cemetery races to keep up as New York virus deaths mount

By **DAVID GOLDMAN** and **MATT SEDENSKY** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The streets are eerily quiet. Barely a soul walks by. But when Rabbi Shmuel Plafker arrives at the cemetery, it's buzzing: Vans pulling in with bodies aboard, mounds of dirt piling up as graves are dug open, a line of white signs pressed into the ground marking plots that are newly occupied.

Some of the few signs of life in this anguished city are coming from those tending to the dead.

As the world retreats and the pandemic's confirmed death toll in New York City alone charges past 10,000, funeral directors, cemetery workers and others who oversee a body's final chapter are sprinting to keep up.

Plafker, the chaplain at Mount Richmond Cemetery on Staten Island, grips in hands covered by rubber

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gloves the long list of burials he must preside over this day. In the notes section beside each person's name, the reason for their demise: "COVID." "COVID." "COVID."

"There's a tremendous sadness," he says. "Were it not for this, they would be living, some healthy, some not so healthy. But they would be alive."

Mount Richmond is run by the Hebrew Free Burial Association, which buries Jews who die with little or nothing. A century ago, it buried garment workers killed in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire and those who fell to the Spanish flu. More recently, it was Holocaust survivors who fled Europe.

And now, those dying of the coronavirus.

A stream of people trusted with preparing Mount Richmond's dead for burial continues to arrive at the cemetery, carefully washing the bodies as Jewish law dictates, then placing them in a white shroud. The Torah calls for burial as soon as possible. These days, it's more of a challenge than ever.

Companies that transport the dead to their final resting places are backed up, part of a chain reaction of hold-ups that includes overbooked funeral homes and cemeteries that are turning families away.

"The casket companies have no caskets," says James Donofrio, a funeral director who handles Mount Richmond's arrangements.

Hebrew Free Burial stocked up on caskets before the coronavirus unleashed its worst, just as they did with protective gear for workers, garments for the dead and other supplies. They think they have enough. Then again, they thought the mortuary cooler they ordered a month ago to fit an extra four bodies would be enough extra space. Now they have a refrigerated trailer big enough to hold 20.

Amy Koplou, who runs Hebrew Free Burial, worries about staff maintaining such furious pace and raising enough money to cover the costs being run up. But they've vowed to plod on.

They were used to burying one person on an average day. A "crazy day," Koplou says, would be five.

The other day, they put 11 people in the ground.

Staffers find themselves exchanging texts about death certificates at 2 a.m. and fielding dozens of calls at a time. It takes its toll on everyone.

Plafker looks at the trees in bloom and the grass sprouting and finds spring's signs of rebirth so paradoxical given the death that surrounds him. He thinks of the centuries-old words he recites on the High Holy Days, that seem to carry so much more weight now.

"How many shall pass away and how many shall be born," it says. "Who shall perish by water and who by fire? Who by sword and who by wild beast? Who by famine and who by thirst? Who by earthquake and who by plague?"

Now, it seems, a plague is upon him.

Between travel restrictions and potentially exposed family members kept in isolation, many funerals now have no mourners on site. When they do, they are prohibited from gathering at the graveside, instead listening to rushed services by phone from cars parked 50 feet away.

Michael Tokar comes along this day to bid his father farewell, waiting in his car for directions when Donofrio arrives with news.

"We have a problem," an apologetic Donofrio says. "The body ain't here. We're going to have to do the funeral tomorrow."

There was a snag in getting the hospital to release the remains. So the son dutifully returns a day later.

Tokar's father had a cough and fever and a home health aide got him to the hospital. Two days later, he was dead, with the coronavirus listed as the cause.

As Tokar sits in his car, his phone rings. Plafker is on the line. The service is beginning and the rabbi delivers a play-by-play of the ritual.

"I'm going to help the men lower the body," he tells him.

The crew is dressed in white protective suits, masks and gloves, looking more fit for a moon landing than a funeral. They use orange straps to place David Tokar in his grave.

"We're going to cover him now," Plafker says, before asking the son if he wanted to talk about his dad.

"He was born 92 years ago," he began, reciting a collection of facts that form a portrait.

He collected stamps. He loved the racetrack. He adored his grandchildren.

The rabbi reads a Psalm and tells Tokar his father will live on in the hearts of those who loved him and that he hopes this "terrible plague" will finally pass. In 10 minutes, it is over.

A few rows away, Thomas Cortez readies another grave. Two of his friends have fallen ill and he and his colleagues worry they will too. It is sad work, he admits, but it must continue.

Another funeral is about to begin.

Sedensky reported from Philadelphia.

Syria refugees to face their torturers in German court

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Six years ago Wassim Mukdad fled Syria, demoralized and fearing for his life as the country spiraled ever deeper into all-out war.

This week, the 34-year-old will come face-to-face with the man accused of running a government detention center where Mukdad and thousands of others were tortured during the early months of the uprising against Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Together with more than a dozen other witnesses, Mukdad will testify before a German court in the trial of Anwar R., a former member of Syria's secret police suspected of overseeing the abuse of detainees at a notorious jail near Damascus known as Al Khatib, or Branch 251.

German prosecutors last fall charged the 57-year-old R., whose full surname wasn't released for privacy reasons, with crimes against humanity, murder and rape in a case that human rights activists say marks the first time worldwide that a former Syrian official is being held responsible for such serious crimes during the long-running conflict.

As a senior member of Syria's General Intelligence Directorate, R. is accused of overseeing the "systematic and brutal torture" of more than 4,000 prisoners between April 2011 and September 2012, resulting in the deaths of at least 58 people, federal prosecutors said.

A second suspect, identified as Eyad A., will also go on trial accused of contributing to crimes against humanity by enabling the torture and imprisonment of at least 30 protesters in late 2011. The 43-year-old was allegedly part of a unit that arrested people following a demonstration in the city of Douma and took them to Branch 251, where they were severely mistreated.

"I was taking part in demonstrations, demanding freedom and civil society, liberties and democracy. Exactly the same as the whole demonstration movement in that time," Mukdad recalled in an interview with The Associated Press.

"The second time I was detained, it was in the same branch where (R.) allegedly used to work," he said. "I faced torture there, during the interrogations."

For legal reasons, Mukdad can't talk about the details of his case before the trial opens. But he said what happened to him wasn't unique.

"We were three friends and we all suffered the same procedures from the beginning till the end," he said. "And other people in the cells I met also suffered the same. So I knew that it wasn't only me."

None of the inmates knew why they were being detained or whether they would make it out alive.

"We were not allowed to contact any lawyers, family members or friends," Mukdad said. "Nobody tells you anything. It's not only a physical torture, it's also psychological torture."

The defendants' lawyers could not be reached for comment.

After being released, Mukdad volunteered as a medic in a refugee camp in southern Damascus, only to get detained by al-Nusra, an Islamist armed group linked to al-Qaida, and then again by government forces.

"Starting from 2013, the situation was going very clearly into a full-scale civil war," Mukdad said.

The government had begun to use chemical weapons. "You think: What could I do anymore? There is no place for any reasonable voice in in this time of total mania."

He decided to flee Syria a year later, first to Turkey and then, in 2016, to Germany.

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Like hundreds of thousands of Syrians who found refuge in Germany, Mukdad tried to create a new life for himself, learning the language and concentrating on music, unaware that human rights groups in Europe were building a case against Syrian officials. It wasn't until last year that he happened to cross paths with a lawyer in Berlin who asked him to testify against Anwar R.

"This trial is of considerable importance worldwide. The trial will provide an overall picture of the crimes committed by the Syrian government. This knowledge can then be used by others and in other trials," said Wolfgang Kaleck, head of the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights that supports 16 Syrians in the case, eight of whom will be present as co-plaintiffs.

The group said the case is the result of a series of criminal complaints submitted over the past four years by almost 50 Syrian torture survivors, relatives, activists, and lawyers in Germany, Austria, Norway and Sweden.

With efforts to bring war crimes cases to the International Criminal Court in The Hague blocked by Russia and China, victims have increasingly looked to courts in Europe to apply the principle of 'universal jurisdiction' that allows them to try crimes committed elsewhere. Both France and Germany have issued international arrest warrants for Jamil Hassan, the former head of Syria's Air Force Intelligence Service implicated in widespread torture.

To Mukdad, the trial that opens Thursday in Germany's western city of Koblenz is a way to "raise the voice of the victims, the living and the dead."

"If there is any process to restore part of this dignity for the victims, to acknowledge the suffering, to just say clearly and loudly, this is not acceptable, it's a gain for the whole of humanity," he said.

Mukdad said he hopes the defendants receive the fair trial he was denied in Syria. The men, who themselves left Syria for Germany before their arrest in February 2019, remain in jail.

"If they are innocent, I want them to be free. If they are guilty, I want them to face just punishment," said Mukdad. "All that I can hope is that the system works properly."

Follow Frank Jordans on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/wirereporter>

WHO warns rush to ease virus rules could cause resurgence

By CHRIS BLAKE and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The World Health Organization said Tuesday that rushing to ease coronavirus restrictions will likely lead to a resurgence of the illness, a warning that comes as governments start rolling out plans to get their economies up and running again.

"This is not the time to be lax. Instead, we need to ready ourselves for a new way of living for the foreseeable future," said Dr. Takeshi Kasai, the WHO regional director for the Western Pacific.

He said governments must remain vigilant to stop the spread of the virus and the lifting of lockdowns and other social distancing measures must be done gradually and strike the right balance between keeping people healthy and allowing economies to function.

Despite concerns from health officials, some U.S. states on Monday announced aggressive reopening plans, while Boeing and at least one other U.S. heavy-equipment manufacturer resumed production. Elsewhere around the world, step-by-step reopenings were underway in Europe, where the crisis has begun to ebb in places such as Italy, Spain and Germany.

Australia said Tuesday that it will allow the resumption of non-urgent surgeries from next week as health authorities grow more confident that hospitals there won't be overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients.

The reopenings come as politicians grow weary of soaring unemployment numbers and the prospect of economic depression. Asian shares followed Wall Street lower on Tuesday after U.S. oil futures plunged below zero because of a worldwide glut as factories, automobiles and airplanes sit idled.

The cost to have a barrel of U.S. crude delivered in May plummeted to negative \$37.63 as traders run out of places to store it. It was at roughly \$60 at the start of the year.

Businesses that start operating again in the U.S. are likely to engender good will with President Donald

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Trump at a time when his administration is doling out billions in relief to companies. Trump has been agitating to restart the economy, singling out Democratic-led states and egging on protesters complaining that the shutdowns are destroying their livelihoods and trampling their rights.

In several states — most of them Republican-led — governors said they had seen signs that the coronavirus curve was flattening, making it possible to start reopening businesses and public spaces.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp announced plans to restart his state's economy before the end of the week. Kemp said gyms, hair salons, bowling alleys and tattoo parlors could reopen Friday, as long as owners followed strict social distancing and hygiene requirements.

Texas on Monday began a week of slow reopenings, starting off with state parks, while officials said that later in the week, stores would be allowed to offer curbside service. Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee announced that businesses across most of the state would begin reopening as early as next week, although the order did not cover counties with the largest cities, including Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville and Chattanooga. Both states are led by Republicans.

Republican West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice said Monday that he would allow hospitals to begin performing elective procedures if the facilities met an unspecified set of criteria, while Democratic Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said Monday that he would let his statewide stay-at-home order expire next week as long as strict social distancing and other individual protective measures continued.

But governors from many other states said they lacked the testing supplies they need and warned they could get hit by a second wave of infections, given how people with no symptoms can still spread the disease.

"Who in this great state actually believes that they care more about jet skiing than saving the lives of the elderly or the vulnerable?" Democratic Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer remarked, referring to restrictions in place in her state. "This action isn't about our individual right to gather. It's about our parents' right to live."

Boeing said it was putting about 27,000 people back to work this week building passenger jets at its Seattle-area plants, with virus-slowing precautions in place, including face masks and staggered shifts. Boeing's shutdown went into effect March 25 after workers tested positive for the virus and an inspector for the company died. Washington was the first state to see a spike in COVID-19 cases and enacted strict shutdown orders that helped tamp down the virus.

Doosan Bobcat, a farm equipment maker and North Dakota's largest manufacturer, said about 2,200 workers at three factories around the state returned. Company spokeswoman Stacey Breuer said the reopening came after two weeks spent putting in safety measures.

"There is definitely still some concern and do we feel 100% safe? Obviously not," said William Wilkinson, a Bobcat welder and president of a United Steelworkers union local. He said workers there were wearing face masks and keeping their distance from one another.

Worldwide the virus has infected nearly 2.5 million people and caused more than 170,000 deaths, according to a Johns Hopkins University count. The U.S. has been the hardest hit country with more than 787,000 infections and more than 42,000 deaths.

The true figures are believed to be much higher, in part because of limited testing and difficulties in counting the dead.

There have been encouraging signs in places like New York state, where hospitalizations have leveled off. Monday's death toll, at 478, was the lowest in three weeks, down from a peak of nearly 800.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert, warned on ABC: "Unless we get the virus under control, the real recovery economically is not going to happen."

Long reported from Washington. AP journalists worldwide contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

After denial, Indonesia sees mounting coronavirus deaths

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — While Indonesia's neighbors scrambled early this year to try to contain the spread of the coronavirus, the government of the world's fourth most populous nation insisted that everything was fine.

In speeches, Indonesia's health minister, Terawan Agus Putranto, told his country's people that they shouldn't fear the virus, even as tens of thousands around the world were being infected.

Rather than focus on creating social distancing guidelines or ramping up testing, Putranto credited Indonesian "immunity" and the strength of prayer for the country's lack of any infections. He dismissed as "insulting" a report by Harvard University researchers that said Indonesia must have elected not to report its cases.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's southern neighbor Australia and some fellow Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore were quick out of the gate to address the crisis, taking actions as early as the end of January that included containment and tracing measures.

Indonesia, on the other hand, did not even confirm its first case of the virus until early March. As of Monday, the nation had reported at least 6,760 infections — including 590 deaths from COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, more fatalities than any Asian country other than China.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo acknowledged last month that the government had chosen to keep the public misinformed about the state of the coronavirus in the country.

"Indeed, we did not deliver certain information to the public because we did not want to stir panic," he said.

Suspicion over the lack of cases in Indonesia began to grow when a Chinese tourist who had traveled from Wuhan — the central Chinese city where the pandemic started late last year — to the Indonesian resort island of Bali tested positive for the coronavirus when he returned to China in early February.

Indonesian authorities, however, immediately played down the incident, with Defense Minister Muhammad Mahfud declaring, "The coronavirus does not exist in Indonesia."

Widodo, perhaps spurred by a desire for economic growth, promoted Putranto's theories, ignoring the likelihood that the vast archipelago nation had virus cases.

But there was skepticism among the public, especially after local media reported cases of Indonesian patients with pneumonia-like symptoms dying. The government's apparent lack of transparency caused many Indonesians to seek information on their own about social distancing, with some even choosing to quarantine themselves.

Pandu Riono, an epidemiology expert at the University of Indonesia, estimated that the country had cases of the virus as early as January, but that limited testing capabilities had caused them to go undetected.

The turning point came when the government announced the country's two first cases on March 2. Dozens of other infections were confirmed over the next couple of weeks, prompting Widodo's administration to finally take serious measures, including ordering nationwide social distancing and suspending all nonessential activities.

But for many, it was too little, too late.

"This outbreak affected my life worse than a tsunami," said Risti Ameliana, a resident of Jakarta, Indonesia's capital. "But falling trust in government makes it harder, as this is a global pandemic."

Bivitri Susanti, a law and political analyst from Indonesia's Jentera School of Law, said Widodo's scramble to curb the virus after a late start had caused confusion among his government ministers in issuing regulations.

"Jokowi was too slow in leading the war against this pandemic crisis," she said, using Widodo's popular nickname. "Instead, he showed his weak leadership."

On March 13, Widodo appointed the National Disaster Mitigation Agency's head, Doni Monardo, to lead

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the COVID-19 national task force, and allowed more labs to test for the coronavirus. He also has instructed his ministers and the task force to be transparent with the public.

But testing remains a major problem. Since the first cases were confirmed in early March, Indonesia has conducted fewer than 40,000 tests — or just 144 per 1 million people, according to government spokesman Achmad Yurianto.

At least 36 labs have been equipped so far for coronavirus testing, according to Monardo, less than half of the government's goal of having 78 labs that can conduct 10,000 tests per day.

Monardo said Indonesia is also facing shortages of essential medical supplies, including personal protective equipment for health care workers. He said the shortages have contributed to the deaths of at least 32 doctors and 12 nurses.

Widodo on Monday ordered all governors, district chiefs and mayors to intensify the tracking and isolating of people who have been exposed to the virus.

"The government cannot work alone," Widodo said at the start of a Cabinet meeting. "This is not easy for us ... but I believe that we can get through this ordeal together and come out stronger as a nation."

Early this month, Widodo declared a state of "health emergency," allowing local leaders to impose enforceable restrictions to contain the virus across the sprawling nation of more than 260 million people and 17,000 islands.

The government also has created funding options to raise 1,000 trillion rupiah (\$62 billion) to finance a record stimulus package in an effort to protect the economy from recession. As of March, it had raised 24% of the financing for the fiscal shortfall through debt issuance, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said.

