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Tree Planting Underway
The planting of trees is in progress in Groton as the city received a tree grant. Paul Kosel is pictured here planting one of several trees along Fifth Street. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

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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S.D. students suffering loss of learning during school closures

Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

Millions of American schoolchildren, including tens of thousands in South Dakota, are suffering a loss of learning and reduced exposure to instructional rigor now that schools across the country have closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the best efforts of administrators, teachers and parents to engage in remote learning with students, the mass closures of school buildings across the country will undoubtedly lead to an educational gap for many children, with consistent research showing that elementary students, low-income students and those with special educational needs likely to face the biggest drops.

Public and private K-12 schools began closing across the country in March as concern grew over potential spreading of the coronavirus.

As of mid-April, South Dakota and more than two dozen other states had decided schools would not reopen again during the spring semester. National experts and state and local educators acknowledge that remote learning, either by computer or through paper take-home packets, will not be as effective as in-class learning.

"There is recognition that flex learning opportunities are not necessarily offering the same quality as traditional, face-to-face instruction," Mary Stadick Smith, deputy secretary of education in South Dakota, wrote to News Watch in an email. "Certainly, there are teachers and students who are proficient and can excel in an online environment, but for many teachers and students, this is a new world."

Stadick Smith said the state has urged school districts to focus on "essential" learning during the school closures. She said academic standards for the state's roughly 136,000 public school students remain in place, though the state will not administer annual assessments for English, math or science and has waived its requirement that districts report student attendance levels to the state.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem urged the temporary closure of public schools in mid-March, and then on April 6 announced that the state's 670 public schools would not reopen for the rest of the school year and that all teaching would occur remotely. The 80 or so private school systems in South Dakota, with about 15,500 students, have also followed suit.

Concerns over learning loss and online absenteeism are plaguing school districts across the country, potentially affecting learning for millions of young Americans.

The pandemic is also upending education on a global scale: According to an April 3 announcement by UNESCO, at least 35 countries around the world had canceled school because of the virus, affecting nearly 300 million students.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the second-largest public school system in the U.S., with about 750,000 students, reported in April that a third of students were not logging in to online learning platforms



Teachers are using online technology to more directly connect with students during a time of school closures. In this case, R.F. Pettigrew Elementary School first-grade teacher Nicole Highby used a YouTube video to read to students while they are at home. Photo: Courtesy Sioux Falls schools

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and that 13% of students had not had any online contact with a teacher nearly a month after schools closed.

Administrators in South Dakota's two largest districts — in Sioux Falls and Rapid City — acknowledge that a small percentage of students and their parents have not yet been contacted by teachers or administrators since schools closed in mid-March.

Among other potential setbacks, the nationwide school closures could significantly exacerbate the "summer learning loss" or "summer slide" that typically occurs in the time between when students depart schools for the summer break to when they return in the fall.

Duke University education professor Harris Cooper, one of the nation's foremost experts on the summer learning slide, said the learning losses will result from students spending nearly double the amount of time away from the classroom this year in comparison with a typical 10-week summer break.

"I can't imagine it's going to do anything other than slow down learning; they're just not going to get the material as well or hold onto it as long," Cooper said.

Cooper was the lead author on a groundbreaking 1996 study that confirmed that children suffer a loss of learning during the summer break, and that the level of loss differs by school subject, student age and family income level.

Cooper and his team reviewed 39 other studies in a process called meta-analysis and found that the summer loss was equal to about one month of grade-level learning that took place during the school year — meaning that student scores on standardized tests were noticeably lower at the start of the fall semester than when students left school in the spring.

The analysis also found that summer loss was more detrimental to math skills across all student age groups and populations, and that low-income children also suffered a loss of reading skills. The analysis found that subjects in which learning is more procedural, such as spelling and math, in which new skills are built on previous knowledge, were more susceptible to sliding over the summer break.

The study also showed that low-income students, who may have less parental involvement in their education and fewer educational and reading materials at home, were more susceptible to summer learning loss. According to the state, about 36% of South Dakota public school students receive free or reduced-price lunches, a commonly used indicator of poverty status.

Losing classroom instruction time was more detrimental to younger students, who are still developing the skills needed to do well in school now and in the future, the study found.

"Those differences in the earliest grades may have the greatest impact on a child's academic trajectory," Cooper said. "It puts kids on a different track."

The school closures during the pandemic may have an unknowable level of learning loss because they have created the potential for an unprecedented double-whammy of negative outcomes.

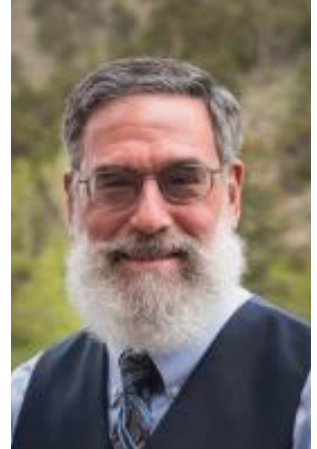
"There's two kinds of loss here — there are some things they are going to forget and there's some things they won't ever get exposed to," Cooper said.

Educators say the extended lapse in classroom learning could also increase the educational gap between high-achieving students, especially those who are highly motivated and who benefit from strong parental involvement, and students who struggle with learning for any reason.

"The criticalness of parent involvement has certainly increased," said Valerie Seales, director of teaching, learning and innovation in Rapid City.

"I can't imagine it's going to do anything other than slow down learning; they're just not going to get the material as well or hold onto it as long."

-- Duke University professor Harris Cooper



Harris Cooper

Keeping students engaged a challenge

Beyond the potential for extended learning loss, the other major concern during the pandemic is whether students are tuned in while learning from home and whether efforts by school districts and teachers to engage with students are effective.

Accurately monitoring student engagement and tracking online absenteeism has been difficult for school districts across the country, including in South Dakota, where administrators and teachers had to scramble just to develop any form of remote learning platform and lesson plans when the pandemic hit.

Most districts are relying on teachers to make sure all families with students were contacted in regard to education and to monitor

whether individual students are staying engaged. While teachers try to stay in touch with students, there is little they can do to guarantee students are not playing video games, watching television or just hanging around during daytime periods they would otherwise be in class.

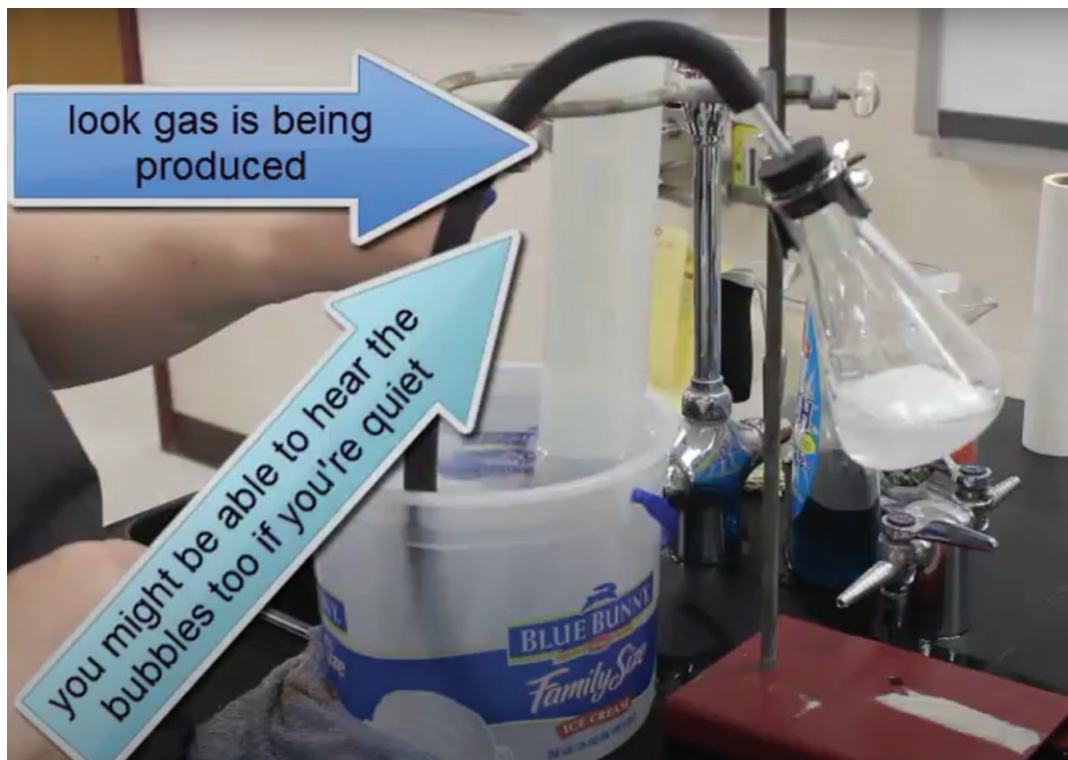
As of mid-April, the Rapid City Area Schools had no engagement-tracking mechanisms in place but hoped to launch a system soon, district spokeswoman Katy Urban said.

In Sioux Falls, officials say that 87% of students were considered to be engaged in schooling as of early April, with 82% being reached by teachers through online formats such as Zoom and Google Classroom or by I-phone, and 5% through paper packets that must be picked up daily or weekly by parents, according to Doug Morrison, director of research, innovation and accountability for the district.