Yet worries loom over how the virus could spread in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, during Ramadan, a monthlong Islamic holiday that begins this week. Millions of people traditionally return to their hometowns to visit relatives during the holiday.

There's a chance that Indonesia "will face an explosion of coronavirus cases that could infect 1 million people after Ramadan" unless the government takes stricter measures, said Riono, the epidemiology expert.

On Tuesday, Widodo announced that the government would ban all people from returning to their hometown next month to celebrate Eid, which marks the end of the dawn-to-sunset fasting during Ramadan.

Widodo, however, has ruled out a complete lockdown of the country, citing Indonesian's cultural characteristics, its unique demography and the potential crippling economic damage. Instead, he has opted for large-scale social distancing restrictions.

That's put him at odds with Jakarta Gov. Anies Baswedan, a political rival who has been seeking tougher restrictions amid growing concerns about undetected cases in the capital and its metropolitan area, which is home to 30 million people. Jakarta has become the epicenter of the outbreak in Indonesia, confirming at least 3,097 cases as of Monday, including 287 deaths.

The central government finally relented to Baswedan's request for enforceable restrictions earlier this month, with several other regions of the country quickly following.

Associated Press writers Victoria Milko and Edna Tarigan contributed to this report.

AP: Publicly traded firms get \$300M in small-business loans

BY REESE DUNKLIN, JUSTIN PRITCHARD, JUSTIN MYERS and KRYSTA FAURIA Associated Press

Companies with thousands of employees, past penalties from government investigations and risks of financial failure even before the coronavirus walloped the economy were among those receiving millions of dollars from a relief fund that Congress created to help small businesses through the crisis, an Associated Press investigation found.

The Paycheck Protection Program was supposed to infuse small businesses, which typically have less access to quick cash and credit, with \$349 billion in emergency loans that could help keep workers on the job and bills paid on time.

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But at least 75 companies that received the aid were publicly traded, the AP found, and some had market values well over \$100 million. And 25% of the companies had warned investors months ago — while the economy was humming along — that their ability to remain viable was in question.

By combing through thousands of regulatory filings, the AP identified the 75 companies as recipients of a combined \$300 million in low-interest, taxpayer-backed loans.

Eight companies, or their subsidiaries, received the maximum \$10 million possible, including a California software company that settled a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation late last year into accounting errors that overstated its revenue.

The eight firms getting maximum loans are likely just a tip of the iceberg: Statistics released last week by the U.S. Small Business Administration showed that 4,400 of the approved loans exceeded \$5 million. Overall, the size of the typical loan nationally was \$206,000, according to the statistics. SBA will forgive the loans if companies meet certain benchmarks, such as keeping employees on payroll for eight weeks.

The list of recipients identified by the AP is a fraction of the 1.6 million loans that lenders approved before the program was depleted last week, but it is the most complete public accounting to date. Neither the Trump administration nor the lending industry has disclosed a list of Paycheck Protection Program beneficiaries.

Representatives of the SBA, which is overseeing the program, did not respond to a request for comment late Monday. But last Friday, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a written statement that most of the loans, 74%, were for less than \$150,000 and that demonstrated “the accessibility of this program to even the smallest of small businesses.”

President Donald Trump, asked Monday whether the criteria for who can receive loans should change, said that “we’ll look at individual things and some people will have to return it if we think it’s inappropriate.” He added that the loans are supposed to be awarded, in part, by “what we think is right.”

The AP analysis comes as lawmakers from both political parties negotiate an additional relief package that in large part would replenish the Paycheck Protection Program with more than \$300 billion, but there are disagreements about terms for the new funding measure. A final deal could come as early as Tuesday.

AP’s review also found examples of companies that had foreign owners and that were delisted from U.S. stock exchanges, or threatened with removal, because of their poor stock performance before the coronavirus caused a downturn. Other companies have had annual losses for years.

Wave Life Sciences USA Inc., a Boston-area biotechnology company that develops new pharmaceuticals, received a \$7.2 million loan. Weeks earlier, Wave Life Sciences, whose parent company is based in Singapore, disclosed in its annual report net losses of \$102 million, \$147 million and \$194 million during the last three fiscal years.

“We currently have no products on the market and expect that it may be many years, if ever, before we have a product candidate ready for commercialization,” it wrote.

In an emailed statement Monday, the company said: “The livelihood of our U.S. employees and their families would be severely disrupted if they were to lose their jobs or be furloughed. We are doing everything we can to support them.”

Michael Minnis, who has studied the SBA program as an accounting professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, said he understood the frustrations of smaller businesses that have not received funding when publicly listed companies have. But he said it would be hard to go into the program and change the parameters now.

“There’s a fundamental trade-off here between speed and targeting this in the absolute best way,” he said.

Minnis estimates the program might need to dispense \$720 billion to meet demand.

Since launching April 3, the relief package has faced criticism about slow loan processing, unclear rules and limited funding that left many mom-and-pop businesses without help.

News that the \$1.6 billion Shake Shack burger empire had received a maximum \$10 million loan, disclosed in a filing Friday, ignited public anger. Company executives said late Sunday they would return the money after finding other sources of capital.

By design, the Paycheck Protection Program was meant to get money out quickly to as many small

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businesses as possible, using a formula based in part on workforce and payroll size. Some of the eligibility criteria was expanded making it possible for some businesses with more than 500 employees to qualify if, for example, they met certain size standards for their industries or other conditions.

The owners behind large restaurants chains like Potbelly, Ruth's Chris Steak House and Taco Cabana were able to qualify and get the maximum \$10 million in loans despite employing thousands of workers.

Some other big companies that received loans appeared to have enough cash on hand to survive the economic downturn. New York City-based Lindblad Expeditions Holdings, for example, a cruise ship and travel company with 650 workers and a branding deal with National Geographic, got a \$6.6 million loan. At the end of March, the business reported having about \$137 million in cash on its balance sheet.

"When this crisis hit, we had two business planning cases: 1) substantial layoffs and furloughs or 2) receiving these funds and not impacting our employees," spokeswoman Audrey Chang wrote in an email. "Lindblad is the very rare travel company that has not imposed any layoffs, furloughs or salary reductions to date."

Five of the companies that the AP identified were previously under investigation by financial and other regulators, including firms that paid penalties to resolve allegations, records show.

Quantum Corp., a data storage company based in San Jose, California, that has a workforce of 800, paid a \$1 million penalty last December over allegations that accounting errors resulted in overstated revenues. Quantum received a maximum \$10 million loan.

Without that loan, "we would most certainly be forced to reduce headcount. We owe it to our employees — who've stuck with us through a long and difficult turnaround — to do everything we can to save their jobs during this crisis," company spokesman Bob Wientzen wrote in an email.

Broadwind Energy, a suburban Chicago maker of wind turbines that employs about 520, agreed to pay a \$1 million penalty five years ago after the SEC accused it of failing to inform investors that reduced business from two major customers had caused "substantial declines" in its long-term financial prospects. Broadwind, which could not be immediately reached, received \$9.5 million from the loan program.

Marrone Bio Innovations, a biopesticide company in Davis, California, that has about 50 workers, similarly agreed to pay \$1.8 million in 2016 after the SEC alleged its chief operating officer had inflated financial results to hit projections that it would double revenues during its first year as a public company. Marrone received a loan worth \$1.7 million.

Pam Marrone, the chief executive, said the company "shouldn't be punished" for what happened with the SEC because it has had clean audits for years now. She described the investigation as a "body blow" that cost it investors and drove its stock price under \$1. She said it has had to take on \$40 million in debt and is still digging itself out of the financial hole.

"People don't realize how tough it is to be a small public company like us that's not yet profitable," she said. "We can't just go to investors and say, 'OK, open up your wallets.'"

The AP analysis found that about 1 in 4 of the companies, in fact, had warned investors months ago that they or their auditors had significant doubts about their ability to remain viable and meet their financial obligations despite the booming economy at the time.

One was Heliuss Medical Technologies, a company located near Philadelphia that develops technology to help injured brains heal themselves.

The company has 19 employees and received a \$323,000 loan amid a tough stretch. Its most recent annual report warned, "We may be unable to continue to operate without the threat of liquidation for the foreseeable future" and did not expect to have enough cash to go beyond May.

In an interview, president and chief executive Phil Deschamps said the company was able to raise enough capital earlier this year that, when paired with the loan, it can survive to early summer — when it expects to have filed for U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval for its device. Without the federal money, he said, the company would have lost scientists and attorneys who help prepare regulatory submissions.

Deschamps said his company followed the same rules and applied like any other, and that its device could help thousands of people in the future. But he also understands why some people might question

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giving money to publicly traded firms.

"If we didn't qualify for whatever reason, we would have walked away and figured out another way to do it," he said.

Another company that was facing financial doubts before the virus was Enservco Corp., a Denver-based firm that helps oil and gas firms, including in the fracking industry. In its annual report filed last month, the company said: "We do not generate adequate revenue to fund our current operations, and we incurred significant net operating losses during the years ended December 31, 2019, and 2018, which raise substantial doubt about our ability to continue as a going concern."

Chief executive Ian Dickinson said in an interview that his company would not have folded without the \$1.9 million loan it received. But, he said, he welcomed the money and would've had to let go more employees than he already has without it. Enservco's annual report cited 186 employees; Dickinson said payroll has "reduced significantly" from that mark, without giving specifics.

Dickinson said he did not believe concerns about how long the company could survive were raised in the application process with its bank.

"At the end of the day, our employees are really no different than the employees of a nonpublic company," Dickinson said. "These are funds being used to keep folks on payroll and keep food on their tables."

That big companies and ones with questionable records received such precious financial aid during the chaotic last few weeks frustrates Zachary Davis, a Santa Cruz, California, businessman who runs two artisanal ice cream shops, a beachside café and a taco bar with partner Kendra Baker.

Before a shelter-in-place order in mid-March, the two were expecting their best year to date and were on track to pay off in May the \$250,000 loan from the federal government that they used 10 years ago to open their original shop.

"We were feeling pretty good about where we were in the world. Now it's just all turned upside down," said Davis, who had to lay off 70 workers.

Davis says they were recently able to obtain a different \$10,000 disaster loan from the federal government to pay off vendors, but he says that it "evaporated within seconds." Davis and Baker submitted a Paycheck Protection Program application with supporting documents on April 2 but are still waiting.

Competing against businesses with hundreds of millions a year in revenue and teams of accountants and lawyers is tough, Davis said, "and if you're a little guy, chances are you're going to the back of the line."

Associated Press writers Michael Liedtke in Berkeley, California, and Jeannie Ohm in Washington, D.C., and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

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Some US producers, states reopening amid political pressure

By COLLEEN LONG, GENE JOHNSON and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Boeing and at least one other U.S. heavy-equipment manufacturer resumed production and some states rolled out aggressive reopening plans Monday, despite nationwide concerns there is not enough testing yet to keep the coronavirus from rebounding.

In one of the most forceful moves yet, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp announced plans to restart the state's economy before the end of the week. Kemp said gyms, hair salons, bowling alleys and tattoo parlors could reopen Friday, as long as owners followed strict social distancing and hygiene requirements.

Boeing said it was putting about 27,000 people back to work this week building passenger jets at its Seattle-area plants, with virus-slowng precautions in place, including face masks and staggered shifts. Doosan Bobcat, a farm equipment maker and North Dakota's largest manufacturer, announced the return of about 2,200 workers at three factories around the state.

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The reopenings came amid economic gloom, as oil futures plunged below zero on Monday and stocks and Treasury yields also dropped on Wall Street. The cost to have a barrel of U.S. crude delivered in May plummeted to negative \$37.63. It was at roughly \$60 at the start of the year.

Elsewhere around the world, step-by-step reopenings were underway in Europe, where the crisis has begun to ebb in places such as Italy, Spain and Germany. Parts of the continent are perhaps weeks ahead of the U.S. on the infection curve of the virus, which has killed more than 170,300 people worldwide, according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Businesses that start operating again in the U.S. are likely to engender good will with the Trump administration at a time when it is doling out billions in relief to companies. But the reopenings being announced are a drop in the bucket compared with the more than 22 million Americans thrown out of work by the crisis.

In a dispute that has turned nakedly political, President Donald Trump has been agitating to restart the economy, singling out Democratic-led states and egging on protesters who feel governors are moving too slowly.

In several states — most of them Republican-led — governors said they had seen signs that the coronavirus curve was flattening, making it possible to start reopening businesses and public spaces.

Kemp, a Republican, said a decline in emergency room visits by people with flu-like symptoms indicated that infections were going down. But he also acknowledged that Georgia had lagged in COVID-19 testing and announced new initiatives to ramp it up.

Texas on Monday began a week of slow reopenings, starting off with state parks, while officials said that later in the week, stores would be allowed to offer curbside service. Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee announced Monday that businesses across most of the state would begin reopening as early as next week, although the order did not cover counties with the largest cities, including Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville and Chattanooga. Both states are led by Republicans.

Republican West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice said Monday that he would allow hospitals to begin performing elective procedures if the facilities met an unspecified set of criteria, while Democratic Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said Monday that he would let his statewide stay-at-home order expire next week as long as strict social distancing and other individual protective measures continued.

But governors from many other states said they lacked the testing supplies they need and warned they could get hit by a second wave of infections, given how people with no symptoms can still spread the disease.

"Who in this great state actually believes that they care more about jet skiing than saving the lives of the elderly or the vulnerable?" Democratic Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer remarked, referring to restrictions in place in her state. "This action isn't about our individual right to gather. It's about our parents' right to live."

Trump took to Twitter to complain that the "radical left" and "Do Nothing Democrats" are "playing a very dangerous political game" by complaining about a testing shortage. At the same time, Vice President Mike Pence told governors that Washington is working around-the-clock to help them ramp up testing.

The death toll in the U.S. stood at 42,300 — the highest in the world — with nearly 787,000 confirmed infections, by Johns Hopkins' count. The true figures are believed to be much higher, in part because of limited testing and difficulties in counting the dead.

In other developments:

— Republican Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan announced his state will be able to test 500,000 more people for COVID-19 thanks to a shipment of tests from South Korea. His wife, Yumi Hogan, who is Korean-American, negotiated the shipment with Korean officials. Trump said at an afternoon briefing that governors like Hogan and Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker of Illinois don't understand they already have the testing capacity they need to begin the first phase of reopening their states.

— Massachusetts has emerged as an alarming hot spot of contagion, with over 1,800 dead and officials hoping to bend the curve through aggressive contact tracing.

— New York, with the worst outbreak in the nation, reported that hospitalizations in the state have leveled off and the day's death toll, at 478, was the lowest in three weeks, down from a peak of nearly 800.

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Still, the city canceled three of its biggest June events: the Puerto Rican Day parade, the Israel parade and the gay pride march.

— A meatpacking plant in Minnesota was shut down after an outbreak there. But Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds refused to order the closing of any slaughterhouses in her state that are seeing alarming increases in COVID-19, saying: "Without them, people's lives and our food supply will be impacted."

Mobilized by the far right, many Americans have taken to the streets in places such as Michigan, Ohio and Virginia, complaining that the shutdowns are destroying their livelihoods and trampling their rights.

But Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert, warned on ABC: "Unless we get the virus under control, the real recovery economically is not going to happen."

Boeing's shutdown went into effect March 25 after workers tested positive for the virus and an inspector for the company died. Washington was the first state to see a spike in COVID-19 cases and enacted strict shutdown orders that helped tamp the virus down.

The crisis has exacerbated problems at Boeing, which is in dire financial trouble and under federal investigation over two crashes of its 737 MAX jetliner that killed 346 people.

Union representatives spent the day walking through factories to see what safeguards had been put in place.

At Doosan Bobcat, spokeswoman Stacey Breuer said the reopening came after two weeks spent putting in safety measures.

"There is definitely still some concern and do we feel 100% safe? Obviously not," said William Wilkinson, a Bobcat welder and president of a United Steelworkers union local. He said workers there were wearing face masks and keeping their distance from one another.

Even with the outbreak easing in places, the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, cautioned, "The worst is yet ahead of us." He did not specify why he believed so. But there were signs the virus was swelling in Africa, where the health care system is in poor condition.

Long reported from Washington. Corder reported from The Hague, Netherlands. AP writers worldwide contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Oil price goes negative as demand collapses; stocks dip

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares skidded on Tuesday after U.S. oil futures plunged below zero as storage for crude runs close to full amid a worldwide glut as demand collapses due to the pandemic.

Shares fell in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai but New York stock futures edged higher after the S&P 500 sank 1.8% overnight, giving up some big gains from last week.

In a stunning development, the cost to have a barrel of U.S. crude delivered in May plummeted to negative \$37.63. It was at roughly \$60 at the start of the year.

Traders are still paying more than \$20 for a barrel of U.S. oil to be delivered in June, which analysts consider to be closer to the "true" price of oil. Crude to be delivered next month, meanwhile, is running up against a stark problem: traders are running out of places to keep it, as factories, automobiles and airplanes sit idled around the world.

"We could merely be in the eye of the hurricane as the epicenters of its rage remain centered around demand devastation and crude oil oversupply," Stephen Innes of AxiCorp. said in a commentary.

"At a minimum, oil prices will be the last asset class to recover from lockdown. End transport demand will only occur in the final stages of reopening when border crossing is allowed, and travel restrictions get lifted," he said.

Tanks at a key energy hub in Oklahoma could hit their limits within three weeks, according to Chris Midg-

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ley, head of analytics at S&P Global Platts. Because of that, traders are willing to pay others to take that oil for delivery in May off their hands, so long as they also take the burden of figuring out where to keep it.

"Almost by definition, crude oil has never fallen more than 100%, which is what happened today," said Dave Ernsberger, global head of pricing and market insight at S&P Global Platts.

"I don't think any of us can really believe what we saw today," he said. "This kind of rewrites the economics of oil trading."

Few traders are buying and selling U.S. oil to be delivered in May. When trading contracts for it expire on Tuesday, the earliest delivery they'll be able to buy is for June.

Brent crude, the international standard, fell nearly 9% on Monday to \$25.57 per barrel.

Early Tuesday, U.S. crude for June delivery had gained \$1.24 to \$21.67 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the standard for international oil pricing, had edged 3 cents higher, to \$25.67.

Monday's plunge in oil sent energy stocks in the S&P 500 to a 3.7% loss, the latest in a dismal 2020 that has caused their prices to nearly halve.

Halliburton reported a stronger first quarter profit than expected but said the pandemic has created so much turmoil in the industry that it "cannot reasonably estimate" how long the hit to demand will last.

The S&P 500 fell 51.40 points to 2,823.16. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 2.4% to 23,650.44, and the Nasdaq dropped 1%, to 8,560.73.

Gains from companies that are winners in the new stay-at-home economy helped limit the market's losses. Netflix jumped 3.4% to set another record as people while away the hours and days shut in at home. Amazon added 0.8%.

In Asia, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 1.3% to 19,419.07 while the Hang Seng index in Hong Kong lost 1.9% to 23,875.03. South Korea's Kospi fell 1.9%, to 1,861.99.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.5% to 5,325.80 and the Shanghai Composite index gave up 0.9% to 2,826.41.

In a sign of continued caution in the market, Treasury yields remained extremely low. The yield on the 10-year Treasury was steady at 0.62%.

In currency trading, the dollar fetched 107.65 Japanese yen, almost unchanged from 107.63 on Monday. The euro fell to \$1.0844 from \$1.0862.

Stocks have been on a general upward swing recently, buoyed by promises of massive aid for the economy and markets by the Federal Reserve and U.S. government.

More recently, countries around the world have tentatively eased up on business-shutdown restrictions meant to slow the spread of the virus.

But health experts warn the pandemic is far from over and new flareups could ignite if governments allow a premature rush to "normal" life. The S&P 500 remains nearly 17% below its record high as millions more U.S. workers file for unemployment every week amid the shutdowns.

Many analysts also warn that some of the the recent rally for stocks is based on overly optimistic expectations for a fast economic rebound once shutdowns end.

"There's still uncertainty surrounding the reopening of the economy," said Julian Emanuel, chief equity and derivatives strategist at BTIG. "Come fall, are we going to be back on airplanes? Are we going to go out and eat?"

AP Business writers Alex Veiga, Stan Choe and Damian J. Troise contributed.

Trump says he'll 'suspend immigration,' offers no details

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Monday that he will sign an executive order "to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States" because of the coronavirus.

"In light of the attack from the Invisible Enemy, as well as the need to protect the jobs of our GREAT American Citizens, I will be signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States!" Trump tweeted.

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He offered no details as to what immigration programs might be affected by the order. The White House did not immediately elaborate on Trump's tweeted announcement.

Trump has taken credit for his restrictions on travel to the U.S. from China and hard-hit European countries, arguing it contributed to slowing the spread of the virus in the U.S. But he has yet to extend those restrictions to other nations now experiencing virus outbreaks.

Due to the pandemic, almost all visa processing by the State Department, including immigrant visas, has been suspended for weeks.

More than 750,000 Americans have come down with COVID-19 and more than 42,000 have died.

Mid-April in America is an unforgiving time, and now this

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

For a generation, mid-April has delivered some of American life's most cataclysmic moments — a week when young men have shot up schools, terrorists have blown up fellow humans, members of a religious sect have burned to death in their compound and environmental calamity has sullied the ocean.

Now, as those traumatic, unwelcome anniversaries of the past 27 years roll by in the space of a single spring week, overlay one of the most disruptive moments in all of American history, even as it is still unfolding: the coronavirus, and the efforts to contain it.

What is it about this one particular week in April, anyway? And what does it mean — for survivors, and for all Americans — to move through this barrage of violent memories knowing that life as we know it, at least for now, has gone away?

"In April, things tend to happen. I don't think it's an accident that a lot of events take place in April. That's the month that people have been waiting for," says John Baick, a historian at Western New England University in Massachusetts.

He has been noticing the propensity for upheaval in April since he was in college. "There is," Baick says, "something about the spring that goes against rationality."

It was easy to believe it on Monday, 21 years after the Columbine High School shootings in Colorado and the day after the Oklahoma City bombing's 25th anniversary — and, not entirely incidentally, a day after Canada's deadliest mass shooting.

For the record, the other American cataclysms of mid-April in the late 20th and early 21st centuries alone:
— Waco, where the U.S. government raided a compound of the Branch Davidians sect on April 19, 1993, killing 76 in the raid and the fire that followed.

— Virginia Tech, where student Seung-hui Cho shot and killed 32 people and wounded 17 others on April 16, 2007.

— The explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling rig on April 20, 2010, which killed 11 crewmen and triggered the largest marine oil spill in history.

— The Boston Marathon bombing, when brothers Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev detonated two bombs that killed three people and wounded several hundred others on April 15, 2013, setting off a four-day manhunt that ended with two officers dead.

As these anniversaries unfolded over the past week — each with its own enduring trauma, its own survivors, its own communities affected — the stress of both the coronavirus and anti-coronavirus measures have changed how the events are remembered.

At Columbine, where two heavily armed students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, killed 12 classmates and a teacher on April 20, 1999, the annual private gathering of survivors and families at the school was replaced by a streamed online ceremony because of COVID-19 restrictions. Then-principal Frank DeAngelis, who organizes the yearly ceremony, said the lack of human contact made this year's anniversary tough — but also provided new opportunities.

"We did the best we could, and just could not think of not doing it," DeAngelis said. "One of the many positive things to come out of it this year was more people were able to see that moment. ... I think it provided hope."

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Same story in Oklahoma City, where the Alfred P. Murrah Federal building was destroyed by domestic terrorist's Timothy McVeigh's bomb on April 19, 1995, killing 168 people. The annual commemoration on the building's grounds was canceled and a one-hour video produced in its place.

Ryan Whicher, whose father, U.S. Secret Service Agent Alan Whicher, was killed in the bombing, said it was "extremely difficult" not to be able to attend in person.

"But it's all for the right reasons," Whicher said. "Everyone is making sacrifices. I don't think it's fair for us in this coronavirus (environment) to feel we should be treated any differently."

Beyond the core groups marking these sad moments, though, is the effect on the general public. Are the anniversaries now less noticeable because of the fatigue of American life shutting down, with social distancing in full force? Or would such milestones make things more intense for people already struggling with a changed world?

"Does something like COVID take up so much bandwidth that news coverage of past events matters less this year? I can see how plausibly you'd go both ways," says Bethany Lacina, a political scientist at the University of Rochester who studies the interplay of politics and American popular culture.

She also researches human conflict and notes that winter's harshness often dissuades mayhem and crime, which then tend to emerge with the thaw. "Unpleasant weather depresses political violence of all sorts," Lacina says.

The notion of waiting until spring to take action, to wage war, to attack or just to speak out forcefully certainly has some precedent in American history.

Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth on the night of April 14, 1865, and died the next morning. The first major protest against the Vietnam War was on April 17, 1965, in Washington, drawing about 20,000 demonstrators. The upheaval after Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 assassination extended into mid-April.

Even more salient than those, perhaps, is this date: April 19, 1775, the day the "shot heard 'round the world" — the battles of Lexington and Concord — kicked off the American Revolution.

Apryl Alexander, a clinical assistant professor of psychology at the University of Denver, works with people who experience trauma more than once. She sees links between the violent events of mid-April in modern America and the current coronavirus saga.

For one, "a lot of these tragedies were related to some sort of systems failure," just as with the virus' spread. What's more, she says, the stress of what Americans are enduring today is difficult enough without overlaying old bad news.

"We're inundated with all this information that's not really hopeful. And now you're going to add these memories of these prior situations on top of that? That's going to exacerbate your stress," says Alexander, a Virginia Tech graduate who was living in the community in 2007.

"This experience we're going through with COVID is a trauma," she says. "And I don't think many people are reflecting on that."

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, covered the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and the Columbine High School shootings in 1999. Follow him on Twitter [here](#). Ken Miller in Oklahoma City and Thomas Peipert in Denver contributed to this report.

Georgia to reopen some businesses as early as Friday

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's governor announced plans Monday to restart the state's economy before the end of the week, saying many businesses that closed to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus could reopen as early as Friday.

The governor in neighboring Tennessee planned to let businesses in most of his state begin reopening as soon as next week.

Georgia's timetable, one of the most aggressive in the nation, would allow gyms, hair salons, bowling alleys and tattoo parlors to reopen as long as owners follow strict social-distancing and hygiene require-

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ments. Elective medical procedures would also resume. By Monday, movie theaters may resume selling tickets, and restaurants limited to takeout orders could return to limited dine-in service.

Such a swift reopening runs counter to the advice of many experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top authority on infectious diseases, who warned again Monday that resuming business too soon risked a fresh spike in infections.

Republican Gov. Brian Kemp said it was important to allow businesses that had been shut down a chance to get some revenue flowing. But he emphasized businesses would still be operating under restrictions including monitoring employee health, enhancing sanitation and separating workers.

"I think this is the right approach at the right time," Kemp said. "We're not just throwing the keys back to these business owners. We're talking about people (who had) the government shut down their business."

Bars, live performance venues and amusement parks will remain closed.

Kemp's order overrides any attempt to impose stricter local decisions, but some local officials including Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said the governor is moving too quickly.

"It appears the governor's order supersedes anything I can do as mayor, but I still have my voice and what I will continue to do is ask Atlantans to please stay at home," Bottoms told ABC News.

"Reopen? Dangerously incompetent" is how Stacey Abrams, a Democrat who narrowly lost the 2018 governor's race to Kemp, characterized the action on Twitter.

The governor's actions line up with the phase one of reopening seen in the guidelines issued last week by President Donald Trump's administration. Those guidelines call for 14 days of declining COVID-19 cases. Georgia on Monday had recorded six days of declining new infections according to a rolling seven-day average of state Department of Public Health figures. If that continued through Friday, it would be 10 days. Kemp said he delayed the reopening of sit-down service in restaurants and theaters until next Monday in part because, "I also think that gives us more time to continue to flatten the curve."

But new infections and deaths are likely to continue to mount, even if at a reduced rate. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation suggests Georgia shouldn't loosen social distancing until June 15. Kemp argues he's still mandating social distancing even as businesses reopen.

Kemp's action comes a month after he closed many businesses and not quite three weeks after he issued a shelter-at-home order that will remain in place until April 30. Kemp said elderly and medically fragile people should continue to stay at home until May 13. Kemp's shelter-at-home order followed days of pressure from local officials, and even after he issued the order, there were clashes over keeping open beaches, lakes and state parks. Kemp says keeping those outdoor spaces open has been a success.

The governor Monday said a decline in emergency room visits by people with flu-like symptoms indicates that infections are coming down.

"The bottom line is, social distancing worked," state Public Health Commissioner Kathleen Toomey told a handful of reporters after Kemp's news conference. Widespread testing is considered one cornerstone of reopening strategies.

Kemp acknowledged Georgia has lagged when it comes to COVID-19 testing and announced new initiatives to ramp it up. The state had administered more than 84,000 tests though Monday, but its per-capita testing rate is in the bottom 10 of states and lower than neighbors Alabama, Florida and Tennessee.

He said the state medical college in Augusta will begin producing thousands of swabs each day for collecting test samples. The school will also offer an online app statewide that would let people with symptoms consult with a clinician and be referred for testing if warranted. Meanwhile, the Georgia National Guard has been deploying teams capable of administering at least 1,500 tests per day to nursing home residents, emergency personnel and others.

Adjutant General Thomas Carden couldn't say exactly how much his efforts would push up testing by, saying there could be constraints on how many test kits are available or how many kits labs could process.

"What I've charged General Carden to do is to take every test we got, and use it every single day," Kemp said. "And when we run out, then we'll figure out how to get more tests."

In downtown Savannah, Patrick Godley's restaurant 17 Hundred 90 has been closed for a month. His

fine-dining menu doesn't suit itself to takeout, so he just locked the doors. His cooks, waiters and dishwashers were furloughed, allowing them to draw partial unemployment benefits.

Godley said Monday he fears it's too early to reopen for business and that doing so might trigger a new spike in infections.

"I'd rather stay closed an extra week and wipe this thing out than to open prematurely, have a second wave and have to shut down again," he said.

Even if he did reopen next week, Godley said, he doubts he would have many customers.

"I don't think people are going to be going out and celebrating a lot right now."

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, also a Republican, said his mandatory safer-at-home order will expire April 30, which will pave the way for 89 of the state's 95 counties to begin opening businesses.

Lee's announcement did not apply to counties with the largest cities — areas that are not overseen by Tennessee's Department of Health but have their own public health districts.

Lee said officials were "working directly with our major metropolitan areas to ensure they are in a position to reopen as soon and safely as possible."

Some businesses will be allowed to reopen as early as April 27, but it was unclear exactly which ones. Lee told reporters that details would be finalized later this week.

Georgia's death toll from COVID-19 hit 775 late Monday. Infections have been confirmed in more than 19,000 people.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms. For some, it can cause severe illness such as pneumonia or death.

Associated Press Writer Russ Bynum in Savannah, Georgia, contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

States work to keep meat plants open despite virus outbreaks

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — Governors in the Midwest are working to keep large meatpacking plants operating despite coronavirus outbreaks that have sickened hundreds of workers and threaten to disrupt the nation's supply of pork and beef.

In Kansas, Gov. Laura Kelly sent personal protective equipment and testing supplies to counties with meat processing plants. Gov. Kristi Noem said she didn't think it would be difficult to fulfill federal requirements to reopen a shuttered facility in South Dakota. And Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds warned of the dire cost of closing plants, even as she acknowledged the certainty of more clusters of infection at the facilities.

JBS USA said Monday it was suspending operations at a large pork processing plant in southwestern Minnesota because of an outbreak of COVID-19 among workers — the latest facility to be closed in the public health crisis.

Minnesota Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said 33 JBS employees and six close relatives had tested positive as of Saturday.

Meat processing workers are particularly susceptible to the virus because they typically stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the line and congregate in crowded locker rooms and cafeterias.

The JBS plant in Worthington employs more than 2,000 people and normally slaughters 20,000 hogs per day.

"We don't make this decision lightly," Bob Krebs, president of Colorado-based JBS USA Pork, said in a statement. "We recognize JBS Worthington is critical to local hog producers, the U.S. food supply and the many businesses that support the facility."

Iowa's governor has also warned of the threat to food supply if authorities clamp down too hard on facilities with outbreaks, and has refused to shutter a sprawling Tyson Foods pork processing facility in

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Waterloo where dozens of workers are infected.

Reynolds said the state is working with meat companies to test workers and prevent outbreaks from growing too large, even as she acknowledged that more "clusters of positive cases" are certain.

"These are also essential businesses and an essential workforce," she said. "Without them, people's lives and our food supply will be impacted. So we must do our part to keep them open in a safe and responsible way."

Reynolds noted that Iowa produces about one-third of the nation's pork. If hogs can't be processed, farmers will have to euthanize them, the governor warned.

"We're not that far from it and it will be devastating, not only for the food supply but for the cost of food moving forward," she said.

Advocates for workers said Reynolds has little regard for a vulnerable workforce that includes many refugees and immigrants.

"It's sickening," said Democratic state Sen. Bill Dotzler of Waterloo, who has called for a temporary closure and stronger worker protections. Hospitals and medical clinics in his city reported a surge in patients Monday, and many of them were Tyson employees.

A National Beef plant in Tama, Iowa, that had been closed for two weeks resumed production on Monday as scheduled. A day earlier, Reynolds announced that 177 workers out of more than 500 tested were positive for the coronavirus. The Kansas City, Missouri-based company didn't return messages.

Cargill and National Beef have reported infections among employees at plants in southwest Kansas, prompting Gov. Kelly to direct an influx of federal tests and safety equipment to counties in that region. Tyson also has plants there but has not confirmed infections.

Controlling those outbreaks is crucial: Plants in southwest Kansas account for 25 to 30% of beef processing in the U.S.

"It would be a disaster if we had to shut down, so we're trying to do everything that we can to keep those plants online," Kelly told The Associated Press.

South Dakota's governor said the temporary closure of a Smithfield Foods pork plant that produces about 5% of the U.S. pork supply has already been "devastating" for regional producers.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for safely reopening the Sioux Falls plant will be made public soon, Noem said. Its report will call for improved social distancing, expanded use of face shields and other protective equipment, and better communication between the company and workers.

"There's nothing in this report that I think will be difficult to accomplish," said Noem. She declined to say how soon it might reopen.

Smithfield Foods has said the indefinite closure disrupted its supply chain, forcing the closure of a facility in Martin City, Missouri. Smithfield also shuttered a plant in Cudahy, Wisconsin, after employees tested positive for the virus.