Morrison said he does not expect that students will suffer long-range learning setbacks from the school closures. He said the educational process for children occurs along a continuum in which teachers are constantly assessing student achievement, adjusting teaching methods to reach students as best they can, and then helping those who have fallen behind to catch up.

"We have these kids for 13 years, and we got three quarters of the school year in," he said. "Certainly there is some learning that will be missed or be delivered in a different way in the last two months, but I wouldn't necessarily say the sky is falling. Is it ideal? No, but I look at the positives from my perspective."

Morrison said teachers in the district have been heroic in their efforts to create new remote lesson plans from scratch, stay engaged with students on a daily basis and find innovative ways to communicate with students and help them learn in a crisis. Some students, particularly at the high school level, were already



Teaching science remotely has been challenging for teachers, but has also led to innovative methods. Jane Martin, an advanced placement chemistry teacher at Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls, used photos with descriptive markings to show her students how to do an experiment at home. Photo: Courtesy Sioux Falls schools

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adept at learning online, and teachers at all levels may be mastering new skills to use technology to reach students.

"I have no doubt we'll see some slide, but I don't think it's going to have a significant long-term impact," Morrison said. "If you look at it, 87% of our kids are actively learning in this environment, either online or in paper packets or whatever, and that's really phenomenal if you think about it."

Morrison said the number of students who are not fully engaged in learning and the 3% who have not been reached at all by the district are in line with chronic absenteeism rates during a normal school year.

But the 87% engagement figure reported by the district doesn't provide a full picture of the effectiveness of teaching and learning during the pandemic, said Tony Martinet, president of the Sioux Falls Education Association, which represents about 800 teachers.

Marinet said the district is using a "relaxed" definition of engagement during the school closures, one that may not reflect the difficulty students have in learning from home and the challenges teachers have in working remotely with students.

"Their standard for engagement has had to be modified at the current time," he said. "It means that when students are presented with learning opportunities, that they are trying. They've relaxed it a little bit, so for a student to be engaged, are they logging on, or connecting in some way, or turning some work in? It's not that they're completing every part of the process, but that they're engaged in some element of that."

Marinet said teachers feel that the district has given them a good framework for remote teaching while also allowing for adaptation and innovation. He said he is most concerned that the current learning environment has worsened long-standing inequities in education related to income, family situation or language ability.

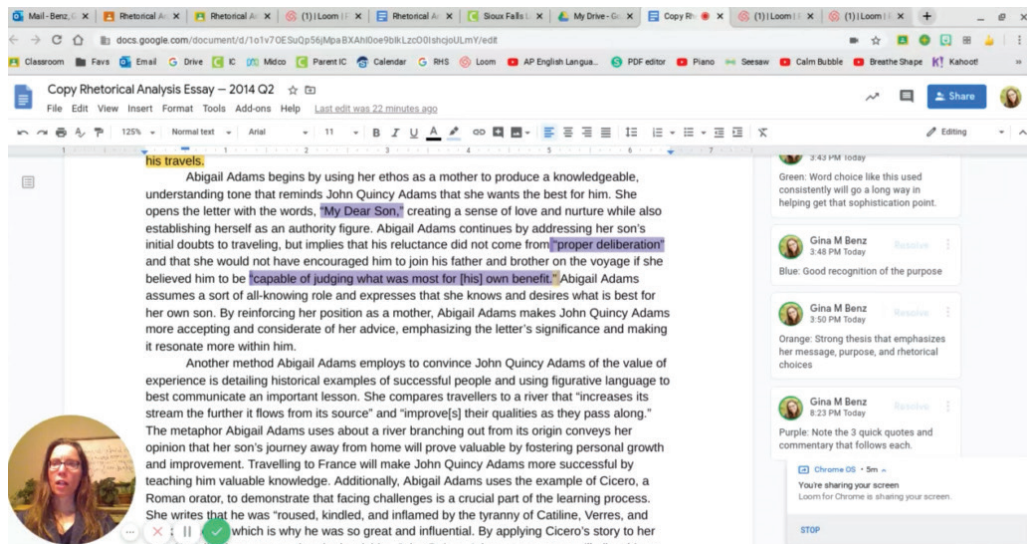
For example, he said, remote learning could be difficult for families in which parents work in essential fields and must leave the home each day, sometimes making older children responsible for the care and education of their younger siblings.

"Some of the frustrations are around equity issues; are we giving the same opportunities to all students?" he said.

Families that did not have computers or online access were provided devices by the school district, and some internet providers around the state have given free service to families.

The Sioux Falls district and its teachers have gone to great lengths to reach students who may be more vulnerable to learning loss during the pandemic, said Teresa Boysen, assistant superintendent of academic achievement.

Boysen referred to teachers as the "rock stars" of the district, and said many are working to find unique



A side benefit from the school closures is that some teachers are becoming experienced in the effective use of technology to connect with students remotely. This screenshot shows Roosevelt High School advanced placement English teacher Gina Benz using the video service Loom to discuss a literature assignment with students in real time. Photo: Courtesy Sioux Falls schools

ways to teach students who need extra help. Some are teaching science without using in-class experiments, while others are seeking ways to improve students' reading skills through online programming.

Boysen said teachers are aware that it may take extra effort to reach lower-income students and those whose primary language is not English, which includes about 2,800 of the district's roughly 25,000 students. She acknowledged that in some cases, remote learning will not be as effective as in-class, more personalized instruction.

"How do you do a cooking class or a science experiment when you don't have those things at home?" she said. "And when we think about the lack of access to that second language, they aren't having that practice like they were because there's nine weeks' loss of daily instruction and just being around that language."

Rural school districts in South Dakota are facing some of the same challenges as more urban districts, but their transition to remote learning may have gone more smoothly in some respects, said Chip Sundberg, superintendent of schools in Gettysburg in Potter County.

Parents of all of the 231 students in the district have been contacted, so all students are in communication with their teachers, Sundberg said. A survey right after the school closure found that only five families did not have internet access, so after making some arrangements for service, engaging with students online has been efficient, he said.

The district also does not have a great need to teach English as a second language, and while poverty is present in the district — 27% of students receive free or reduced-price lunches — income issues have not presented serious challenges, Sundberg said.

Still, remote learning creates a gap in the ability of teachers to reach rural students who have learning challenges or who may not have strong educational support at home.

"We typically see our kids seven hours out of the day, so we can see when they're not getting what is happening with the learning, and we've got kids that are in home situations that aren't the best for anybody," he said. "We're missing those opportunities to have those conversations with the kids that are struggling."



Schools that would typically be buzzing with activity during midday in April, including Horace Mann Elementary in Rapid City, are now closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Educational experts worry about the long-term effects the closures may have on student learning. Photo:

Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

Coming back from a crisis

The focus on teaching only "essential" topics and standards will certainly diminish some of the intangibles that come from learning in a classroom, said Seales, the Rapid City administrator.

"There are students that may end the school year right where they would have had they been in school, self-motivated, self-directed learners who are probably faring better than those students who needed more interaction with their teachers face to face," she said.

Rapid City, which is home to a handful of high-poverty schools, has faced challenges in equipping all

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families with computers and internet access.

Furthermore, parents with children of varying ages are finding it difficult to juggle the different types of remote learning that are occurring at different grade levels, said Seales.

"If you're a parent that has multiple students with multiple teachers, it can be pretty overwhelming," she said.

School districts have long been aware of the potential for summer learning loss and have tried to minimize its impact, both through summer-school programs and through assessments and teaching adjustments made at the start of the next school year.

She said teachers are aware remediation may be needed when students return to school after the pandemic eases, hopefully by the fall.

"Certainly, I think we're all going to have to bear in mind when we start the next school year the loss of these nine weeks. It isn't going to leave our students in the same starting point had this not occurred," she said. "The typical transition into the school year, and the startup where you take the time to try to establish the classroom environment and meet the social and emotional sides of student needs, I think that's going to look different in the next year due to the monumental amount of time that we've been out."

Trying to remotely teach elementary-age children in an urban neighborhood has been both challenging and rewarding, said Kirk Zeeck, principal of Anne Sullivan Elementary School in Sioux Falls.

Opening and maintaining strong lines of reciprocal communication with parents and students has been the biggest educational challenge for teachers so far, especially with students whose first language is not English, Zeeck said.

His school has about 600 children who speak about two dozen different languages; about 75% of students receive free or reduced-price lunches. In addition to teaching those children remotely, Zeeck and his staff are also responsible for providing daily breakfasts and lunches to those who arrive at a drive-up distribution point (meals are also provided to community members who show up).

Reaching students with learning challenges or disabilities has been difficult for his staff, Zeeck said. For example, a school reading specialist who has a caseload of 30 to 40 students has been able to reach only about 15 to 20 of those students regularly, he said.

But most teachers have had success connecting with students; he said teachers with a classroom of about 25 children have typically stayed in communication with about 20 of those students.

Zeeck said students aren't learning every minute or hour they are at school, so teachers and parents are considering that when creating and executing lesson plans. He added that stresses at home during the pandemic can also create barriers to learning. As a result, he said, teachers are encouraging parents and students to put in two good hours of learning time at home each day.

"You can't replicate the instruction in the classroom, that's for sure, but we're doing our best," he said.