Also in Wisconsin, a surge of infections has been linked to the JBS Packerland plant in Green Bay. Health officials said they didn't have an exact number of infections connected to the plant, but infections spiked by more than 100 in the surrounding county over the weekend. The plant remains open.

In western Michigan, a JBS meat packing plant that was closed over the weekend reopened Monday. Sixty people there have tested positive for the coronavirus, Allegan County health spokeswoman Lindsay Maunz told WOOD-TV.

Associated Press reporters Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis; Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls; and Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, contributed to this story.

New Zealand could pull off bold goal of eliminating virus

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — While most countries are working on ways to contain the coronavirus, New Zealand has set itself a much more ambitious goal: eliminating it altogether.

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And experts believe the country could pull it off.

The virus "doesn't have superpowers," said Helen Petousis-Harris, a vaccine expert at the University of Auckland. "Once transmission is stopped, it's gone."

Geography has helped. If any place could be described as socially distant it would be New Zealand, surrounded by stormy seas, with Antarctica to the south. With 5 million people spread across an area the size of Britain, even the cities aren't overly crowded.

And Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has taken bold steps, putting the country under a strict lockdown in late March, when only about 100 people had tested positive for the new virus. Her motto: "Go hard and go early."

New Zealand has so far avoided a widespread outbreak, and new cases have dwindled from a peak of about 90 per day in early April to just five on Tuesday, leaving the goal tantalizingly close. Only 13 people have died so far, and Ardern has been personally briefed on each death.

"We have the opportunity to do something no other country has achieved: elimination of the virus," Ardern told reporters last week. "But it will continue to need a team of 5 million behind it."

Petousis-Harris said the country had managed to avoid the confusion and half-measures that have hampered the response in many other places.

"New Zealand got everything right," she said. "Decisive action, with strong leadership and very clear communications to everybody."

Ardern on Monday announced the country would stay in lockdown for another week before slightly easing some work restrictions to help restart the economy. Most of the social restrictions will remain in place.

She also tried to temper expectations of her goal, saying elimination didn't mean that new cases wouldn't arise in the future but they would be stamped out immediately.

New cases are likely when New Zealand eventually reopens its borders, but questions remain about how well prepared the health system is to implement effective contact tracing should a widespread outbreak occur. Petousis-Harris pointed to problems last year when the country failed to contain a measles outbreak.

Even if New Zealand does purge itself of the virus, the effects will linger. Before the outbreak, tourism was booming. About 4 million people visited each year, drawn by stunning scenery and the lure of adventure sports. The industry employed more than 300,000 people and accounted for about 10% of New Zealand's entire economy.

"It's been devastating. No question at all," said Stephen England-Hall, the chief executive of Tourism New Zealand, a promotional agency. "No one can really plan to go from 100% to zero in three days."

A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development found that because of its reliance on tourism, New Zealand's economy could initially be one of the hardest-hit by the coronavirus among developed nations.

The government, which came into the crisis with its books in relatively good shape, has been handing out billions of dollars in temporary wage subsidies to try and prevent mass unemployment. More than half the nation's workforce has suddenly become reliant on government handouts.

Still, most people appear to support Ardern's strict lockdown, under which schools are closed and people working nonessential jobs can leave home only for groceries or exercise. Google mobility data indicates there has been high compliance.

Many have found creative ways to cope, like 28-year-old personal trainer Jessee James. Instead of meeting her clients in gyms or at their homes, she's been leading virtual sessions over Zoom and FaceTime.

Some of her clients are using cans of beans instead of dumbbells, or laundry baskets instead of sandbags. Many want to talk more about their feelings, like the business owner who needed to lay off employees or the client with emotional issues who needs encouragement.

"Normally they would just talk to the people around them," James said. "It's been quite different."

One of the most symbolic casualties of the outbreak has been Air New Zealand. The airline had been a source of pride for many as it expanded internationally and won industry awards. In a series of frank updates, Chief Executive Greg Foran described how the carrier had reduced flights by 95% and would

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need to cut its workforce by at least 3,750.

One person who doesn't yet know if he will retain his job with the airline is 27-year-old pilot Scott Beatson. He and partner Bella Ashworth, who just finished law school, bought a house earlier this year, and they're both now worried about their futures.

"It's quite sad," Beatson said. "Just before the lockdown, I was talking with a baggage loader and a check-in person, and everyone took such pride in the company."

An eager fisherman and hiker, Beatson has taken to camping in his backyard while stuck at home. Like many around the country, he's been tuning into some of the daily briefings given by Ardern and Ashley Bloomfield, the director-general of health.

An unassuming official who spent a year working at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Bloomfield's calm and reassuring presence has turned him into an unlikely heartthrob.

Singer Maxwell Apshe wrote a song about Bloomfield that has been viewed more than 75,000 times on YouTube. "If I had one wish, I would make it this: I'd be in your bubble," go the lyrics.

When New Zealand does come out of its bubble, the path forward remains unclear. It will need to continue relying on its traditional strength in farming to sell things abroad like dairy products, kiwifruit and wine.

Some have suggested the country could first reopen its borders to Australia, which has also been successful in flattening its virus curve.

England-Hall, the tourism executive, said New Zealand will look to first rebuild the domestic tourism market. He said being virus-free could eventually become a selling point abroad for the country.

The conundrum is that to stay virus-free, New Zealand may need to continue its current requirement that new arrivals spend two weeks in quarantine. Given that the average tourist in the past has stayed for about 11 days, it seems an insurmountable obstacle.

Ever the optimist, England-Hall foresees a new type of tourism product in which wealthy people could be pampered during a quarantine period — a kind of isolation spa.

But with travel curtailed, some worry that New Zealand could revert to a more insular version of itself, before cheap flights allowed its citizens to roam the world, and foreigners to visit. A place where isolation can be both a blessing and a curse.

Rampage leaves 18 dead in Canada's worst mass shooting

By **ROB GILLIES** Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Police fanned out across more than a dozen crime scenes Monday after a rampage by a gunman disguised as a police officer left at least 18 dead and homes in smoldering ruins in rural communities across Nova Scotia — the deadliest mass shooting in Canada's history.

Officials said the suspect, identified as 51-year-old Gabriel Wortman, also died in the weekend attack. Authorities did not provide a motive for the killings.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Chief Superintendent Chris Leather told a news conference Monday that police expect to find more victims once they are able to comb through all the crime scenes, some of which were houses set ablaze as victims were inside, adhering to government calls to stay at home because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Leather said police teams were spread out at 16 locations across central and northern Nova Scotia. He said some of the victims knew Wortman, and some didn't.

"We're relatively confident we've identified all the crime scenes," Leather said. "We have had five structure fires, most of those being residences, and we believe there may be victims still within the remains of those homes which burnt to the ground."

The dead included a police officer. Another was wounded by gunfire and was recovering at home, Leather said.

"The 18 innocent lives lost will be remembered throughout Canada's history," Public Safety Minister Bill Blair said.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau noted how close-knit the small province of Nova Scotia is.

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"The vast majority of Nova Scotians will have a direct link with one or more of the victims. The entire province and country is grieving right now as we come to grips with something that is unimaginable," Trudeau told a news conference.

"The pandemic will prevent us from mourning together in person, but a vigil will be held virtually to celebrate the lives of the victims," Trudeau added, saying it would take place Friday night through a Facebook group.

Trudeau asked the media to avoid mentioning the name of the assailant or showing his picture.

"Do not give this person the gift of infamy," he said.

The 12-hour rampage began late Saturday in the rural town of Portapique, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) north of Halifax, where police warned residents to lock their doors and stay in their basements as the attack unfolded. The town, like all of Canada, had been adhering to government advice to remain at home because of the pandemic and most of the victims were inside when the attack began.

Several bodies were later found inside and outside one house on Portapique Beach Road, the street where the suspect lived, authorities said.

Bodies were also found at other locations within about a 30-mile (50-kilometer) area from the neighborhood where the shootings began, and authorities believe the shooter may have targeted his first victims but then began attacking randomly.

Authorities said the gunman wore a police uniform and made his car look like a Royal Canadian Mounted Police cruiser.

"His ability to move around the province undetected was surely greatly benefited by the fact that he had a vehicle that looked identical in every way to a marked police car," Leather said, adding that the gunman was also either wearing a police uniform or very good copy.

He said at one point the suspect was forced to abandon his car and then carjacked other vehicles to continue to "circulate around the province steps ahead of our investigators."

Authorities believe he acted alone. RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki said he was not well known to police and no note from the suspect has been found. She said police were still studying the crime scenes to determine what weapons were used.

According to his high school yearbook, Wortman long had a fascination with the Mounties. "Gabe's future may include being an RCMP officer," his yearbook profile said.

The dead officer was identified as Constable Heidi Stevenson, a mother of two and a 23-year veteran of the force.

Two health care workers at local nursing homes were also among those killed, according to Von Canada, a long term health care company, which identified them as Kristen Beaton, a continuing care assistant, and Heather O'Brien, a licensed practical nurse.

O'Brien's daughter, Darcy Dobson, wrote in a Facebook post that, "A Monster murdered my Mother."

"Murdered her, without a second thought. The pain comes and goes in waves. I feel like I'm outside of my own body. This can't be real. At 9:59 am she sent her last text message to our family group chat. By 10:15 she was gone."

School teacher Lisa McCully, who worked at a local elementary school, also was among the dead. "Our hearts are broken along with those of her colleagues and students at Debert Elementary," Nova Scotia Teachers Union President Paul Wozney said.

Police initially said Wortman had been arrested Sunday at a gas station in Enfield, outside Halifax, but later said he had died. It was not clear how, and they did not provide further details, although one police official said that there was an exchange of gunfire between the suspect and police at one point.

Wortman, who owned a denture practice in the city of Dartmouth, near Halifax, lived part time in Portapique, according to residents.

Atlantic Denture Clinic, the practice Wortman owned, had been closed for the past month because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Neighbor Nancy Hudson said she met Wortman about 18 years ago when he bought the property on

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Portapique Beach Road, which is a short walk from her home, and she and her husband used to socialize with him.

"There is another side to Gabe. He had some issues, especially with his girlfriend," Hudson said, adding that he was obsessed and jealous. "It was a red flag."

Speaking to reporters Monday, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil said that even in the midst of such anguish now was not the time to gather together to mourn.

"We cannot forget that in the midst of this tragedy we are still fighting a deadly virus," McNeil said. "Now more than ever we need your cooperation. It takes inner strength. The best that we can honor the victims of this tragedy is to continue to act in a way that protects our fellow Nova Scotians."

Mass shootings are relatively rare in Canada. The country overhauled its gun-control laws after gunman Marc Lepine killed 14 women and himself at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique college in 1989. Before this weekend's rampage, that had been the country's worst mass shooting.

Trudeau said Monday his government would introduce further gun control legislation prohibiting military-style assault weapons, a measure that had already been planned before the coronavirus pandemic interrupted the current parliamentary session.

This story has been updated to correct that this was Canada's worst mass shooting, not killing.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

Boeing said it will put about 27,000 people back to work this week building passenger jets at its Seattle-area plants, with virus-slowing precautions in place, including face masks and staggered shifts. The modest reopenings come amid protests in some states by people who say it's time to get back to work.

Boeing is among a small number of manufacturers around the U.S. that geared up Monday to resume production amid pressure from President Donald Trump to reopen the economy and resistance from governors who warn there is not enough testing yet to keep the new coronavirus from rebounding. Maryland secured 500,000 tests from South Korea after the governor's Korean American wife negotiated the shipment.

The moves are accompanied by signs of economic gloom as oil futures plunged below zero to a historic low. Stocks and Treasury yields also dropped on Wall Street.

Here are some of AP's top stories Monday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow [APNews.com/VirusOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/VirusOutbreak) for updates through the day and [APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak) for stories explaining some of its complexities.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— Boeing and a small number of other manufacturers around the U.S. are gearing up to resume production this week. Doosan Bobcat, a farm equipment maker and North Dakota's largest manufacturer, announced the return of about 2,200 workers at three factories around the state.

— Federal officials said Monday they plan to start tracking and publicly sharing information on infections and deaths in nursing homes, which they are calling the ground zero of the coronavirus crisis. The move to help spot trends about how the virus is spreading comes as critics, industry officials and local leaders call for the federal government to take more aggressive action to track infections and contain outbreaks in the homes.

— About 200 people rallied in Maine's capital demanding the state to open back up, despite officials' insistence on a cautious approach in order to prevent another outbreak. Similar rallies have happened in New Hampshire, Michigan, Ohio and elsewhere in the country. Participants include gun rights activists, opponents of stay-at-home orders and supporters of President Donald Trump.

— Some big restaurant chains have obtained loans from the government under a small-business relief program, leading business groups to cry foul even though the loans are within the guidelines of the lending program. The Paycheck Protection Program exhausted its \$350 billion in funding last week and many small businesses were unable to obtain loans they desperately need to stay afloat.

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— Reports of accidental poisonings from cleaners and disinfectants are up in the U.S. this year, and researchers believe it's related to the coronavirus epidemic. Such poisonings were up about 20% in the first three months of this year, compared with the same period in 2018 and 2019, according to a report Monday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

— The U.S. state of Maryland will be able to test 500,000 more people for COVID-19 thanks to a shipment of tests from South Korea. Gov. Larry Hogan announced Monday that wife Yumi Hogan, who is Korean American, negotiated the shipment with South Korean officials. The Republican governor said Maryland has been doing everything in its power to increase testing capacity.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority of people recover.

Here are the symptoms of the virus compared with the common flu.

One of the best ways to prevent spread of the virus is washing your hands with soap and water. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends first washing with warm or cold water and then lathering soap for 20 seconds to get it on the backs of hands, between fingers and under fingernails before rinsing off.

You should wash your phone, too. Here's how.

TRACKING THE VIRUS: Zoom in at the individual county level to access numbers showing the situation where you or loved ones live.

ONE NUMBER:

— 1,553: India recorded its biggest single-day spike in coronavirus cases on Monday. The government has eased one of the world's strictest lockdowns to allow some manufacturing and agricultural activity to resume.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— Brad Paisley has been surprising people on video conference calls to share in a virtual happy hour. The country star has already joined a group of elementary school teachers in Illinois, a young man celebrating his 21st birthday and a group of health care workers.

— COLLEGE SENIORS: The pandemic has forced many of the nearly 2 million people expected to earn U.S. bachelor's degrees in 2020 into instant "adulting." Gone are housing, friends and dreams of a graduation ceremony.

— COLLEGE SPORTS CUTS: College sports programs already are being cut as the pandemic triggers fears of an economic meltdown on campuses around the country.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

South Texas ER doctor self-isolates in his kids' treehouse

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP) — A South Texas emergency room physician has chosen a novel place to self-isolate as he's treating patients with the novel coronavirus.

Dr. Jason Barnes made a temporary home of his children's treehouse in the backyard of the family's Corpus Christi home. He is among many health care workers who are leaving their homes or taking other precautions to protect their families after being exposed to the virus. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death.

Barnes, a 39-year-old physician at Christus Spohn Hospital Beeville and Christus Spohn Hospital South in Corpus Christi, told the Corpus Christi Caller-Times that he has spent nearly three weeks in the cabin treehouse and often shouts down to his kids if he needs something — or sometimes walks up to the back

picture window door of their home to make his request.

"They're within yelling distance," Barnes said. "But I can call or go up to the glass. They know not to open the door and risk catching something."

Of course, this self-isolation means his two sons, ages 6 and 9, lose their playhouse.

"They love that thing, but they understand, so they're not missing the treehouse, per se," Barnes said. "They tell me they miss me once a day."

'Political game'? Governors push back on Trump virus charge

By ALAN SUDERMAN, JOHN HANNA and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A chorus of governors from both parties pushed back hard Monday after President Donald Trump accused Democrats of playing "a very dangerous political game" by insisting there is a shortage of tests for coronavirus. The governors countered that the White House must do more to help states do the testing that's needed before they can ease up on stay-at-home orders.

Kansas' Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly said the current federal effort "really is not good enough if we're going to be able to start to open our economy. We cannot do that safely without the tests in place."

Supply shortages have stymied U.S. testing for weeks. The needs range from basic supplies like swabs and protective gear to highly specialized laboratory chemicals needed to analyze patient results. Hospitals, laboratories and state health departments report scouring the globe to secure orders, competing against each other and their peers abroad.

The governors' plea for stepped-up coordination came on the latest day when the Trump administration provided discordant messaging: Trump blasted state leaders on Twitter for being too dependent on federal government and said later that some governors just didn't understand what they had, while Vice President Mike Pence assured governors the government was working around-the-clock to help them ramp up testing.

Pence sought to soften the administration's message amid growing clamor from both parties for a national testing strategy to help secure testing swabs, chemical reagents and other crucial supplies.

"When it comes to testing, we're here to help," Pence told governors during a video conference from the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Associated Press obtained audio of the call.

Pence said the administration sent each state a detailed list Monday of testing capacity. But Maryland's Republican Gov. Larry Hogan said much of the unused lab machinery listed for his state was in federal labs the state does not have access to. Pence said the administration has agreed to open up federal labs to help states.

Hogan announced Monday that the state had received 500,000 tests from South Korea — a "game-changing" deal negotiated by his wife, Yumi Hogan, who grew up outside Seoul.