Zeeck said he has seen unexpected benefits from the pandemic in that teachers are able to better assess what works and what doesn't, to expand their creativity and to value more deeply their ability to provide students with a well-rounded education.

"However devastating, this is for teachers a wonderful opportunity to boost your creativity and go into the most incredible creative learning opportunity of all time," he said.

Some teachers are videotaping themselves conducting lessons, while some parents take pictures of their child's homework and text or email it to teachers to maintain a strong connection and accountability.

Parents and children, he said, are also using the time in isolation to better understand the value of education and what it means to their futures.

"If you look for a silver lining, this step back, this staying at home, it's given them a chance to think, 'What do I, as a third-grader or fifth-grader, what do I really want to do with my life, how can I be a good citizen in our community?'"

Sioux Falls school officials said they will not hold students back a grade solely due to remote learning and will generally allow students to maintain the class grades they had when schools closed.

Stadick Smith said the state and school districts will work together to catch students up when things return to normal and that individual districts may seek solutions that are unique to their schools and populations.

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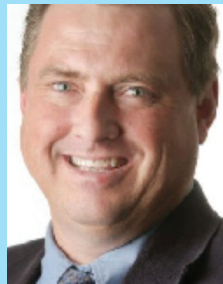
"School leaders and we here at the state are starting to have conversations about the expected learning loss and the best ways to address it when the appropriate times comes," she wrote.

Cooper, the Duke researcher, said school districts should consider drastic steps to help students catch up, including delaying student promotions to the next grade until a couple of months after school resumes. He also suggested the upcoming school year could be extended by 30 days or more to provide additional instruction time to help students get back on track with educational standards.

That would certainly cost more money and require teacher contracts to be adjusted in the coming year, but the need to erase learning losses in an entire generation of students would be well worth the cost, Cooper said.

"All of this is costing money, but if you think about the long-term costs of a generation that is not going to have the same skill set as they should when they leave school, there will be a cost to that dispersed over time," Cooper said. "We're going to pay for it — one way or another."

ABOUT BART PFANKUCH



Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is the content director for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal and also worked at newspapers in Florida. Bart has spent more than 30 years as a reporter, editor and writing coach.

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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 | Apr. 21 | Apr. 22 | Apr. 23 |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Minnesota | 2,213 | 2,356 | 2,470 | 2,567 | 2,721 | 2,942 |
| Nebraska | 1,287 | 1,474 | 1,648 | 1,722 | 1,813 | 2,124 |
| Montana | 426 | 433 | 433 | 437 | 439 | 442 |
| Colorado | 9,433 | 9,730 | 10,106 | 10,447 | 10,878 | 11,262 |
| Wyoming | 309 | 313 | 317 | 322 | 326 | 332 |
| North Dakota | 528 | 585 | 627 | 644 | 679 | 709 |
| South Dakota | 1542 | 1635 | 1685 | 1755 | 1858 | 1,956 |
| United States | 735,287 | 758,720 | 786,638 | 824,438 | 842,624 | 867,459 |
| US Deaths | 39,090 | 40,666 | 42,295 | 45,039 | 46,785 | 49,804 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Minnesota | +142 | +143 | +114 | +97 | +154 | +221 |
| Nebraska | +149 | +187 | +174 | +74 | +91 | +311 |
| Montana | +4 | +7 | 0 | +4 | +2 | +3 |
| Colorado | +379 | +297 | +376 | +341 | +431 | +384 |
| Wyoming | +7 | +4 | +4 | +5 | +4 | +6 |
| North Dakota | +89 | +57 | +42 | +17 | +35 | +30 |
| South Dakota | +131 | +93 | +50 | +70 | +103 | +98 |
| United States | +28,508 | +23,433 | +27,918 | +37,800 | +18,186 | +24,835 |
| US Deaths | +2,011 | +1,576 | +1,629 | +2,744 | +1,746 | +3,019 |

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April 23rd COVID-19 UPDATE

South Dakota:

Positive: +98 (1858 total) 5 less than yesterday

Negative: +521 (12,109 total)

Hospitalized: +8 (119 total) - 58 are currently hospitalized

Deaths: No Change (9 total)

Recovered: +127 (1064 total)

Governor Noem will hold her briefing at 10 a.m. on Friday

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett +1 (11), Brule +2 (40), Buffalo 9, Butte +2 (15), Campbell 7, Custer 14, Day +1 (49), Dewey 21, Douglas 23, Edmunds 18, Grant +1 (32), Gregory +1 (29), Haakon +1 (11), Hand 18, Hanson 20, Harding 1, Jackson 4, Jones 4, Kingsbury +1 (60), McPherson +1 (13), Mellette 11, Perkins 4, Potter 28, Stanley +1 (31), Tripp 50, Ziebach 3, unassigned +91 (1199).

Brown: +1 positive (28 total - of those 9 are employees from the Demkota Beef Plant)

Codington: +1 recovered (13 of 13 recovered)

Hughes: +1 positive (7 total)

Jerauld: +1 positive (5 total)

Lincoln: +6 positive, +7 recovered (62 of 110 recovered)

McCook: +1 positive, +1 recovered (3 of 4 recovered)

Minnehaha: +82 positive, +115 recovered (838 of 1636 recovered) Of those in Minnehaha County, 801 are related to Smithfield employees and 206 are associated with the employees.

Pennington: +1 recovered (9 of 22 recovered)

Turner: +4 positive, +1 recovered (4 of 13 recovered)

Union: +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 of 8 recovered)

Yankton: +2 positive (25 total)

The NDDoH & private labs are reporting 741 completed tests today for COVID-19, with 32 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 709. NDDoH reports one new death.

State & private labs have reported 16,330 total tests & 15,621 negatives.

269 ND patients are recovered.

Please note: two cases previously reported in North Dakota were moved out of state.

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Total Positive Cases* | 1956 |
| Total Negative Cases* | 12109 |
| Recovered | 1064 |
| Ever Hospitalized** | 119 |
| Deaths*** | 9 |

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Age Range | # of Cases | # of Deaths |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 0-19 years | 111 | 0 |
| 20-29 years | 362 | 0 |
| 30-39 years | 457 | 0 |
| 40-49 years | 401 | 0 |
| 50-59 years | 355 | 2 |
| 60-69 years | 185 | 3 |
| 70-79 years | 41 | 1 |
| 80+ years | 44 | 3 |

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| County | Positive Cases | Recovered Cases | Negative Cases |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Aurora | 1 | 1 | 34 |
| Beadle | 21 | 19 | 166 |
| Bennett | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Bon Homme | 4 | 4 | 94 |
| Brookings | 9 | 9 | 307 |
| Brown | 28 | 12 | 501 |
| Brule | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| Buffalo | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Butte | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Campbell | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Charles Mix | 4 | 4 | 66 |
| Clark | 1 | 1 | 47 |
| Clay | 5 | 4 | 107 |
| Codington | 13 | 13 | 396 |
| Corson | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Custer | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Davison | 5 | 3 | 261 |
| Day | 0 | 0 | 49 |
| Deuel | 1 | 1 | 68 |
| Dewey | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| Douglas | 0 | 0 | 23 |
| Edmunds | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Fall River | 1 | 1 | 11 |
| Faulk | 1 | 1 | 14 |
| Grant | 0 | 0 | 32 |
| Gregory | 0 | 0 | 29 |
| Haakon | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Hamlin | 2 | 2 | 52 |
| Hand | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Hanson | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Harding | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Hughes | 7 | 6 | 202 |
| Hutchinson | 2 | 2 | 79 |

| | | | |
|----------------|------|-----|------|
| Hyde | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Jackson | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Jerauld | 5 | 4 | 26 |
| Jones | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Kingsbury | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| Lake | 3 | 2 | 93 |
| Lawrence | 9 | 9 | 66 |
| Lincoln | 110 | 62 | 1160 |
| Lyman | 2 | 2 | 19 |
| Marshall | 1 | 1 | 34 |
| McCook | 4 | 3 | 83 |
| McPherson | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Meade | 1 | 1 | 61 |
| Mellette | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Miner | 1 | 0 | 18 |
| Minnehaha | 1636 | 838 | 5059 |
| Moody | 2 | 1 | 80 |
| Oglala Lakota | 1 | 1 | 21 |
| Pennington | 11 | 9 | 367 |
| Perkins | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Potter | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| Roberts | 4 | 4 | 76 |
| Sanborn | 3 | 2 | 34 |
| Spink | 3 | 3 | 83 |
| Stanley | 0 | 0 | 31 |
| Sully | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| Todd | 1 | 1 | 39 |
| Tripp | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| Turner | 13 | 4 | 120 |
| Union | 8 | 5 | 110 |
| Walworth | 5 | 5 | 26 |
| Yankton | 25 | 21 | 374 |
| Ziebach | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Unassigned**** | 0 | 0 | 1199 |

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Sex | # of Cases | # of Deaths |
|--------|------------|-------------|
| Female | 908 | 2 |
| Male | 1048 | 7 |

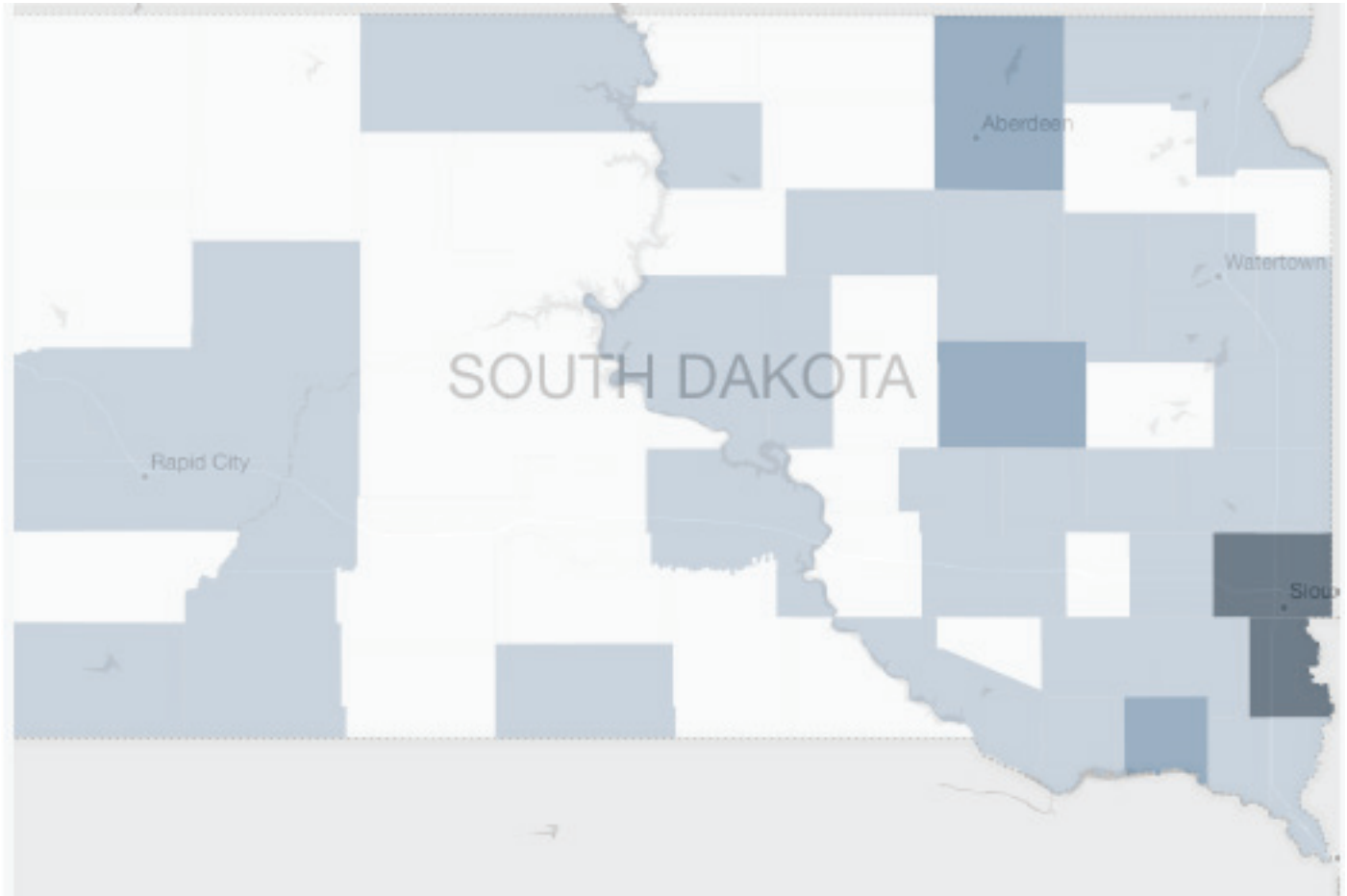
COVID-19 DEATHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY

| County of Residence | # of Deaths |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Beadle | 2 |
| McCook | 1 |
| Minnehaha | 5 |
| Pennington | 1 |

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COVID-19 Community Impact Map



Cases 0 1-19 20-49 50+

Community spread is defined as:

None: COVID-19 cases may occur in the community, but there is NO community transmission.

Minimal to Moderate: There are 1-4 cases of community-acquired COVID-19 in a county.

Substantial: There are 5+ cases of community-acquired COVID-19 in a county or a distinct group of cases in a single area (e.g., city or county).

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

April 27, 2020 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Updates, including any necessary action, to District response to COVID19 closure.
3. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve 2020-2021 signed teaching contracts.
2. Issue Auxiliary Staff work agreements due by Friday, May 8, 2020 with final terms to be negotiated at a later date.
3. Approve resignation of Joellen Miller, Co-cheer Coach for 2020-2021 school year.

ADJOURN

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84705016518?pwd=NkpCNklhUnhpWDFoWkpKT21XZ3RtUT09>

Meeting ID: 847 0501 6518

Password: 1LKHEz

Join By Phone

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 847 0501 6518

Password: 724461

Unemployment Initial Weekly Claims Decrease

PIERRE, S.D. – During the week of April 12 through April 18, a total of 5,128 initial weekly claims for unemployment benefits were processed by the Department of Labor and Regulation. This is a decrease of 1,231 claims over the prior week's total of 6,359.

A total of \$4.3 million was paid out in state benefits, in addition to \$9.6 million paid out in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits. The Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund balance April 19 was \$115 million.

The latest number of continued claims is 14,431 for the week ending April 11. This indicates the number of unemployed workers eligible for and receiving benefits after their initial claim.

"Claims are being processed as quickly as possible, and if eligible, benefits will be paid retroactively," said state Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman. "Please bear with us, as the reality is there are many claims in queue. If there are no issues, a claimant typically receives their payment within three weeks."

SDHSAA Continues Partnership with SDPB

South Dakota Public Broadcasting will continue its comprehensive coverage of high school achievement in the state for the next five years.

The South Dakota High School Activities Association has extended the statewide network's contract for coverage of events through the 2025 school year. The vote came at the annual meeting of the SDHSAA Board of Directors Tuesday, April 21. SDPB has had the contract for coverage of SDHSAA events since the 2001-2002 school year.

"The Association is very happy and pleased with the terms of the agreement with SDPB," said Dr. Daniel Swartos, Executive Director of the SDHSAA. "Coverage of SDHSAA-endorsed events on-air and online allows exciting opportunities for statewide coverage of both athletics and fine arts activities, and South Dakota Public Broadcasting is a trusted partner in making these events available across the state and nation."

SDPB offers comprehensive on-air coverage and/or Internet coverage of a variety of events that showcase the achievements of South Dakota youth. All of the SDHSAA-sanctioned championship athletics and statewide fine arts finals are covered on TV, on SDPB.org or both.

"We are delighted to continue our partnership with the SDHSAA," said Julie Overgaard, Executive Director of SDPB. "We are proud to spotlight the achievements of South Dakota's young people. These students are role models for their peers and for the next generation of high school students."

SDPB Television offers live coverage of championship play for Football, Volleyball, Wrestling, Soccer, Competitive Cheer and Dance, Girls and Boys Basketball and Track and Field. In addition, the network presents the All-State Chorus and Orchestra concert live. A number of championship and All-State events are streamed live, and recorded for later air on SDPB-TV. They include Gymnastics, All-State Band and All-State Jazz Band performances. All of the events, plus the remainder of the SDHSAA-sanctioned events, are covered with photos, stats, scores, digital content and more on SDPB.org and its associated social media accounts.

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

All kinds of news tonight; that's what I get for taking it easy last night. But first the numbers, which to be frank, are not great. Again.

The number of reported cases surged again today to 865,252; both the raw number and the percentage increase moved upward for the second consecutive day. I'd like to see this nipped in the bud. NY led with 263,460, a notable tick upward in both raw number and percentage increase. NJ now has 99,989, just about ready to break the 100,000 case mark, also with a greater increase in both raw numbers and percentage. These are not patterns we want to see continue. NY and NJ combined are still at 42% of US cases. Other top states are as follows: MA – 46,023, CA – 39,437, PA – 38,284, IL – 36,935, MI – 33,929, FL – 29,640, LA – 25,739, and CT – 23,100. These ten states hold at 74% of US cases. There are 2 more states over 20,000 cases, 6 more over 10,000, 8 more over 5000, 16 more + DC over 1000, 8 more + PR and GU over 100, and only VI and MP under 100.

44,300 people have died from this disease in the US. Here, we are on day 2 of declining rates of increase in both raw numbers and percentage. Given deaths lag new case reports, this is to be expected; the increases resulting from the past couple of days' bad news are in the future. NY has reported 15,740 deaths, NJ 5368, MI 2812, MA 2360, PA 1715, IL 1696, CT 1639, CA 1553, and LA 1540. There are 8 more states reporting over 500 deaths, 15 more + DC reporting over 100, 6 more over 50, 9 more + PR over 10, and 3 + GU, VI, and MP under 10.

About the outcomes of this infection, I've seen an interesting article about some of the effects treating physicians are seeing in patients. This comes from study of three cases who all showed signs of something called endotheliitis, inflammation of the linings of blood vessels and the heart. This inflammation damages that lining, called endothelium, impairing the ability of the vessels to carry oxygen and nutrients to tissues that need them and to exchange those for carbon dioxide and wastes the tissues need to offload. Since this is the entire reason you have blood vessels, it's a serious matter when they can't do it.