"They want the states to take the lead, and we have to go out and do it ourselves, and so that's exactly what we did," Hogan said.

Trump didn't take that lying down. In his daily briefing, he said some governors have "more capacity than they understand."

"The governor of Maryland could have called Mike Pence, could have saved a lot of money," Trump said. "I don't think he needed to go to South Korea. He needed to get a little knowledge."

In Ohio, Republican Gov. Mike DeWine said his state is working with another federal agency, the Food and Drug Administration, to find a source of reagent, the chemical used to analyze test results. "A lot of good things are going on, but we're not there yet," DeWine said.

Democratic Montana Gov. Steve Bullock said his state received 5,000 nasal swabs Monday from FEMA — evidence the federal government is listening. But he added, "It doesn't get us far enough."

In New York, Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the states should take the lead on testing but it's up to the federal government to help sort out supply chain issues facing testing manufacturers.

"What the states will run into is when you talk to those labs ... they buy machines and equipment from national manufacturers," said Cuomo, who is expected to meet with Trump at the White House Tuesday.

"And those labs can only run as many tests as the national manufacturers provide them chemicals, reagents and lab kits."

Pennsylvania's Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf said, "We need the reagents, we need the test kits and I think that's the sort of general cry from other states."

As Pence spoke with the governors, Trump took to Twitter with a more combative tone than his vice president, complaining that the "radical left" and "Do Nothing Democrats" were playing politics with their complaints about a lack of tests.

"Now they scream'Testing, Testing, Testing,' again playing a very dangerous political game," Trump tweeted. "States, not the Federal Government, should be doing the Testing - But we will work with the Governors and get it done."

Public health experts say the country needs to dramatically increase its testing infrastructure if it is going to safely roll back restrictions and reopen businesses without risking a major spike in infections.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, told ABC's "Good Morning America" Monday that the country is currently running about 1.5 million to 2 million tests per week. But, "we really need to get up to, at least, you know, maybe two times that, three times that."

The White House said the Pentagon is finalizing negotiations with a Maine medical company to ramp up production of nasal swabs under the Defense Production Act. An Ohio manufacturer of cotton swabs has also agreed to convert its facilities to allow for 10 million testing swabs per month.

Testing was an issue on Capitol Hill, too, where the administration and Congress were inching toward agreement on an aid package of more than \$450 billion to boost a small-business loan program that has run out of money. The deal is expected to add funds for hospitals and COVID-19 testing, as well.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. But for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani in Chicago; Kevin Freking, Matthew Perrone and Zeke Miller in Washington; Marina Villeneuve in Albany, New York; Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland; and Amy Beth Hanson in Helena, Montana contributed reporting. Suderman reported from Richmond, Virginia. Hanna reported from Topeka, Kansas.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingTheOutbreak>

2 types of testing look for COVID-19 infections new and old

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Testing is critical to controlling the coronavirus and eventually easing restrictions that have halted daily life for most Americans. But there's been confusion about what kinds of tests are available and what they actually measure.

There are still just two main types in the U.S. One tells you if you have an active infection with the coronavirus, whether you have symptoms or not. The other checks to see if you were previously infected at some point and fought it off.

Currently, almost all testing in hospitals, clinics and drive-thru sites uses the first testing method, to help doctors detect and treat people with active COVID-19.

The other method — known as antibody testing — is still getting rolling. But eventually experts predict the blood test will play a key role in allowing many Americans to safely return to work and school by identifying those who are likely immune from the virus.

Neither test can be done at home yet.

Here's a look at both tests and how they work:

TESTING FOR INFECTION

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Genetic testing is the best method for detecting active COVID-19 infections and making a diagnosis. The process requires several steps and high-tech testing equipment to detect tiny traces of the virus that causes COVID-19.

First, the doctor or nurse gathers samples from a patient's nose or throat using swabs. The sample is developed through a process called polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, which is used to boost any traces of virus until they are detectable.

The same process has long been used to diagnose viruses like HIV and hepatitis.

The Food and Drug Administration has now authorized dozens of these types of tests that can be run at hospitals, university laboratories and large testing chains like Quest Diagnostics. The tests typically take 4 to 6 hours to run and can take a day or more to turn around if a sample needs to be shipped to another site for processing.

Last month, several faster options that don't require laboratory processing came on the market. The fastest is a 15-minute test from Abbott Laboratories run on small, portable electronic machines found in thousands of hospitals, clinics and doctor's offices. The test puts all the chemical ingredients into a small cartridge that's inserted into the Abbott machine along with the swabbed sample.

There are caveats to these types of tests: Someone can test negative one day and then positive the next. Much depends on the level of virus and whether the swab picked up enough of it to make a good sample.

The FDA recently authorized the first genetic test that uses saliva, rather than a nasal swab, but its availability is limited for now.

U.S. testing continues to be squeezed by huge demand, limited testing machines and shortages of key supplies like swabs. While the U.S. is now conducting well over 1 million tests per week, most experts say that number will need to increase at least threefold before social distancing is dramatically eased.

TESTING FOR ANTIBODIES

The second type of test won't tell you whether you're currently infected with the virus, but whether you were infected sometime in the past.

Instead of searching for the virus itself, these tests search for blood proteins called antibodies, which the body produces days or weeks after fighting an infection. The same approach — usually a finger-prick of blood on a test strip — is used for HIV, hepatitis and many other infections.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease official, says it's a "reasonable assumption," that if you have antibodies, you will be protected from another infection. But federal researchers still have to answer several key questions: How accurate are the tests? What antibody level is needed for immunity? How long does that immunity last?

By testing broad populations for antibodies, researchers hope to learn how widely the virus spread and how deadly it really is. Both questions remain unresolved since experts believe at least 25% of those infected never show symptoms. Some of those larger studies are getting started.

For now, FDA Commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn suggests the blood tests could be used by front-line health care workers. For example, a doctor who tests positive for antibodies could be in a safer position to treat COVID-19 patients than a colleague who tests negative.

The FDA has authorized four antibody tests based on preliminary reviews. But more than 90 others have launched without FDA oversight under a federal emergency policy intended to quickly ramp up testing options. Those tests are supposed to bear disclaimers, including that they have not been FDA-approved, though many don't.

Several laboratory and physician groups have called for tighter FDA control.

"They have a responsibility to go back, demand more rigorous clinical trials and probably put some guard rails around these tests," said Dr. Gary Procop of the Cleveland Clinic and president of the American Society for Clinical Pathology.

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter: www.twitter.com/AP_FDAAwriter

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Massachusetts becomes coronavirus hot spot as cases surge

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

Massachusetts has become a hot spot of coronavirus infections, drawing the concern of federal officials and promises of aid from hard-hit New York as the state's death toll prepares to double in less than a week.

Deaths from COVID-19 are expected to surpass 2,000 this week in Massachusetts, where officials are scrambling to boost hospital capacity and trace new infections to curb the spread of the disease.

"We're right in the middle of the surge now," Republican Gov. Charlie Baker said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Vice President Mike Pence said the White House is closely watching the Boston area, and the coordinator of the federal coronavirus task force, Dr. Deborah Birx, said officials are "very much focused" on Massachusetts.

There were 103 new deaths reported in Massachusetts on Monday, bringing the state's death toll to more than 1,800. More than 1,500 new cases were reported, for a total of more than 39,500 across the state. That compares with more than 14,000 deaths in New York state and over 35,000 nationally.

Massachusetts is hoping to bend the curve by using a group of "contact tracers" to alert people who may have come in contact with someone who tested positive for the virus so they can self-quarantine or be tested themselves.

As of Thursday, contact tracers had gotten a hold of 765 people who had tested positive and those people identified more than 1,000 people they had been in close contact with, WBUR reported.

"We don't have any other really good tools until we have a vaccine," said Andrew Lover, an expert at the University of Massachusetts Amherst's School of Public Health & Health Sciences.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

As the number of hospitalizations and deaths dropped in New York, which had been the epicenter of the outbreak in the U.S., Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo pledged to send 400 ventilators to Massachusetts, if needed.

"You were there for us and we are going to be there for you," Cuomo said Sunday.

Two field hospitals designed to deal with an expected surge of COVID-19 patients opened Monday in Massachusetts, joining two other sites that have been up and running. A fifth one is expected to open in about a week.

There were more than 150 patients on Saturday at a medical center called Boston Hope set up at the city's convention center. The 1,000-bed hospital could reach capacity as the cases peak, officials said.

"If the surge really happens, which it feels like it's here and escalating, then in fact we will be filling all of our beds," Jeanette Ives Erickson, co-director of the field hospital, told The Boston Globe.

In Massachusetts' hardest-hit community, Chelsea, officials are urging residents not to leave their homes at all as the cases surge unless they are an essential worker or have an essential need.

The densely populated city just outside Boston, with a large Latino immigrant community, has Massachusetts' highest rate of infection, nearly four times the statewide rate. The city's more than 40,000 residents live across just about 2 square miles in crowded housing units, and many work in essential services like grocery stores, said City Manager Thomas Ambrosino.

"We have to get it under control here," Ambrosino said.

Boston has been ramping up efforts to slow the spread in neighborhoods with the highest rates of infection. But as temperatures climbed Sunday, some people ignored directives to stay at home and gathered with friends or played soccer and golf, Mayor Marty Walsh said.

They were "not understanding the severity of what's happening here in this country and in Boston, in Massachusetts," Walsh said on CNN. "It's just wrong," he said.

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The city has outfitted public work trucks with speakers that are circling hard-hit neighborhoods broadcasting messages about social distancing, washing hands and covering faces.

"The worst is yet to come for a lot of people," Walsh said Monday. "Even when we're beyond the curve, we're going to have positive cases of coronavirus, we're still going to have loss of life."

Associated Press writer Steve Leblanc contributed to this report.

3 killed by suspected tornado, lightning as storms hit South

HEADLAND, Ala. (AP) — Suspected tornadoes killed at least two people as severe weather blasted the Deep South, and a house fire believed started by lightning claimed a third person, officials said Monday.

Jerry Oliver Williams, 61, died late Sunday night when winds flipped the home Williams shared with his wife and child in a rural Alabama county, authorities said. The area was under a tornado warning at the time.

"He was in a mobile home, and the mobile home was destroyed by a tornado. He was in the wreckage of the mobile home. His wife and child were with him, and they were OK," said Coroner Derek Wright of Alabama's Henry County.

A suspected twister also resulted in one death in Marion County, Mississippi, said Coroner Jessie Graham. Jerry Johnson, 70, died when his home took a "direct hit" from the storm in the Sandy Hook community, Graham said.

The National Weather Service said it had received reports of large hail and broken power poles in the area, and emergency management officials said 20 homes were damaged.

In south Georgia, Wilcox County Coroner Janice Brown a 95-year-old woman died in a house fire early Monday that the state fire marshal's office suspected was caused by a lightning strike. Heavy storms were in the area at the time, said Brown, who declined to identify the victim since extended family members hadn't been notified.

The deaths came as firefighters worked through storms to contain a blaze at the main music building at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Authorities haven't determined the cause of the fire, but it happened while strong storms with lightning were in the area.

Firefighters saved most of the instruments and uniforms belonging to Alabama's "Million Dollar Band," Mayor Walt Maddox said in a tweet.

Rainfall totals in excess of 2 inches (5.08 centimeters) were widespread, and isolated spots in central Alabama received more than 8 inches (20.32 centimeters) of rain in a day, the weather service said.

More than 35,000 homes and businesses in Alabama and Mississippi were still without power around noontime Monday.

The Storm Prediction Center received more than 250 reports of possible tornadoes, high winds, hail and storm damage from east Texas to central Florida on Sunday and Monday. A tornado touched down on Interstate 75 in north Florida, tossing a portable building being hauled by a truck into a nearby pickup truck, where the driver suffered minor injuries, authorities said.

Teams from the National Weather Service will assess tracks to determine where tornadoes struck.

The storms hit a week after a two-day outbreak of more than 100 tornadoes that began Easter Sunday killed at least 36 people across the region.

Feds to track, share information on nursing home outbreaks

By CANDICE CHOI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Calling nursing homes ground zero of the coronavirus crisis, federal officials said Monday they plan to start tracking and publicly sharing information on infections and deaths in such facilities to help spot trends and early signs the virus is spreading in communities.

The move comes as critics, industry officials and local leaders have called for more aggressive actions by the federal government to track infections in homes and contain outbreaks by helping them get greater

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access to testing and masks, especially given the vulnerability of elderly residents.

"It's our intention to make that information public," Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, said during a call with reporters, adding that details were still being worked out on when or how the information would be distributed.

Because the federal government has not been releasing a count of its own, The Associated Press has been keeping its own tally from media reports and state health departments, finding at least 8,496 deaths linked to coronavirus outbreaks in nursing homes and long-term care facilities nationwide.

But the true toll of the mostly frail and elderly people who live in such facilities is likely much higher, experts say, because many homes have not reported their deaths and state counts may not include those who died without ever being tested.

For the federal tracking of infections, Verma said homes could start reporting by the end of this week and that questionnaires from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will collect information on deaths as well as confirmed and suspected cases, including among workers. She also said nursing homes will also be required to tell patients and family members within 12 hours of a confirmed infection.

Verma noted that that federal surveillance of outbreaks at nursing homes will be important for re-opening the country since infections in the homes could be early predictors of spread in communities.

"It's fair to say nursing homes have been ground zero" for the virus, Verma said, noting that the Life Care Center nursing home in Washington state became the first COVID-19 hot spot in the U.S.. That outbreak eventually claimed 43 lives.

Some of the biggest outbreaks since have included 55 deaths at a nursing home in New York City's Brooklyn borough, 49 at a home outside Richmond, Virginia, 48 at a veteran's home in Holyoke, Mass., and at least 40 deaths each at five homes in outer boroughs of New York City.

Experts say the outbreaks have been fueled by the industry's chronic challenges with controlling infections and staffing shortages. Several major outbreaks have been blamed on asymptomatic spreaders who made it past screening measures such as daily temperature checks for staffers that nursing homes were ordered to put in place in mid-March.

Mark Parkinson of the American Health Care Association, which represents nursing homes and assisted living facilities, said he hopes federal officials will use the data they collect to identify where to prioritize badly needed resources like testing and masks for residents and workers.

"The country was so focused on making sure that hospitals were fully equipped and ready for a surge of admissions, we were really left behind," he said.

AP investigative researcher Randy R. Herschaft in New York and reporter Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington contributed to this report.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Congressional Black Caucus PAC backs Biden's White House bid

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — The Congressional Black Caucus PAC endorsed Joe Biden's presidential bid on Monday, further cementing his support among the nation's influential black political leadership.

The political action committee's unanimous endorsement came on the heels of several key nods of support among caucus leadership and members, including civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis of Georgia and caucus Chairwoman Rep. Karen Bass of California. The PAC is the caucus's separate campaign arm.

"There's no question that Joe Biden is badly needed by this country," CBC PAC Chairman Rep. Gregory Meeks of New York said in an interview with The Associated Press. "His leadership, his experience, his understanding on how to get things done and his ability to work and pull people together is needed now more than ever. We need someone that is a healer and not a divider, and that's Joe Biden."

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Biden, who is on the cusp of clinching the Democratic presidential nomination, had already scored key endorsements from 38 of the 54 members of the group, which is composed of most African American members of Congress.

Black voters have long anchored the former vice president's White House bid with overwhelming support in South Carolina, on Super Tuesday and in Midwestern states like Michigan. But that was before the coronavirus pandemic disrupted the presidential race, forcing several states with significant black populations, like Georgia, to postpone their primaries. African Americans have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

An AP analysis last week found nearly one-third of those who have died are African American, with black people representing just 14% of the population in the areas covered in the analysis.

Earlier this month, Biden joined a growing call for the release of comprehensive racial data on the coronavirus pandemic, which he said has put a spotlight on inequity and the impact of "structural racism."

Meeks said he believes Biden is well-suited to address the lasting impact of the pandemic and he'd like to see an agenda from him that specifically addresses racial disparities that have long plagued black Americans. Many of the nation's front-line workers, who are among the most at risk, are black Americans and other people of color.

"There's no question in my mind that there needs to be an agenda that pushes forward black America," Meeks said. "Joe Biden has proven that he has the ability to get things done and that he has a vision to bring us together and have an agenda of significant importance for the black community."

The CBC PAC endorsed Hillary Clinton in 2016 over Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. When asked what will be the road map to winning the election this time after Democrats suffered a bitter defeat, Meeks said it's simple: Listen to black women, who are among the Democratic Party's most loyal voting bloc.

"Black women over-performed in 2016, and had we listened to them, we might not have the person that's there now," Meeks said.

But Meeks said he's confident Biden will be able to drum up support among key demographics.

"There was a reason why Barack Obama chose Joe Biden to be his vice president," Meeks said. "He is the appropriate person now to step forward and take the reins of this great nation of ours."

Kat Stafford is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at https://twitter.com/kat__stafford.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

4/20 uncertainty: Marijuana industry tested in virus crisis

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The unofficial holiday celebrating all things cannabis arrives Monday as the nation's emerging legal marijuana market braces for an economic blow from the coronavirus crisis, with many consumers reducing spending or going underground for deals.

It was supposed to be a long weekend of festivals and music culminating on April 20, or 4/20, the code for marijuana's high holiday. Instead, it has been reduced to an online replica because of stay-at-home orders to curb the pandemic.

Virtual parties and video chats are replacing vast outdoor smoking sessions to mark the rise of legalization and celebrate cannabis culture. The origins of the annual celebration are believed tied to a group of Northern California high school friends, who used the code as slang for smoking pot in the early 1970s.

"Stay home," the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, or NORML, said bluntly. San Francisco Mayor London Breed threatened arrests: "We will not tolerate anyone coming to San Francisco for 4/20 this year."

For businesses, 4/20 is usually their once-a-year Black Friday, when sales soar. Instead, they are reporting up-and-down buying and pondering an uncertain future.

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The pandemic means the world economy could face its worst year since the Great Depression in the 1930s. In a sign of what's to come, U.S. retail sales overall dropped nearly 9% in March — a record. Millions are out of work.

As for the holiday, "there's a somber feeling to this one," said Jordan Lams, CEO of Pure CA, which specializes in marijuana extracts and does business as Moxie brand products. Before the outbreak, "it was going to be the biggest 4/20 in history," Lams said.

Steve White, CEO of Arizona-based Harvest Health & Recreation, said he's watching to see if consumers treat marijuana more like beer or toilet paper when money runs short.

When the economy tumbles, beer sales traditionally spike. With toilet paper, panic-buying might empty shelves but people do not use more of it. They just buy less later.

It will be a telling year, because no one in the relatively new industry knows if sales will plunge, stay flat or even rise.

"Do people buy less cannabis, or does it become more ingrained as part of their daily life?" White said.

The uncertainty in the market poses the latest challenge for an industry that's expanded in some form to all but a handful of states.

The risks are spotlighted in California, where businesses contend with hefty taxes, an illicit market that still dwarfs the legal one and a tourism-reliant economy that's crippled by virus restrictions.

Because cannabis remains illegal at the federal level, most banks don't want to do business with pot companies and they aren't included in the coronavirus rescue package that will help other businesses.

Before the virus, "we were already teetering on ... an edge of a cannabis collapse," said Los Angeles dispensary owner Jerred Kiloh, who heads the United Cannabis Business Association. "It's going to be very difficult for cannabis businesses to make it through this pandemic."

That's despite the onset of stay-at-home orders in March that sent marijuana sales rocketing; some businesses reported single-day records as customers stocked up. New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles were among the cities that labeled dispensaries essential businesses that could remain open.

But since then, business generally has flattened or tapered off, even with deliveries and curbside pickups growing to reduce health risks. Marijuana data trackers BDS Analytics documented sales surges through much of March, but then consumers pulled back in late March and early April, with sales mostly below average.

In recent days, some sellers reported sales jumps as government assistance checks began reaching consumers.

In Oregon, cannabis retailers saw a huge spike last month — a 30% increase in average sales per retailer compared with March 2019. Sales increases mid-month were even larger.

However, the peak has leveled off and customers are coming in less frequently but buying more, said David Alport, who owns two Bridge City Collective stores in Portland. He's hired three more employees to handle home deliveries.

In Illinois, marijuana businesses can keep operating under Gov. J.B. Pritzker's stay-at-home order. Companies made sweeping changes that included appointment-only sales and online ordering.

The Mission dispensary on Chicago's South Side saw an initial spike in purchases before the lockdown took effect, but that's leveled off.

"We've never faced an economic downturn when cannabis was legal," said Kris Krane, president of Mission dispensaries. "This is completely unprecedented."

Some customers could be especially vulnerable during an economic downturn. Among cannabis users in states where its legal, 32% have incomes below \$35,000 and only 54% have full-time employment, according to BDS Analytics. Anyone on a tight budget might be more apt to avoid taxes that go with legal purchases and buy from illicit market dealers.

Steve DeAngelo, co-founder of Harborside dispensaries in California, said it's difficult to predict what's next, with no template for how cannabis consumers will react in a deep economic downturn.

Still, he notes that the industry has endured for years through times good and bad, even when consumers had only one option — illegal purchases. Consumers who see marijuana as part of their daily routine

will keep coming back, he predicted.

But, for businesses, there will be a "sorting out," DeAngelo said. Companies with strong brands and cash reserves are likely to fare better in a poor economy; those saddled with heavy debt who made too-rosy promises to investors will face challenges.

"There is not going to be an extinction moment," DeAngelo said. "It's going to prove more resilient than many, many other industries."

Associated Press writers Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon, and Kathleen Foody in Chicago contributed. Blood, Flaccus and Foody are members of AP's marijuana beat team. Find complete AP marijuana coverage here: <https://apnews.com/Marijuana>. Follow Blood on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MichaelRBloodAP>.

Wildlife photographer Peter Beard found dead near his home

NEW YORK (AP) — Artist, adventurer and celebrated wildlife photographer Peter Beard was found dead in woods near his cliff-side home at the tip of Long Island nearly a month after his family reported him missing. He was 82.

"He died where he lived: in nature," his family said in a statement posted on Beard's website Sunday night.

In recent years, the once-swashbuckling explorer had developed dementia and had at least one stroke, according to the New York Times. His family confirmed that a body found Sunday in Camp Hero State Park in Montauk was Beard's.

The Suffolk County Medical Examiner hasn't made an official identification but East Hampton Police Capt. Christopher Anderson said Monday "we're reasonably confident" it's Beard. He said the cause of death hasn't been determined but neither foul play nor suicide is suspected.

"Peter defined what it means to be open: open to new ideas, new encounters, new people, new ways of living and being," his family said in its statement. "Always insatiably curious, he pursued his passions without restraints and perceived reality through a unique lens."

Beard was renowned for his photos of African wildlife, taken in the decades when he lived and worked at his tent camp in Kenya. His best-known work was "The End of the Game," published in 1965. It documented the beauty and romance of Africa and the tragedy of its endangered wildlife, especially the elephant.

He also photographed women in magazine fashion shoots and had well-documented romances with many of them, including Candice Bergen and Lee Radziwill, sister of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, according to the New York Times. He was married for a time to model Cheryl Tiegs and was friends with Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, Salvador Dali and the Rolling Stones.

Beard was born into a wealthy family in Manhattan in 1938 and graduated in 1961 from Yale, where he studied with the artist Josef Albers and art historian Vincent Scully.

After graduation, he traveled to Denmark and met and photographed Karen Blixen, who had written the memoir "Out of Africa" under the pen name Isak Dinesen. He later bought 45 acres abutting the African coffee farm where Blixen had lived.

Beard is survived by his wife Nejma Beard, and daughter Zara.

Israeli coalition deal keeps Netanyahu in power

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his chief rival announced Monday that they have forged a deal to form a coalition government, ending months of political paralysis and averting what would have been a fourth consecutive election in just over a year.

Netanyahu and former military chief Benny Gantz, leader of the Blue and White party, signed the power-sharing agreement after weeks of negotiations for what they termed a "national emergency" government meant to steer the country through the coronavirus outbreak.

Although Netanyahu repeatedly came up short in three elections over the past year, the coalition agree-

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ment returns the long-serving leader to the premiership, defying critics who predicted his downfall and restoring his reputation as a political wizard. It means that Netanyahu will almost certainly remain in office for the duration of his upcoming trial on corruption charges.

The deal calls for a three-year period, with Netanyahu serving as prime minister for the first half, and Gantz taking the job for the second half.

Gantz's party will take control of a number of senior government ministries, including defense.

The agreement delivers Netanyahu a significant boost as he fights to hold on to power while fending off corruption charges. His party will gain influence over judicial appointments. The deal also requires the approval of both parties on key appointments including the attorney general and the state prosecutor — granting Netanyahu veto power over the officials who hold sway over his legal fate.

"I promised the state of Israel a national emergency government that will work to save the lives and livelihoods of the citizens of Israel," Netanyahu tweeted.

After March 2 elections left both men short of a required parliamentary majority, Netanyahu and Gantz agreed to try to form a unity government because of the burgeoning coronavirus crisis. The talks stalled several times, reportedly over Netanyahu's personal legal problems, sparking concern that they would plunge the country into new elections.

The deal required major compromise by both men. During three bitter campaigns over the past year, Gantz and his Blue and White party vowed never to serve in a government under Netanyahu so long as he faces a slew of corruption charges. After 11 years as prime minister, Netanyahu agreed to step aside and allow Gantz to take the job, if the coalition manages to survive long enough.

"We prevented a fourth election," Gantz tweeted. "We will protect democracy. We will battle corona and we will worry about all the citizens of Israel."

While the government was ostensibly formed to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed over 170 Israelis and ravaged the economy, negotiations revolved largely around Netanyahu's corruption trial, set to start next month. Main sticking points included a demand by the prime minister to have more say on judicial appointments, which could play a role if his case eventually reaches the Supreme Court.

Political analyst Avraham Diskin, who was involved in crafting some of the coalition deal, said guarantees by both sides were critical. Netanyahu wanted a guarantee he would not be forced to resign after Gantz takes over as prime minister. Israeli law requires all public officials, with the exception of the prime minister, to step down if charged with a crime.

For Blue and White, that meant assurances that Netanyahu wouldn't topple the government before Gantz becomes prime minister, Diskin said.

"There was a total lack of trust," he said. "I pray that the government will hold up and won't miss the opportunity with fights over nonsense."

In a joint statement, the parties said they would form a six-month "emergency" government focused on the coronavirus crisis. In the meantime, they will work on a "policy outline" for a long-term unity government.

The deal could clear the way for Netanyahu's campaign promise to annex large parts of the West Bank after July 1. Gantz has raised concerns about the plan, which is bitterly opposed by the Palestinians and much of the international community, saying it could only take place with broad international support.

Palestinian official Saeb Erekat said the new government would have two options: "to either open the doors for a meaningful peace process or to further jeopardize any hope for peace."

Last month's election, just like the campaigns last September and April, ended with no clear winner. But with a slight majority of lawmakers endorsing him, Gantz was chosen first by the country's figurehead president to try to build a coalition government.

The glue holding together Gantz's different backers was their shared animosity toward Netanyahu. Gantz began to move forward with legislation that would have disqualified the indicted Netanyahu from serving as prime minister in the future.

But with the virus crisis worsening, and his own shaky alliance fraying, Gantz made an about-face late last month and accepted an offer from Netanyahu to pursue a joint government to deal with the pandemic. The move drew heavy criticism from Gantz's supporters and tore apart his Blue and White alliance.

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Negotiations continued even after Gantz' allotted time to build a coalition ended last week. The Knesset, or parliament, had been given until May 7 to select a candidate for prime minister. Otherwise, it would automatically have been dissolved and triggered new elections.

On Sunday night, several thousand demonstrators, including Gantz's former political partner Yair Lapid, gathered in Tel Aviv to protest the emerging deal. Protesters accused Netanyahu of using the coronavirus crisis to shield himself from prosecution and accused Gantz of abandoning his central campaign promises.

"You don't fight corruption from within. If you're inside, you're part of it," Lapid said.

Netanyahu is desperate to remain in office throughout the trial, using his position to lash out at his enemies and rally public opposition to his prosecutors.

Netanyahu is awaiting trial on charges of accepting bribes, breach of trust and fraud. He has denied any wrongdoing and portrays himself as a victim of a media and judicial witch hunt. Citing the coronavirus crisis, Netanyahu's hand-picked justice minister has already delayed the trial by two months by shuttering most of the court system.

Israel has identified more than 13,000 cases of the coronavirus, with 172 deaths. While this week the country began relaxing some of its health restrictions, hundreds of thousands are out of work and the economy has come to a standstill.

Sirio Maccioni, who opened famed eatery Le Cirque, dies

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Italian restaurateur Sirio Maccioni, who opened the celebrated French restaurant Le Cirque and watched it grow into arguably Manhattan's favorite dining room of the rich and famous, has died in Italy. He was 88.

Maccioni's son, Mauro, told The Associated Press that his father died in the family's villa in Tuscany early Monday. He had suffered from the effects of a stroke and Alzheimer's disease, the son said.

Le Cirque was famed for its decadent Grand Marnier souffles and terrines of rabbit rilette. The starry guest list included Frank Sinatra, Henry Kissinger, Princess Grace, Bill Blass, Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, Diana Ross and Nancy and Ronald Reagan.

Le Cirque opened in 1974 at the Mayfair Hotel. "We weren't really prepared, but the rest is history. We were the first 'place to be seen' that also had good food," Maccioni told The AP in 2000.

The restaurant moved and reopened as Le Cirque 2000 in 1997 in the New York Palace Hotel. In 2006, Le Cirque moved again and opened on East 58th Street. In 2017, the restaurant filed for bankruptcy. Le Cirque has branches in Las Vegas, Dubai and India.

The restaurant received a four-star review from the New York Times in 1987, which was renewed in 1997. The Times gave it two stars in 2006 and three stars in 2008. The newspaper downgraded the restaurant to a single star in 2012.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani once recognized it as being one of the city's most glamorous and hospitable restaurants. The James Beard Foundation gave Maccioni its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014.

"I consider myself a working restaurateur, but I'm proud to be called elite," Maccioni told The AP. "I encourage all my people to be elite; be an elite dishwasher. Being elite means being the best."

He and his restaurant helped launch the careers of many illustrious chefs, including Daniel Boulud, David Bouley, Terrance Brennan, Alain Sailhac, Rick Moonen and Jacques Torres.

Maccioni, born and raised in Italy, was forced to go to work after his father was killed during World War II. He worked in hotels and restaurants in France, Switzerland and Germany before moving to the United States in 1956.

"I didn't do this out of inspiration or desperation. I realized very early that I couldn't afford to be young," he said. "I did completely give my life to this business. Is it worth it? Maybe not. But I had no choice, and I've never felt exploited."

He attended Hunter College during the day. At night, he worked at The Colony, one of New York's trendiest restaurants, where Frank Sinatra, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, and Aristotle Onassis frequently

dined. After a few years, he moved to a club at the Pierre Hotel before opening Le Cirque. He is survived by his wife, Egidiana, and their three sons, Mario, Marco and Mauro.

Associated Press reporter Frances D'Emilio contributed to this report from Italy

Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>

Sparkling waters hide some lasting harm from 2010 oil spill

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Ten years after a well blew wild under a BP platform in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 men and touching off the nation's worst offshore oil spill, gulf waters sparkle in the sunlight, its fish are safe to eat, and thick, black oil no longer visibly stains the beaches and estuaries. Brown pelicans, a symbol of the spill's ecological damage because so many dived after fish and came up coated with oil, are doing well.

But scientists who spent the decade studying the Deepwater Horizon spill still worry about its effects on dolphins, whales, sea turtles, small fish vital to the food chain, and ancient corals in the cold, dark depths.

The gulf's ecosystem is so complex and interconnected that it's impossible to take any single part as a measure of its overall health, said Rita Colwell, who has led the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative.

BP put up \$500 million for the independent GoMRI program soon after the spill, part of more than \$69 billion it says it has spent overall, including spill response, cleanup, settlements, restoration and other costs.

Some scientists say the recovery has been remarkable since those dark spring days in 2010, when oil billowing from the sea floor began killing wildlife and blackening marshes and beaches from Texas to Florida.

Ed Overton, a Louisiana State University chemist who has studied oil dispersal since the 1970s, said today's visitors to Louisiana's marshes would have to know just where to look to find damage: "So there's still oil there 10 years later. Is it significant compared to what we saw in 2010? And the answer is not only no, but hell no."

But major concerns remain. Steven A. Murawski, chief scientist of the National Marine Fisheries Service when the well blew, said, "We will see environmental impacts from this for the rest of our lifetimes."

Here's a look at how some key aspects of the ecosystem are doing.

DOLPHINS AND WHALES

"Initially, industry experts were saying, 'The dolphins and the whales, they're smart. They're not going to swim into oiled areas,'" recalled Nancy Kinner, co-director of the Coastal Response Research Center and Center for Spills and Environmental Hazards at the University of New Hampshire.

But cetaceans must surface to breathe, rising through oil that spread across more than 15,300 square miles (40,000 square kilometers) - nearly as big as Switzerland. Each exhalation vaporized oil and gas into minuscule droplets, which they then inhaled, Kinner said.

Lung disease and other ailments caused by the spill killed more than 1,000 bottlenose dolphins over several years, many of them in Louisiana's hard-hit Barataria Bay, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported. More than one-fifth were aborted, stillborn or died soon after birth. Pregnant Barataria and Mississippi Sound dolphins still give birth far more rarely than in healthy populations. Health checks of Barataria Bay dolphins in 2018 found that lung problems "in some cases ... may be even getting worse," said Lori Schwacke of the National Marine Mammal Foundation.

Whales almost certainly suffered similar oil-caused ailments but can't be safely examined, Schwacke said. NOAA estimated the spill killed 17 percent of the gulf's Bryde's whales, declared endangered in 2019 after their population dwindled to fewer than 100. Other whales are suffering, too.

"The toothed whales, sperm whales, Bryde's whales, right whales ... these populations which were somewhat in jeopardy prior to the oil spill have been declining 5 or 10% a year ever since the oil spill," said Ian MacDonald of Florida State University.

Going forward, some BP money will go toward improving conditions for dolphins and whales. These

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include studies on reducing effects of human-produced noise, such as seismic airguns and ship propellers, on whales and dolphins, which communicate and navigate by sound.

FISH

How fisheries would survive was hard to fathom while slicks fouled estuaries where many fish spawn, but scientists haven't found any widespread species die-offs, said Chuck Wilson, chief science officer for GoMRI.