The authors reviewed the clinical course in all three patients and post mortem findings in the two who had died. What was seen in these patients was damage to the microvascular beds (the places where those exchanges actually happen) in the lungs, heart, kidney, and intestines; one patient also had liver damage. Noting the expression of ACE-2 receptors in tissues of all of those affected organs, the writers suggested the damage can be attributed to direct viral activity and to the host's inflammatory response. They linked this endotheliitis to the known increased risk seen from the following factors: male sex, obesity, smoking, diabetes, established cardiovascular disease, and hypertension, pointing out that all of these conditions can create pre-existing endothelial dysfunction which might make the patient more susceptible to further damage from either viral action or inflammatory response to the virus.

They then suggested that productive lines of inquiry for therapies might focus on stabilizing endothelial cells while tackling viral replication. They particularly mentioned anti-inflammatory anti-cytokine drugs (many of which are in or getting close to clinical trials), ACE inhibitors (drugs often used to treat high blood pressure), and statins (used to lower serum cholesterol).

I read another article that discusses clotting issues in Covid-19 patients. Apparently we are seeing a great many cases where abnormal blood clotting is a feature of the disease. Clots are being seen in various organs, including lungs (which closes off areas of the lung from oxygen exchange) and brain (leading to stroke, even in young, healthy people without risk factors for stroke). Because kidney damage has been a feature of the disease, there is a fair number of patients requiring hemodialysis, where the blood is run

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through a machine which does the kidney's work while the kidney heals; and there have been reports surfacing of the filters in the hemodialysis machines being clogged with clots that were circulating in these patients. The association with abnormal clotting has been strong enough that some physicians are recommending treating patients with high doses of anticoagulants (which inhibit clotting) even before there is evidence of abnormal clotting, apparently in an attempt to prevent it. It should be noted that not every patient is suited to this treatment; those who have increased bleeding risks could suffer serious damage from anticoagulant therapy; bleeding in the brain, for example, causes strokes too. There is a clinical trial underway for tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, a therapeutic often used to treat clot-caused stroke; it acts by dissolving clots that have formed.

I do not know how these two conditions, the epitheliitis and the abnormal clotting, are related, but I suspect they may be. I do know that damaged endothelium can trigger abnormal clotting or fail in its usual duty to break down abnormal clots, so it seems to me that there could be an association. My guess is that, if there's anything to this, smarter people than I have already thought of it and are investigating. We'll see what turns up.

I would like to point out though that I have been seeing something that concerns me a bit: As these articles surface in the popular press about this and that drug being potentially helpful or harmful to folks exposed to this virus, I am seeing people wondering online (where all the best people go for medical advice), asking their friends' opinions whether they should maybe stop taking some drug they've been prescribed by their doctors—or perhaps double their dose. Although, as I've mentioned once or twice, I am not a physician, I have two pieces of health care advice for you: (1) (This one's ironic, since I am giving you this advice on the Internet.) Do NOT go to the Internet for health care advice. You should not crowdsource your health information. Doctors go to school all those years and then do all that training just so they'll know more than random strangers on the Internet, even random strangers who assure you they once had a roommate who attended medical school. How about you save your questions for them? (2) The person most equipped to pronounce on the advisability of stopping a medication or changing the dosage is your primary care provider. If you're wondering about something like this, call that provider and discuss. I guess both of these suggestions are really the same advice: Talk to your doctor about health issues; they are quite literally paid to know these things.

As for therapies, the FDA has authorized compassionate use of convalescent plasma (that antibody-containing blood product from recovered individuals we've discussed before) in severely ill patients under a Single Patient Emergency Investigational New Drug (eIND) use and also opened an Expanded Access protocol for patients seriously ill or at risk who do not qualify for a clinical study. There is also a full clinical study of this therapy underway now. We should have information on how that's going as things develop. Interestingly, there has been a coordinated effort to involve the New York Jewish community, who was hard hit early and includes large numbers of recovered people, in plasma donation and getting those donations to physicians who are treating patients; it's one of the cool stories we see popping up here and there showing that we can, even in the midst of a crisis, step up for some stranger we'll never meet.

Speaking of research efforts, the NIH (National Institutes of Health) is recruiting for a study to determine how many adults in the US without a confirmed history of Covid-19 have antibodies indicating prior infection. The goal is to discover the extent to which the virus has spread undetected in the US and get an idea which communities and populations are most affected. They are using tests developed at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID, the outfit Dr. Anthony Fauci runs) and the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), designed to detect the specific antibodies formed in response to this virus. (For my sciencey friends, they're using ELISA to detect both anti-SARS-CoV-2 S-protein IgG and IgM.) The up to 10,000 participants can be in any part of the country because they're using a home collection kit. If anyone here is interested in participating and helping the

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science along, here's a link to the website; you can look at a questionnaire to determine whether you can participate and contact them if you're interested and qualified: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/news-events/nih-begins-study-quantify-undetected-cases-coronavirus-infection#qa-section>. Might as well contribute to knowledge while you stay safe at home. Another way to play the hero without actually having to do much.

There was an interesting study reported recently from Paris involving sewage. (Who knew sewage would be of interest during a pandemic?) We've known for a while that this coronavirus can show up in feces. We don't see any evidence of spread from there, but turns out that fact may provide us with a means to predict track resurgences of infection. Researchers sampling sewage in Paris over the course of a month have noted a pattern of rise and fall in amount of virus detected that corresponds to increases and decreases in the number of cases being reported. This could be an important way to monitor what's happening and to get an image of the actual viral load in a population. Fascinating work.

And I'll close with some focus on personal precautions. First of all, it has been noted that some folks have acquired latex/vinyl/whatever gloves to wear when going out and about the community. They're slapping on a pair when leaving home and then wearing them in and out of stores and other places. If you're one of those people I don't want to break your heart, but those gloves are not helping, and if you're wearing them so you don't have to wash your hands so often, then it's quite possible they're hurting instead. Here's the thing: Gloves only work if you remove (using proper procedures) and discard them each time you leave a setting that might be contaminated. So let's say your local grocery store is a hotbed of infection (something I frankly doubt), the way gloves will help is if you don them before entering the store and discard them when you leave. If you keep them on and go into another store, you're simply carrying everything you picked up in Store A into Store B: Gloves carry virus on them every bit as efficiently as hands do. And if you drove from Store A to Store B, you've now also contaminated the inside of your car with those gloves too. See what I mean?

You'd be better off to skip the gloves and wash or sanitize your hands when leaving Store A, then do the same thing upon leaving Store B and any other place you visit on your day about town. Gloves are not magic spells; they're just alternative skin—alternative skin that stuffs landfills and transmits viruses if you're not careful. There's no real reason to protect your skin from this virus because it can't get in through your skin. Bag the gloves. Just wash. A lot.

And last thing for the day, masks. A study of homemade masks to see how protective they actually are returned some surprising results. Remember that we've been advised to wear masks in public to prevent spreading any virus we may have to others? It was clear from the start that the masks weren't going to do that much to protect you; they were intended for the protection of others, and the thinking was that, if all/most folks wore them, we'd all be safer.

Well, turns out there could be more to it than that; it's possible for the mask you're wearing to do you some good too. The study showed there are things you can do to assure your mask does offer you meaningful protection. For starters, it helps if the mask is cotton and of a fairly tightly-woven fabric and contains a second layer of cotton batting or interfacing (that stuff used to stiffen collars and such). A couple of layers of cotton with the batting or interfacing between is better. But a mask like this still has drawbacks, mainly that it does not fit snugly enough to your face, so there are gaps through which virus-laden air can still get to you. But they discovered, if you use a piece of nylon stocking (yep, I'm talking pantyhose here) to snug the mask up against your face, you can achieve protection approaching those N95 masks we're hearing about medical professionals running short of. It is suggested you obtain a ring of stocking fabric by cutting a cross-section from the leg portion of Queen-sized hose and place it around your head and over your mask. The elasticity of the hose pulls the mask up against your face, closing those pesky

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gaps and offering, under ideal conditions, filtering of up to 90% of the particles in the air. If this helps you feel safer when you go out, then there you go. But even if you just wear the mask for others, you're helping quite a lot, so do that.