"Fisheries in the marshes where the oil came on shore have continued to flourish. Recreational fishing continues to be productive and a very popular activity even in Barataria Bay, Louisiana, where the highest oil impact was," he said.

It's a different story farther out and deeper down, where small fish feed top food and sport fish such as tuna or grouper, as well as whales. Murawski, now a professor at the University of South Florida and director of a GoMRI consortium, said small fish that live about 660 to 3,300 feet (200 to 1,000 meters) deep seemed to be doing well a year after the spill, but then their numbers plummeted by 60 to 80 percent, and haven't returned. Because they hadn't been surveyed before the spill, there's no way to say whether the drop was caused by the spill or 2011 was an exceptional year and numbers are back to normal, he said.

Laboratory research has found that oil damaged fish larvae's developing hearts and bones, MacDonald said.

Future restoration projects include plans to get anglers to use equipment that would slowly lower reef fish they don't keep, rather than simply tossing them back. Another project aims to find the best escape hatches for "bycatch" hauled up in shrimp nets, and persuade shrimpers to use them.

MARSHES

The oil turned tall marsh grass as black as cinders and sank into the muck across Louisiana's coastal marshes, a nursery for an array of birds and fish.

"Once all the roots and so on disintegrate, the whole marsh surface, all the soil, is lost. Given the fact that there is rapid sea-level rise and the land is sinking, it's almost impossible to recover," said University of Maryland marine scientist Donald Boesch. Oiled marsh shorelines that weren't lost immediately were more likely to wash away later.

GoMRI surveys found birds, snails and crabs back at pre-spill densities, Wilson said.

But the insects worry Louisiana State University researcher Linda Hooper-Bui. She found that most insect and spider species were back to 68% to 72% of pre-spill populations by 2016, and she was expecting to tell a story of insect recovery on the 10th anniversary.

Then her funding dried up, but in August 2019, she collected one last round of samples and found surprisingly few insects. "Something is going on right now, and it's deeply affected," she said, but she can't tell what caused it.

The vast majority of oiled wetlands were in Louisiana, where officials expect to use more than \$7 billion in oil spill money to restore the coast, including marshes and barrier islands.

DEEP CORAL AND SEA BOTTOM

Far below the surface, deep-sea corals can live hundreds of years, creating habitats for multitudes of creatures near the bottom of the food web. Because of the BP spill, we also know how they can die.

Swaths of such coral were killed, and they grow so slowly — only a few millimeters a year — that it's hard to imagine how they could be replaced, Boesch said. Researchers found that seven years later, affected but surviving coral were less healthy than unoiled reefs.

Before the spill, scientists didn't know that deep-sea corals were severely hurt by oil dispersing in a plume far below the surface. They discovered that rising oil interacts with plankton and then "snows down from the surface and eventually lands," changing the chemical biology of the sea bed, MacDonald said.

"So these are things we've learned. And none of these are good things," MacDonald said.

Scientists plan to study these deep habitats more extensively, including mapping the gulf's seafloor. To protect the fragile corals, money is being spent to develop techniques for growing and transplanting corals and installing buoys in some places to alert trawlers to the corals' underwater presence.

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US lockdowns coincide with rise in poisonings from cleaners

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — One toddler became dizzy, fell and hit her head after drinking from a large bottle of hand sanitizer. A woman had a scary coughing and wheezing fit while soaking her produce in a sink containing bleach, vinegar and hot water.

Reports of accidental poisonings from cleaners and disinfectants are up this year, and researchers believe it's related to the coronavirus epidemic.

Such poisonings were up about 20 percent in the first three months of this year, compared with the same period in 2018 and 2019, according to a report Monday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The authors said they can't prove coronavirus drove the increase, but said it seems likely the two are linked, given the number of stay-at-home orders and guidance to clean hands and dirty surfaces. They warned against using more cleaner than directed, mixing multiple products together or using them in poorly ventilated areas.

The report was based on more than 45,000 recent calls to 55 poison control centers across the country involving exposures to cleaning chemicals or disinfectants.

The same period in 2019 saw 38,000 such calls, while 2018 had 39,000.

Roughly 40% of calls this year were about poisonings in children age 5 or younger, but increases were seen in all age groups. Bleach accounted for the largest share of the increase overall, but for young children the rise was mainly in mishaps involving nonalcohol disinfectants and hand sanitizers, the CDC reported.

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Stepping up: Mets PA announcer offers kind voice amid virus

By BEN WALKER AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The requests come by the hundreds: the son of an emergency room nurse, the husband of a doctor, a hospital patient.

Colin Cosell studies them, sorts them. Normally he'd be at Citi Field, rousing the crowd as public address announcer for the New York Mets. Now he's busy working at home, trying to cheer one fan at a time.

His creative contribution during this health crisis — crafting audio clips for everyone who asks — echoes the booming introductions big league hitters get when they step up to home plate.

"As personalized and customized as possible," Cosell said.

So instead of "the first baseman, No. 20, Pete Alonso!" to the thump of "The Ocean" by Led Zeppelin, it could sound like this: "Leading off for the Mets, the center fielder, No. 44, Fran Kowalski!" to a song by Frank Sinatra.

A welcome voice amid the virus.

The grandson of famed sportscaster Howard Cosell has recorded nearly 600 introductions since he began a month ago. They're about a half-minute each and all done for free.

Recently, Cosell noticed the calls were coming from a certain group.

"I was starting to hear from a lot of medical workers and first responders. That's when it began to hit home," he said.

"They said these 30 seconds take them away from the maelstrom of being a hospital worker during a pandemic," he said.

Stepping up, indeed.

Fans reach Cosell through Twitter at #CallMeUpColin and provide their info, plus a musical choice — Alicia Keys, AC/DC, Shania Twain, Stevie Wonder and a tune from "The Little Mermaid" are among them, along with the "Meet the Mets" theme song.

Many people use Cosell's call-up recordings for their phone ringtones or outgoing messages. Others add them into videos. Some just like the good feeling they bring of being at a ballgame that's not being

played these days.

Cosell clearly has struck a positive chord.

"Thanks for adding a little joy while in quarantine," a person posted on Twitter. "Received this awesome-ness," one wrote. "Colin, you're a saint for doing this," praised another.

Cosell said they've meant equally as much to him.

"A few stories have brought tears to my eyes," he said. "I heard from someone working in an ER who said it was pretty tough in there, and that he broke away and listened for a few seconds and it helped calm him down."

The 40-year-old Cosell, who splits the Mets PA job with Marysol Castro, said the tapings take about 10 minutes apiece to do at his Long Island home and he delivers them by email. He goes in order -- health care workers and those involved in the coronavirus fight get first priority, followed by kids.

"It's been a great way to keep in touch with the fans," Cosell said. "This has been a way of doing that at a scary, disconcerting, uncertain time for everyone."

Cosell, by the way, does an incredible, spot-on imitation of his grandfather. No one has asked Cosell to channel Howard in a message, but he's got a notion how his prickly Poppa would feel about this charitable endeavor.

"I like to think he would be proud," Cosell said. "He'd probably also call me a fool for doing it for free."

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is an AP continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Virus crisis ravages Brazilian Amazon city's health system

By MARCELO DE SOUSA and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — After more than a week suffering a cough and fever — potential signs of COVID-19 — Maria do Espírito Santo went to a hospital in Manaus, Brazil's biggest city in the Amazon rain forest. There were no beds available, just a plastic chair, so her family took her home.

The next day they brought her to an urgent care unit, where she was admitted and put on a gurney, said Isabelle Noronha, a 32-year-old relative, who waited outside for hours along with other patients' anxious loved ones milling about in the darkness.

By then, the 67-year-old woman was in serious condition and waiting for an intensive-care unit bed to free up. After 11 hours, an ambulance transferred her late Friday to a hospital, but she was put in its infirmary rather than its ICU. On Sunday, she remained in serious condition, breathing with the help of oxygen through a tube. She has been tested for COVID-19 and is awaiting the results.

Manaus' health care system, already strained before the coronavirus crisis, is buckling under the current onslaught of coronavirus patients. Ventilators are in critically short supply, doctors bemoan a lack of protective gear, and gravediggers increasingly have their hands full.

Amazonas state had more than 2,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases as of Sunday, the vast majority in Manaus — the only city in the state with intensive care units. The city of 2.2 million has one of the highest rates of infection in Brazil, where more than 38,600 cases have been confirmed, though experts say the total greatly under-represents the true number of infections.

A video shot inside the city's João Lúcio Hospital and circulated on social media this week showed body bags on gurneys in the hallway as well as on beds alongside patients undergoing treatment. A refrigerated container was installed next to the hospital Friday morning, and workers began loading it with corpses. Amazonas' health secretariat confirmed 19 coronavirus deaths in the hospital between Wednesday night and Friday.

The concern is that Manaus could provide a grim glimpse of what lies ahead for Brazil, particularly as

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President Jair Bolsonaro flouts health experts' recommendations for people to stay home to contain the virus' spread, and instead tells citizens to get back to work. In cities like Manaus that have a dearth of equipment and ICU beds, lack of compliance with measures for social distancing is pushing the health care system to its breaking point.

Bolsonaro has repeatedly referred to COVID-19 as just a "little flu" and called for confining only "high-risk" Brazilians because broader restrictions would cause too much economic damage. On Friday, he replaced his health minister with an oncologist who has made a career on the business side of health care.

It's unclear how Manaus became one of Brazil's coronavirus hot spots; its first reported case was a 39-year-old woman who returned from London on March 11. But its health care system giving way was a crisis foretold, says Mario Viana, president of the Amazonas Doctors' Union: Before the crisis, hospitals were already operating near capacity due to lack of investment, and low salaries have long spurred health professionals to leave the city.

"With the pandemic, all this couldn't result in anything other than a situation of chaos and collapse," Viana said.

A survey by the doctors' union, which represents some 3,000 physicians, found more than 120 health care professionals have contracted the virus, five of whom have died.

An intensive-care doctor in the midst of a 10-day shift earlier this week said he was on his own in the ICU, because three of his colleagues had been infected with the virus.

"Unfortunately there aren't people to work," he said by phone, declining to give his name or that of the hospital for fear of getting fired. "This is a sickness that requires specialized attention. Ventilation is an art in a patient with acute respiratory syndrome."

Dr. Geraldo Barbosa, a gynecologist who has attended to multiple pregnant women with COVID-19, said the local government hasn't been able to test him or his wife, also a doctor, to see whether they've contracted the illness.

"All health professionals here are certain we will be contaminated. We just hope not to die," Barbosa said by phone from the Balbina Mestrinho maternity hospital after removing his mask — one of many he's purchased with his own money. He also hasn't been provided with disposable gowns. "A lot of times we doctors are called superheroes, but not even then are we a priority," he said.

Amazonas' health secretariat told The Associated Press in an email that it has instructed "rational use" of protective equipment to avoid blowing through supply.

Despite efforts to purchase protective gear and other critical supplies, that "can't be done overnight," Amazonas Gov. Wilson Miranda Lima told the Globo television station Friday.

Federal authorities have recognized Manaus' critical shortages, and have dispatched a few dozen ventilators, as well as 15 doctors and intensive care specialists from other states. They also pledged to add ICU beds— there are only 264 in the entire state — and build a field hospital specifically for treating indigenous people.

"If we don't take measures, the number of cases will exceed capacity and people will have neither beds nor ventilators and go unattended," the health ministry's executive secretary João Gabbardo told a news conference last weekend.

At Manaus' Parque Tarumã cemetery, one woman broadcast a live feed Thursday of her husband's burial so family members could see it. He'd been a health professional and died of COVID-19. Gravediggers buried 60 people that day, about triple the pre-virus average, according to a cemetery official.

Amazonas has closed schools, prohibited gatherings of more than 100 people and ordered the closure of non-essential businesses, but many people still walk Manaus' streets. Mayor Arthur Virgílio Neto issued a decree recommending face masks, set up a field hospital with 18 ICU beds and is working to open another.

Noting Bolsonaro's call to ignore confinement measures, Virgílio Neto said: "It is very hard to row this boat with the president on the other side, saying life should go back to normal."

Meanwhile, evidence of the health care crisis can be seen outside the city's hospitals.

Beside one facility's entrance, patients suspected of having coronavirus sat on plastic chairs last week

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waiting to be admitted. An older man, accompanied by his son, sat for several hours until finally in frustration the son wrapped his father's arm around his shoulder and the two staggered off, heading home.

— Associated Press writer Maricio Savarese contributed from Sao Paulo and AP photographer Edmar Barros contributed from Manaus.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

If colleges cut sports programs, could new models emerge?

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

College sports programs are already being cut and more are likely on the chopping block.

The coronavirus pandemic has triggered fears of an economic meltdown on campuses around the country. The cancellation of the NCAA men's basketball tournament cost schools \$375 million and more losses are expected, especially if football season is disrupted in the fall.

In tough times, athletic administrators often drop sports programs to save money. In the past few weeks, Old Dominion said it will drop wrestling and Cincinnati will no longer have men's soccer. Warnings of tough times ahead have come from all over college athletics, even some of the wealthiest Power Five schools.

"To say it's not going to have any economic impact — that, I would say, would be grossly naïve," said Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione, who oversees a program that had \$148 million in operating revenue in 2017-18 and boasts of 20 straight years of balanced budgets.

"We're just hoping to minimize it," he said.

Paving the way for more cuts to come, the commissioners of five Bowl Subdivision conferences have asked the NCAA to waive over the next four years a slew of requirements for Division I membership, including the minimum number (16) of sports a school must sponsor.

Some observers see the coming crisis as a chance for schools to consider radical changes to how athletic departments are run or for new development paths to emerge for young athletes.

"Budgets reflect our values," said Arne Duncan, a former U.S. education secretary and now co-chair of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. "I think we'll see now whether in a time of cutbacks, what gets prioritized. Is it the interest of adults and unbelievably high salaries? Or is it the interest of student-athletes and preserving their chance to compete and to put academics first?"

A.J. Maestas, founder of the sports analytics consulting firm Navigate Research, said "a couple hundred" sports programs were cut during the last economic downturn after the 2008 financial crisis. Most programs don't break even and he expects more cuts this time, too.

"If donors are unable to step up and endow the program or at least keep it above water there will be a number of programs that will be cut, especially if it's a sustained economic downturn, which seems pretty realistic," he said.

Nancy Zimpher, former chancellor of the State University of New York and a member of the Knight Commission, said cutting sports programs is short-sighted at a time when colleges could be facing a decrease in overall enrollment.

Having a large variety of sports programs "provides a great recruitment opportunity for the whole university," she said.

David Ridpath, a former NCAA compliance director and professor of sports business at Ohio University, said he fears schools will use the economic crisis as an excuse to make program cuts they had already been pondering. He also wonders if fewer opportunities for athletes in non-revenue college sports provides a catalyst to sever some of the ties between amateur athletics and higher education in the United States.

In his book, "Alternative Models of Sports Development in America," Ridpath makes the case that the U.S. should move toward a European-style academy system. Elite young athletes develop their games and receive an education, but the two are not tethered the way they are in American colleges.

"My argument has always been schools should not be a primary source of elite development," Ridpath

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said. "We need to have other models for those elite athletes to be taken care of. So for me, it's not throwing college athletics and high school athletics out the window. It's reframing it and also making education-based sports more participatory."

Former Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe has an even more radical idea: College athletics should be broken into spectator sports (ones that make money) and participation sports (ones that don't). Schools would provide athletic scholarships in spectator sports, but not in participation sports.

Participation sports then would not be subject to NCAA scholarship limits, would not require highly paid, full-time coaches and would play regional opponents, keeping costs down.

The scholarship piece of Beebe's plan might seem extreme, but other parts are very much in line with what Mountain West Commissioner Craig Thompson and others are already thinking.

"Maybe an institution has sports sponsored in five different conferences, if that makes sense because of geography and other things," Thompson said. "What we're trying to do is throw everything at the wall and it might not be a one-size fits all for even the 12 institutions in the Mountain West."

Beebe, who now consults schools on crisis management, said he hears from athletic directors running programs with successful football and basketball teams who wonder if funding so many other sports that often lose money makes sense.

"And the question they have is: There's so much pressure for me to put so much resources into these sports to continue to sustain this level that it really makes me question why I'm spending half a million dollars or maybe a million dollars on a golf program or a tennis program," Beebe said. "And that was before this crisis."

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and <https://appodcasts.com/category/ap-top-25-college-football/>

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/APTop25CollegeFootballPoll> and <https://apnews.com/Collegefootball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

What Would Have Been: MLB's Fiers in Houston, NBA playoffs

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS** AP Sports Writer

While watching more replays of classic games with the national sports calendar on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic, The Associated Press looks at some of the events that would have been live the week of April 20-26:

MLB:

— Sign-stealing whistleblower Mike Fiers would have been in Houston with the Oakland Athletics for a weekend series. The A's right-hander, who pitched for the 2017 World Series champion Astros, hasn't been back to Minute Maid Park since saying last November that his former team used a camera in center field to steal signs.

— The World Series champion Washington Nationals were to host the Los Angeles Dodgers in a rematch of last season's NL Division Series. The Nationals were on the road for the clinching Game 5 against the Dodgers, when Howie Kendrick hit a grand slam in the 10th inning.