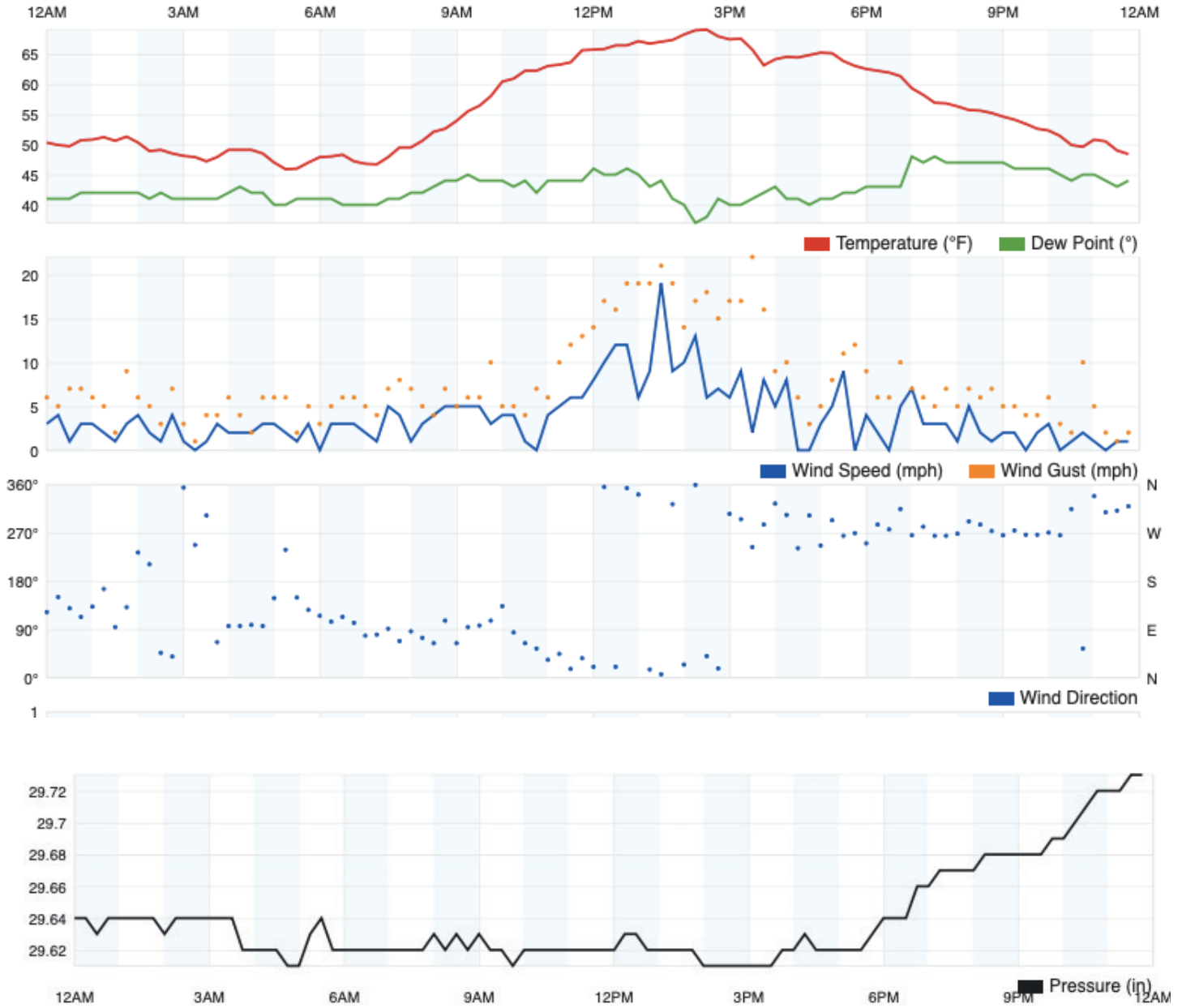
And that's it for the night. The news is discouraging, but we have an opportunity to be encouraging. I've been talking to people who are feeling lonely or sad. You have too, even if they didn't tell you so. Maybe you're lonely or sad too. You have cause; this is, in many ways, a lonely, sad time for all of us. I find it's very difficult to cheer yourself up; self-pep talks don't really work all that well. But you know what does? Helping someone else feel better. Don't be patronizing about it, but assume everyone you talk to is feeling a little bit lonely and sad, and do what you can to make your interaction with them the bright spot in their day instead of just another black cloud passing over. Let them know another human being is interested in them, gives a damn how they're doing; it will be easy if you endeavor to actually be interested and give a damn. If someone smiles tomorrow because of you, you'll have more reason to smile tomorrow too. That's a two-for-one. The world's still a mess; tidy up a corner, would you?

We'll talk tomorrow.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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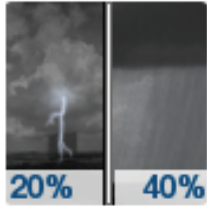
Today



Isolated
T-storms then
Scattered
Showers

High: 69 °F

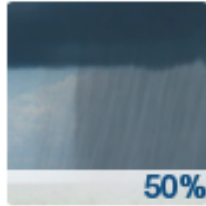
Tonight



Isolated
T-storms then
Scattered
Showers

Low: 40 °F

Saturday



Scattered
Showers

High: 63 °F

Saturday
Night



Partly Cloudy


Low: 39 °F


Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 68 °F





National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
4/23/2020 3:51 PM




Tonight

30%

Lows: 39-45°

**Scattered showers or
Iso. thunderstorms
through evening**
Breezy at times

3 Day Forecast

| Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|---|---|
|  30% |  40% |  |
| 59-66° | 57-65° | 64-75° |

A bit of an unsettled pattern is expected to persist through the remainder of the week. Scattered showers along with a few thunderstorms will be possible the next couple days. No severe weather is anticipated. Temperatures will remain close to normal for late April. A bit warmer and above normal temps will be possible by the end of the upcoming weekend into early next week.

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Today in Weather History

April 24, 1948: A significant F2 tornado moved northeast from South of Castlewood to near Goodwin. Barns were destroyed on two farms. Also on this day, two other tornadoes were observed in South Dakota. One moved from Turner County on into Minnehaha County, injuring two people. The other touchdown 3 miles Southeast of Sioux Falls, destroying barns and other buildings on the west edge of Brandon.

1880: Several tornadoes affected parts of central and southwest Illinois. One tornado of F4 intensity touched down near Jerseyville and killed one person along the 18-mile path. Another F4 tornado passed just north of Carlinville and lifted near Atwater, destroying 50 buildings. Six people died in Christian County by an F5 tornado, which tracked from 9 miles southwest of Taylorville to near Sharpsburg.

1899 - Two women and one son lived to tell the story of being picked up by a tornado and carried more than a fourth of a mile, flying far above the church steeples, before being gently set down again. The young boy and one of the ladies said they had the pleasure of flying alongside a horse. The horse "kicked and struggled" as it flew high above, and was set down unharmed about a mile away. (The Weather Channel)

1908: Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes over across the Central Gulf Coast States claiming the lives of 310 persons. The state of Mississippi was hardest hit. A tornado near Hattiesburg, Mississippi killed 143 persons and caused more than half a million dollars damage. Four violent tornadoes accounted for 279 of the 310 deaths. The deadliest of the four tornadoes swelled to a width of 2.5 miles as it passed near Amite, Louisiana. The tornado also leveled most of Purvis Mississippi.

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Up to seven inches of rain drenched Virginia in three days. Morgantown WV received 4.27 inches in 24 hours, and flooding was reported in south central West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure produced high winds and severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains Region. Strong thunderstorm winds destroyed two mobile homes at Whitt TX injuring two persons. Winds associated with the low pressure system gusted to 70 mph at Guadalupe Pass TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 101 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Colorado to Wisconsin. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Sargeant NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern High Plains to north central Kansas. Thunderstorms spawned ten tornadoes, including one which injured four persons and caused 1.5 million dollars damage at Shattuck OK. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Wheeler TX, wind gusts to 85 mph southwest of Arnett OK, and 13.45 inches of rain near Caldwell TX, which resulted in the worst flooding in recent memory for that area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: The temperature soared to a maximum of 70 degrees in Juneau, Alaska. This is the earliest record of 70-degree reading to occur in Juneau.

2010: April Tornado Outbreak- During a significant severe weather outbreak across the South on April 22-25, 142 tornadoes raked the region, including 77 on April 24 alone. Ten died from the long-track tornado that swept across Mississippi on April 24. A long-lived twister left a trail of destruction extending over 149 miles from Louisiana through Mississippi, resulting in 10 deaths and 75 injuries. This EF4 storm, which grew to a width of 1.75 miles, sported the fourth longest track in Mississippi history. This storm destroyed part of Yazoo City, Mississippi. The Swiss Reinsurance Company estimated insured damages with this outbreak at \$1.58 billion.

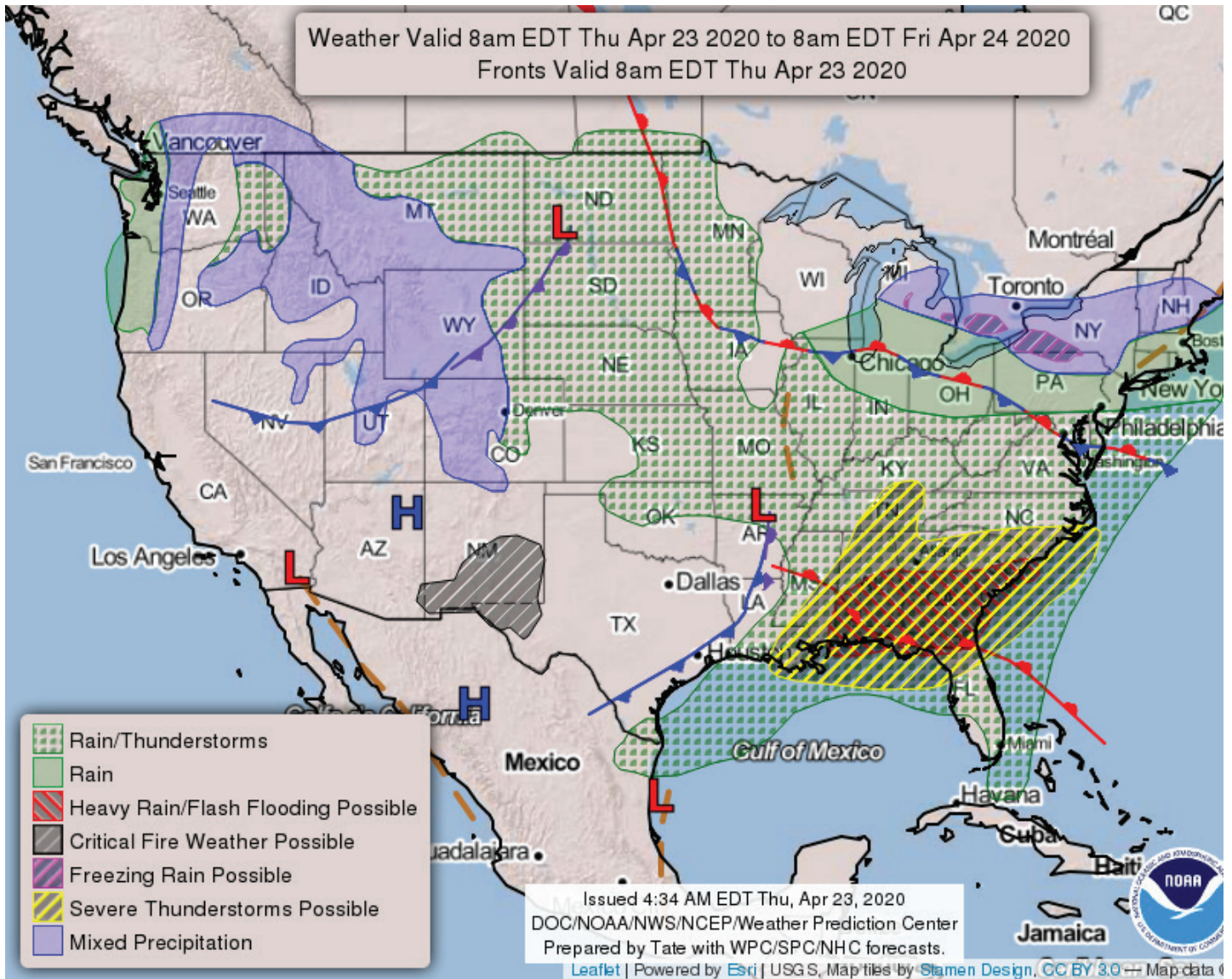
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 70 °F at 2:25 PM
Low Temp: 46 °F at 5:18 AM
Wind: 22 mph at 3:26 PM
Precip:

Record High: 92° in 1962
Record Low: 17° in 1956
Average High: 62°F
Average Low: 35°F
Average Precip in April.: 1.25
Precip to date in April.: 0.94
Average Precip to date: 3.43
Precip Year to Date: 1.29
Sunset Tonight: 8:32 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:30 a.m.



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WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

During one of the civil wars in Italy, a regimental leader was having a difficult time recruiting soldiers to fight. To solve his problem, he was going from city to city looking for people to join him. Many responded and brought their swords and guns to do battle.

One old lady was so moved as she saw the response that she wanted to join in the battle. So, she grabbed her broom, put it over her shoulder and began to march with the men.

Many laughed at her and one person mocked her from the crowd, "What are you doing, old lady? What good are you?"

"Not much," came her answer, "but at least everyone will know whose side I'm on."

Every day we are confronted with choices that reflect our allegiances to Christ. Often they are subtle and do not require much effort and get little attention from others. Sometimes the call to obedience may result in revolutionary changes and completely upset life-long plans and dreams. Surely there have been times when all He asked was to "be still and know that I am God."

The call varies but our response to be faithful to Him is always optional. We either turn toward Him and do as He asks us to do or turn away from Him and follow our selfish ambitions. Opportunities to serve are optional, but to refuse to accept them puts our salvation in question.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are always available when You call us to serve You. We pray that when You call we will answer and say, Here I am, Lord, willing to follow. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 14:14-15 Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! If you love me, obey my commandments.

Come SOW with us: we can only do what we do because of your support. If you are blessed by these daily devotionals please prayerfully consider a donation to support Guido Ministries. Learn more here.

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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

Stopping virus a huge challenge at crowded US meat plants

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Daily reports of giant meat-processing plants closing because workers tested positive for the coronavirus have called into question whether slaughterhouses can remain virus-free.

According to experts, the answer may be no.

Given that the plants employ thousands of people who often work side by side carving meat, social distancing is all but impossible. Because of that, the risk of catching the virus will likely remain even as companies take steps to increase worker protections.

"It's not that people aren't trying. It's just that it is very difficult to control this illness," said Dennis Burson, an animal science professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The list of companies dealing with infected workers has been growing every day at plants across the country. Among the latest was the closure Wednesday of Tyson Foods' huge pork-processing plant in Waterloo, Iowa, after numerous workers tested positive. That follows closures of a Smithfield Foods pork plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; a JBS beef plant in Greeley, Colorado; and many others. Some, including the Tyson pork plant in Perry, Iowa, have reopened after deep cleanings.

The closures shouldn't cause any immediate meat shortages or big price jumps at supermarkets, but as Purdue University economist Jason Lusk noted, "It's a very fluid and volatile situation to keep an eye out for in the days to come."

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, whose state leads the nation in pork production, acknowledged the likelihood of "clusters of positive cases" at meat-processing plants but said the operations must remain open.

"Without them, people's lives and our food supply will be impacted," Reynolds said.

At least 10 worker deaths linked to the virus have been reported at meat-processing plants nationwide, according to the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents roughly 80 percent of beef and pork workers and 33 percent of poultry workers nationwide.

In an attempt to protect workers, companies have started checking employee temperatures, staggering breaks and altering start times. Owners said they have also done more to clean plants, added more break space, slowed production lines so workers can spread out and added plastic shields between workstations.

"We are looking for countless ways of ensuring we have good, healthy social distancing in our plants. It's not impossible despite the number of people in our plants," said Hector Gonzalez, Tyson's senior vice president of human resources.

Major companies, including Smithfield, Tyson, Cargill and JBS, said they have relaxed their attendance and sick leave policies to encourage sick workers to stay home and allow them to be paid.

Still, workplace safety expert Celeste Monforton said it's difficult to ensure people working so closely together won't spread the virus.

"The scary thing is you know if it could happen in one plant, the potential is there for a lot of other plants," said Monforton, a lecturer in public health at Texas State University. "Unless you're super vigilant, this is a recipe for disaster."

Even companies with the best intention may struggle because plant layouts make 6-foot distancing difficult, said Jim Roth, director of the Center for Food Security and Public Health at Iowa State University. Precautions such as face masks and plastic shields can help but likely won't eliminate the risk, he said. Some plants can spread workers out by slowing down operations, but that's not possible everywhere and would reduce a plant's capacity.

"They were constructed to have people stand next to each other and work, and that's very difficult to change," Roth said.

Edgar Fields, president of the Southeast Council of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which represents thousands of poultry workers, said it's hard to know if the precautions will protect workers.

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"We say 6 feet ... but what is enough?" Fields asked. "What else is it that we can ask them to do to try to protect their employees when they walk in the door and when they walk out. I don't know. All of this is new."

Alejandra Wehunt, 22, of Gainesville, Georgia, said she stopped going to work at a poultry processing plant after a coworker tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

"I have a young daughter. I live with my grandmother. I have seizures and heart problems. I can't catch anything," said Wehunt. "If one person got it, probably many others have it too."

Wehunt said the plant manager at the Gold Creek Foods plant had told workers that they had to show up to work or risked losing their jobs, despite the pandemic.

"Why are we losing our jobs because we don't want to put our health in jeopardy," she said.

A Gold Creek Foods spokesman didn't respond to phone calls seeking comment.

Joshua Specht, a University of Notre Dame history professor who has studied the meat industry, said it relies on workers at the margins of society — including recent immigrants — who don't have a safety net and therefore feel pressure to continue working even if they are ill.

"With workers in close proximity, working long hours, and feeling pressure to continue even when sick, the meat industry is at particular risk for pandemic-related disruptions," Specht said.

Associated Press writers Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Amy Forliti in Minneapolis; David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa; and Adriana Gomez Licon in Miami contributed to this report.

Health officials report 98 confirmed COVID-19 cases

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials reported 98 new confirmed cases of the coronavirus on Thursday, as the statewide total rose to 1,956.

More than half of the infections statewide have been tied to the Smithfield pork processing plant in Sioux Falls. Employees who have confirmed infections grew to 801, and another 206 of their close contacts have tested positive.

Nine people have died so far statewide, including two people who worked at Smithfield. 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.

Smithfield closed the plant indefinitely last week because of the outbreak and faced complaints that it wasn't doing enough to protect its workers.

Gov. Kristi Noem on Thursday released a memo from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that offers recommendations on how the plant can protect workers when it reopens. The governor said she would like to see that happen as soon as possible and offered help to Smithfield in implementing the recommendations.

Smithfield has not said when it might reopen.

The governor also used her Thursday briefing to raise issues with the federal dollars coming her way as part of coronavirus relief passed through Congress. She said the money must be spent on addressing the global pandemic, but she would rather use it to make up for revenue loss in the state budget.

The state relies heavily on sales tax revenue, which Noem expects will be drastically behind expectations. The state also reported 5,128 people had made new claims for unemployment benefits last week.

Indiana meat plant closing after workers contract virus

LOGANSport, Ind. (AP) — Tyson Foods Inc. announced Wednesday that it will temporarily close its meatpacking plant in north-central Indiana after 146 employees tested positive for coronavirus.