TRIVIA BREAK: The San Diego Padres were to play next weekend at Detroit for only the second time (2005) since the 1984 World Series that the Tigers won in five games. The starting first baseman and third baseman for the 1984 Padres had played against each other in two earlier World Series. Who are the former All-Stars and Gold Glove winners? (answer at bottom).

NBA: The playoffs would be in full swing, with LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers in a possible first-round Western Conference matchup against the Memphis Grizzlies and standout rookie Ja Morant. In the East, defending NBA champ Toronto could have faced the Brooklyn Nets, an expected top contender in 2020-21 if Kyrie Irving and Kevin Durant are both healthy.

NHL: All of the playoffs would move into the second round, trimming the number of teams still contend-

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ing for the Stanley Cup to eight.

PGA TOUR: A team event in the Big Easy. Ryan Palmer and Jon Rahm won last year at the Zurich Classic in New Orleans, where twosomes use best-ball play in the first and third rounds and alternate shots in the second and final rounds.

NASCAR: A big one at Talladega Superspeedway. Chase Elliott won last April ahead of a race-ending crash that flipped Kyle Larson a half-dozen times. Larson was fired last week by Chip Ganassi after using a racial slur during a live-streamed virtual race.

INDYCAR: Getting weird in Austin before the month of May in Indianapolis. Colton Herta became the youngest IndyCar winner last year after winning the first IndyCar race at Circuit of the Americas in Texas.

XFL: The league that filed for bankruptcy last week would have been in Houston to crown its second champion — 19 years after the XFL's only other season.

TRIVIA ANSWER: Ten-time All-Star first baseman Steve Garvey was in his second season with the Padres after his first 14 years in the big leagues with the Los Angeles Dodgers. Graig Nettles was a 40-year third baseman in his first season in San Diego after 11 seasons with the New York Yankees. The Yankees beat Los Angeles in the 1978 World Series, and the Dodgers beat New York for the 1981 title.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Harry and Meghan say they won't cooperate with UK tabloids

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have announced they will no longer cooperate with several British tabloid newspapers because of what they call “distorted, false or invasive” stories.

Meghan and Prince Harry have written to the editors of The Sun, the Daily Mail, the Daily Express and the Daily Mirror saying they won't “offer themselves up as currency for an economy of click bait and distortion.” They say stories based on “salacious gossip” have upended the lives of acquaintances and strangers alike.

The letter, released Monday by the couple's representative, said Harry and Meghan will have “zero engagement” with the newspapers, and said the couple “believe that a free press is a cornerstone to any democracy.”

But Ian Murray, executive director of Britain's Society of Editors, said “there is no escaping their actions here amount to censorship and they are setting an unfortunate example.”

Harry, who is a grandson of Queen Elizabeth II and sixth in line to the British throne, married the American actress Meghan Markle at Windsor Castle in May 2018, in a ceremony watched around the world.

The couple later said they found scrutiny by the British media — which they said tipped into harassment — intolerable.

Harry has long had an uncomfortable relationship with the media, which he blames for the death of his mother, Princess Diana. She died in a car crash in Paris in 1997 while being pursued by paparazzi.

Harry's unhappiness with the media increased after he began dating Markle, then the star of TV legal drama “Suits.” In 2016, he accused the media of harassing his then-girlfriend, and criticized “racial undertones” in some coverage of the biracial Markle.

In January, they announced they planned to quit as senior royals, seek financial independence and move to North America. The split became official at the end of March, and the couple are currently in California, where Meghan was raised.

The duchess is suing the Daily Mail's publisher, Associated Newspapers, for invasion of privacy over a 2018 article that included portions of a letter she had written to her father. A hearing in the case is due to be held Friday in a London court.

Murray, of the Society of Editors, criticized the couple's move on Monday and said it set a bad example.

“By appearing to dictate which media they will work with and which they will ignore they, no doubt unintentionally, give succour to the rich and powerful everywhere to use their example as an excuse to attack the media when it suits them,” he said.

College seniors face job worries, family stress amid virus

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

Sent home from college because of the coronavirus outbreak, Carter Oselett is back in his childhood bedroom, paying rent on an empty apartment near campus and occasionally fighting with his parents over the television remote.

He's handling the grocery shopping for an aunt recovering from COVID-19 and watching his mom, an optician, try to file for unemployment benefits.

His summer program at a university in Brazil has been canceled and he's not sure he will graduate from Michigan State University in December as planned. And to top it off, he turned 21 quarantined at home with his folks.

"So much fun," Oselett said dryly from his family home in Macomb, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) from his East Lansing campus. "I got to buy a bottle of wine from our local grocer, and that was my big night."

For many of the nearly 2 million people expected to earn U.S. bachelor's degrees in 2020, the pandemic has taken away their housing, friends and long-held dreams of a graduation ceremony. Some college seniors have been jolted into instant "adulthood" as they try to support themselves or struggling family members. For others, it's adulthood delayed, as their post-college work, travel or internship plans are nixed for a dispiriting move back home.

And nearly all of them fear their first steps into adulthood will be clouded by a global recession.

University of Iowa psychologist Barry Schreier advises students to hold on to their goals, even if they have to adjust their timelines. And he says they should expect to cycle through the stages of grief: denial, anger and depression among them.

"Adulthood is a ladder to climb for a lot of our students on a good day. And these are certainly not good days," said Schreier, communications chairman of the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors.

Axel Lopez, a senior at the University of California, Los Angeles, and sports photographer at The Daily Bruin, hoped to take a last walk through the newsroom before moving to Utah this summer for a para-legal job. He's now quarantined in his off-campus apartment, taking his final term online. The expected job offer never came.

"It's a very uncertain time, considering just a couple of months ago, it seemed there was a surplus of jobs available," he said.

A first-generation college student who accompanied his mother growing up as she cleaned houses in Los Angeles, Lopez had dreams of hugging his mom at graduation and telling her: "Yeah, it was all worth it."

UCLA announced its June commencement would be held online, then reconsidered after a backlash. The university has promised to hold an in-person celebration later.

"Even though we're going to have it in the next year, I feel it won't be the same," he said.

Not far from Lopez, Victoria Arévalo is back in her family's small two-bedroom apartment in west Los Angeles, where the bunk beds she shares with an older sister frame her appearance in online classes. She had hoped to stay at her apartment at nearby Loyola Marymount University, where she's studying communications, but knew her family needed the refund she'd get if she left — her stepfather was furloughed from his warehouse job.

In the blink of an eye, Arévalo lost her emotional "safe space," her paid TV news internship and her final months with college friends. At first, she lashed out on social media. But after a few weeks back home, she's come to accept the situation and the tough road ahead.

"I know it's going to be a lot harder than it would have been. I'm just trying mentally to prepare myself," said Arévalo, 22, who moved to the U.S. from El Salvador as a child. "There's good days and bad days. It fluctuates."

For health sciences major Anali Reyes Vazquez, the sweeping turmoil has brought setbacks — her parents are out of work — but also a glimmer of opportunity.

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The 21-year-old senior at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey, planned to find a job and start a part-time master's degree program come June. Now, she's holding off on signing a new lease in case she needs to move home to New Brunswick.

One of her final classes, though, is a course on medical translating, which could help her land a position amid the pandemic serving Spanish-speaking patients.

"There are people in need," she said, "even though it is a scary thought."

Back in Michigan, Oselett finds his bedroom "a little smaller than I remember it."

He spends some of his time working for a California-based nonprofit called Rise, pairing college students who are in crisis because of campus shutdowns with emergency funding.

His classes, which have switched to pass/fail grading, involve a mix of posted assignments and video-conferencing.

"Everyone has sort of adapted to it, but it just doesn't feel as worthwhile," Oselett said. "No one wants to worry about learning right now."

Other times, he and his parents squabble over what to watch on television. He and his father like "Schitt's Creek." His mother not so much.

"We almost have too much time to watch TV and argue about it," he said.

___ Dale reported from Philadelphia.

As mail voting pushed, some fear loss of in-person option

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Scrambling to address voting concerns during a pandemic, election officials across the country are eliminating polling places or scaling back opportunities for people to cast ballots in person — a move raising concerns among voting rights groups and some Democrats who say some voters could be disenfranchised.

In Nevada, election officials will open only one polling place per county for its June primary. In Florida, county officials warn they may have to consolidate polling places across the state. In Ohio's primary next week, only the disabled and the homeless will be allowed to vote in person.

The closures come as many state officials are encouraging voters to vote by mail — and expanding opportunities to do so. Many election officials and health experts see mail-in and absentee voting as the best way to keep voters from spreading the coronavirus and to address a shortage of poll workers who are able to work without risking their health.

But advocates say some states are moving so quickly to embrace the shift to mail that they are not doing enough to accommodate certain voters, including the disabled, people who lack regular mail service, groups with little history of absentee voting or those who are simply unable to keep up with last-minute election changes and mail-in deadlines.

"Not everyone can or should vote by mail," said Stacey Abrams, a former Democratic candidate for Georgia governor who now runs Fair Fight Action, a voting rights group.

The concerns over polling places largely have been overlooked in the fight over voting rights, which has so far centered on partisan disputes over mail-in and absentee voting.

Democrats and voting rights groups have filed lawsuits seeking to expand mail and absentee voting options and pushed for an extra \$2 billion to help states adjust their election systems. National Republicans are fighting those efforts, while President Donald Trump claims without evidence that mail-in voting is vulnerable to fraud.

But the challenge of securing in-person voting may prove just as contentious and just as likely to curb voter participation in the upcoming primaries, which are largely viewed as a dry run for November. In the chaotic recent Wisconsin election, where voters waited for hours to cast ballots, one expert estimated that the closure of polling sites in Milwaukee and other cities may have kept as many as 100,000 people from casting ballots.

Last week, Democrats sued Nevada's top election official, a Republican, for limiting each county to

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a single polling location during the state's June 9 primary, alleging that will channel 87% of the state's voters into only two locations. Democrats, who count on big turnout at the polls in the populous county that contains Las Vegas, sought changes to make mail voting simpler in a state where the overwhelming majority normally vote in person.

A conflict is also brewing in swing state Florida, where the nonpartisan county election coordinators have asked Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis to loosen rules on early voting and allow consolidation of precinct polling stations for elections in August and November.

Democrats fear polling places may close in Palm Beach and Broward counties, two dense areas that are their bases.

But the rush to eliminate in-person voting can be bipartisan. Democrats' party-run primary in Wyoming was conducted exclusively by mail, as was its one in Alaska. Party officials said they took steps like allowing same-day registration that help compensate for lack of in-person options. Kansas Democrats agreed to eliminate polling places for their May primary. Party chairwoman Vicki Hiatt said in-person voting sites were "going to be too risky."

Ohio, Hawaii, Idaho and New Jersey are also sharply limiting or abolishing in-person voting .

Advocates acknowledge election officials are in a difficult position and support an increase in vote by mail for those who want it. But in-person voting, they say, provides an important "fail-safe" in the event of errors or mail delivery issues.

According to a report from the liberal Center for American Progress and the NAACP, African-Americans are particularly reliant on in-person voting. In 2018, only 11% cast a ballot by mail — less than half the rate of whites and Latinos.

"There are going to be people who are going to be disenfranchised by moving entirely to a vote-by-mail system," warned Center for American Progress' Danielle Root.

Ohio's April 28 primary eliminates in-person voting for all but those with disabilities or those without a home address. Anyone who fails to request an absentee ballot before the deadline or whose absentee ballot doesn't arrive in time would not be able to vote in person.

That may include Katie Brickner, 39, who lives in a Cleveland suburb. Her absentee ballot application was returned to her last week as undeliverable after water somehow damaged the front of the envelope after she dropped it off with the post office. She immediately mailed another but is worried after hearing reports that it's taking a few weeks for applications to be processed.

"I will have no voice in the election and it's really important to me this year," she said.

In Maryland, state election officials were poised to cancel in-person voting but decided to keep at least one polling place open in each of the state's 24 counties after voting rights groups raised concerns.

In Idaho, state election officials said it "simply was not safe for voters, election workers or the larger community" to hold in-person voting for the May 19 primary. The state is mailing absentee ballot applications to voters who haven't requested one and has partnered with local grocery stores who will be providing stamps for those who need them.

Still, the decision to eliminate in-person voting could pose a barrier for some tribal members. One county reported the number of absentee ballot requests coming from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in southeastern Idaho as "critically low," said to Randy'L Teton, tribal spokeswoman.

Teton worries that requesting an absentee ballot may pose a challenge for those used to voting in person.

"We're going to need to explain this or delegate a family member that can help their grandma or grandpa on how to get through this," Teton said.

Associated Press writer Bobby Caina Calvan in Tallahassee, Florida, contributed to this report.

Follow Christina Almeida Cassidy on Twitter at https://twitter.com/AP_Christina

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, April 21, the 112th day of 2020. There are 254 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 21, 1976, clinical trials of the swine flu vaccine began in Washington, D.C.

On this date:

In 1509, England's King Henry VII died; he was succeeded by his 17-year-old son, Henry VIII.

In 1789, John Adams was sworn in as the first vice president of the United States.

In 1816, Charlotte Bronte, author of "Jane Eyre," was born in Thornton, England.

In 1836, an army of Texans led by Sam Houston defeated the Mexicans at San Jacinto, assuring Texas independence.

In 1910, author Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, died in Redding, Connecticut, at age 74.

In 1918, Manfred von Richthofen, 25, the German ace known as the "Red Baron" who was believed to have downed 80 enemy aircraft during World War I, was himself shot down and killed while in action over France.

In 1926, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II was born in Mayfair, London; she was the first child of The Duke and Duchess of York, who later became King George VI and the Queen Mother.

In 1930, fire broke out inside the overcrowded Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus, killing 332 inmates.

In 1975, with Communist forces closing in, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu resigned after nearly 10 years in office and fled the country.

In 1989, the baseball fantasy "Field of Dreams," starring Kevin Costner, was released by Universal Pictures.

In 2009, the sole survivor of a pirate attack on an American cargo ship off the Somali coast, on which Captain Richard Phillips was held for ransom, was charged as an adult with piracy in federal court in New York. (A prosecutor said Abdiwali Abdiqadir Muse (AHB'-dih-wah-lee AHB'-dih-kah-dir moo-SAY') had given wildly varying ages for himself before finally admitting he was 18. Muse later pleaded guilty to hijacking, kidnapping and hostage-taking and was sentenced to more than 33 years in prison.)

In 2016, Prince, one of the most inventive and influential musicians of modern times, was found dead at his home in suburban Minneapolis; he was 57.

Ten years ago: Pope Benedict XVI promised "church action" to confront the clerical abuse scandal. Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger was suspended for six games for violating the NFL's personal conduct policy. (Commissioner Roger Goodell handed down the punishment after prosecutors decided not to bring charges in a case involving a 20-year-old college student who'd accused Roethlisberger of sexually assaulting her.) Juan Antonio Samaranch, 89, who'd served as president of the International Olympic Committee for 21 years, died in Barcelona, Spain.

Five years ago: An Egyptian criminal court sentenced ousted Islamist President Mohammed Morsi to 20 years in prison over the killing of protesters in 2012. The head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Michele Leonhart, announced her retirement in the wake of allegations that DEA agents had attended sex parties with prostitutes. Pope Francis accepted the resignation of U.S. Bishop Robert Finn, who'd pleaded guilty to failing to report a suspected child abuser. Mary Doyle Keefe, 92, the model for Norman Rockwell's iconic 1943 Rosie the Riveter painting, died in Simsbury, Connecticut.

One year ago: President Donald Trump spoke with the newly-elected Ukrainian leader, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to congratulate him on his landslide election victory. (A second phone call in July, in which Trump solicited Zelenskyy's help in gathering potentially damaging information about his principal Democratic rival, Joe Biden, would lead to Trump's impeachment by the House.) Suicide bombings at three churches and three luxury hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday killed more than 250 people; the attackers were homegrown militants who had pledged loyalty to the Islamic State group.

Today's Birthdays: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is 94. Actress-comedian-writer Elaine May is 88. Actor

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Charles Grodin is 85. Actor Reni Santoni (REH'-nee san-TOH'-nee) is 82. Anti-death penalty activist Sister Helen Prejean is 81. Singer-musician Iggy Pop is 73. Actress Patti LuPone is 71. Actor Tony Danza is 69. Actor James Morrison is 66. Actress Andie MacDowell is 62. Rock singer Robert Smith (The Cure) is 61. Rock musician Michael Timmins (Cowboy Junkies) is 61. Actor-director John Cameron Mitchell is 57. Rapper Michael Franti (Spearhead) is 54. Actress Leslie Silva is 52. Actor Toby Stephens is 51. Rock singer-musician Glen Hansard (The Frames) is 50. Actor Rob Riggle is 50. Comedian Nicole Sullivan is 50. Football player-turned-actor Brian White is 47. Olympic gold medal pairs figure skater Jamie Sale (sah-LAY') is 43. Rock musician David Brenner (Theory of a Deadman) is 42. Actor James McAvoy is 41. Former NFL quarterback Tony Romo is 40. Actor Terrence J is 38. Actress Gugu Mbatha-Raw is 37. Actor Christoph (cq) Sanders is 32. Actor Frank Dillane is 29. Rock singer Sydney Sierota (Echosmith) is 23.

Thought for Today: "I try to avoid looking forward or backward, and try to keep looking upward." — Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855).

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