The Tyson Fresh Meats plant in Logansport produced 3 million pounds of pork daily. Tyson suspended production Monday to allow for cleaning and sanitizing. The plant reopened Tuesday and is running at limited capacity because of decreased worker attendance. The company will stop all production by Saturday.

"The combination of worker absenteeism, COVID-19 cases and community concerns has resulted in a collective decision to close," said Steve Stouffer, of Tyson's beef-and-pork subsidiary.

Cass County officials said 47 people in the county have tested positive for the virus, with some of those traced back to Tyson employees. Testing of all remaining plant workers will start Thursday, said Cass County Health Department Administrator Serenity Alter. She said officials are hopeful that the test results back within several days so the plant can resume production.

Employers have struggled to contain the virus in meatpacking plants, where workers toil side by side on production lines and often share crowded locker rooms, cafeterias and rides to work.

Several facilities have temporarily closed due to virus outbreaks, including a Smithfield Foods plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a JBS USA plant in Worthington, Minnesota, and a Redwood Farms Meat Processors in Estherville, Iowa. Others have stayed open or resumed production after pauses for testing and cleaning.

An estimated 25% of U.S. pork processing capacity has been closed or idled due to reduced operating speed over the past two days, said Steve Meyer, an economist with Kerns and Associates in Ames, Iowa.

"Closing facilities have serious implications to the national food supply for American families, local communities, growers and farmers," Stouffer said. "When a facility closes, the availability of protein for consumers across the nation will only decrease."

Prices are starting to rise as a result, with analysts warning of an upcoming shortage of certain products at grocery stores. At the same time, hog prices are plummeting due to excess supply, which is hurting farmers.

South Dakota auto races go forward without fans due to virus

By **STEPHEN GROVES** and **AMY FORLITI** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two South Dakota speedways reversed course Thursday and said they would hold their weekend races without spectators, after Gov. Kristi Noem warned fans against attending the sold-out events because of the coronavirus.

New Raceway Park said on Facebook that it came under "pressure" from the governor's office, county and health officials, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Park Jefferson International said it made its decision after discussions with state and local officials.

"They didn't tell us that we couldn't have fans, but to tell you the truth, it just looked like it was going to be so difficult to keep people safe," Dennis Moore, a promoter at New Raceway Park, told The Associated Press. "We don't want anyone to get sick, and we don't want to feel like we created a problem."

Fans who purchased race tickets will receive refunds, both speedways said.

"I think we just eliminated a big problem for all of the fans," Moore said. "They're not happy, but I think in the long run everyone will just be better off."

Noem, a Republican, said Wednesday that she thought the events were a bad idea because they could lead to the spread of the coronavirus, but that she wouldn't force the speedways to cancel. She cautioned that the crowds would violate her guidance not to gather in groups of more than 10.

She said Thursday that she hadn't spoken personally to race organizers, but she praised their decisions.

"I just want to thank them. I think their response has been wonderful," Noem said.

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, or death.

Health experts have said eliminating group gatherings is crucial to curbing the spread of the coronavirus, which can be transmitted by people who do not exhibit symptoms.

Race promoters said they had taken steps to reduce the chances that the event would become a hotbed of virus transmission, including keeping the crowds well below capacity, screening people's temperatures and making concessions cashless. The Saturday race at Park Jefferson International Speedway sold just 700 tickets, for a track that usually holds 4,000. The Sunday event at New Raceway Park in Jefferson sold out 500 tickets, less than one-third of its capacity of 1,800.

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The owner of Park Jefferson International Speedway declined to comment Thursday. On its website, the raceway said: "Governor Noem and her team have been doing a great job leading our state and have asked the citizens to be smart and innovative in how they operate. While we felt we were innovative in how we were addressing fan safety by abiding by the CDC guidelines, we also know the importance of working with our officials' guidance on fan attendance."

Both speedways encouraged fans to watch the races from home on pay-per-view channels.

Forliti reported from St. Paul, Minnesota.

Bugged: Earth's insect population shrinks 27% in 30 years

By SETH BORENSTEIN Science Writer

KENSINGTON, Maryland (AP) — The world has lost more than one quarter of its land-dwelling insects in the past 30 years, according to researchers whose big picture study of global bug decline paints a disturbing but more nuanced problem than earlier research.

From bees and other pollinators crucial to the world's food supply to butterflies that beautify places, the bugs are disappearing at a rate of just under 1% a year, with lots of variation from place to place, according to a study in Thursday's journal *Science*.

That's a tinier population decline than found by some smaller localized studies, which had triggered fears of a so-called insect apocalypse. But it still adds up to something "awfully alarming," said entomologist Roel van Klink of the German Centre for Integrative Biology, the study's lead author.

"The decline across insect orders on land is jaw dropping," said Michigan State University butterfly expert Nick Haddad, who wasn't part of the study. "Ongoing decline on land at this rate will be catastrophic for ecological systems and for humans. Insects are pollinators, natural enemies of pests, decomposers and besides that, are critical to functioning of all Earth's ecosystems."

Insect declines are worst in North America, especially the Midwestern United States, and in parts of Europe, but the drop appears to be leveling off in the U.S. in recent years, said the study that pulled together earlier research on more than 10,000 species with data from 1,676 locations.

The Midwest lost 4% of its bugs a year. The big global losses seem to be around urban and suburban areas and croplands, where bugs are losing their food and habitat, van Klink said.

University of Delaware entomologist Douglas Tallamy, who wasn't part of the study, said he would drive through the Midwest where there were supposed to be lots of butterflies and other insects but would see only corn and soybeans in an insect desert.

Some outside scientists said the results made sense, but worried that the study lacked research and data from some large areas, such as the tropics and Africa.

Co-author Ann Swengel, a citizen scientist who's tracked butterflies for more than 30 years, recalled that when driving around Wisconsin a few decades ago, she would "look out in a field and you'd see all these Sulphur butterflies around. I can't think of the last time that I've seen that."

The study detailed quite different losses from place to place and from decade to decade. That tells scientists that "we're not looking for a single stressor or we're not looking a global phenomenon that is stressing insects in the same way," said University of Connecticut insect expert David Wagner, who wasn't part of the study. What's happening, he said, is "absolutely intolerable."

Van Klink didn't find a link to climate change in the insect loss. But he did see an overarching theme of creeping urbanization, which absorbs land where insects live and eat, and general loss of habitat from farming that takes away weeds and flowers bugs need.

While land bugs were dwindling, freshwater insects, such as mayflies, dragonflies and mosquitoes, are increasing at more than 1% a year, the study found. That's faster than land bugs were disappearing. But those thriving freshwater insects are a tiny percentage of bugs in the world.

That improvement of freshwater species, likely because rivers and streams got cleaner, shows hope, scientists said.

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Swengel said she saw another sign of hope on a cloudy day last year in Wisconsin: she and her husband counted 3,848 monarchs, reflecting recent local efforts to improve habitat for the colorful migrating butterfly. "It was absolutely magnificent," she said. "It's not too late."

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter: @borenbears .

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The Latest: Rapid City has business reopening plan

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Latest on the coronavirus outbreak in South Dakota (all times local): 9:20 a.m.

Rapid City has a plan which could reopen many businesses as early as Monday.

The City Council will meet in special session Monday to consider the plan, and if approved it would take effect immediately.

Gov. Kristi Noem has not issued a stay-at-home order in South Dakota. But, some cities have adopted local laws to avoid spreading COVID-19.

Mayor Steve Allender said that under the plan, restaurants and bars would be able to reopen with a minimum of six feet between tables, chairs and bar stools.

There would also be capacity limits on those businesses and casinos. The limit would be either 10 people, or one customer for every 125 square feet (11.6 square meters) of space.

Additionally, all food service employees would be required to wear masks. At casinos, the video machines must be cleaned and disinfected between customers, according to the Rapid City Journal.

At retail stores, hand sanitizer would be required throughout the store for public use and there would be capacity limits for grocery, retail, recreation and fitness businesses would be limited to one customer for every 200 square feet (18.5 square meters).

US delays oil pipeline approvals after environmental ruling

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has suspended a nationwide program used to approve oil and gas pipelines, power lines and other utility work, spurred by a court ruling that industry representatives warn could slow or halt numerous infrastructure projects over environmental concerns

The directive from Army Corps headquarters, detailed in emails obtained by The Associated Press, comes after a federal court last week threw out a blanket permit that companies and public utilities have used for decades to build projects across streams and wetlands.

The Trump administration is expected to challenge the ruling in coming days. For now, officials have put on hold about 360 pending notifications to entities approving their use of the permit, Army Corps spokesman Doug Garman said Thursday.

The agency did not provide further details on types of projects or their locations.

Pipeline and electric utility industry representatives said the effects could be widespread if the suspension lasts, affecting both construction and maintenance on potentially thousands of projects. That includes major pipelines like TC Energy's Keystone XL crude oil line from Canada to the U.S. Midwest, the Mountain Valley natural gas pipeline in Virginia and power lines from wind turbines and generating stations in many parts of the U.S.

"The economic consequences to individual projects are hard to overstate," said Ben Cowan, a Houston-based attorney with Locke Lord LLP who represents pipeline and wind energy companies. "It could be fatal to a number of projects under construction if they are forced to stop work for an extended period in order to obtain individual permits."

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The Army Corps has broad jurisdiction over U.S. waterways. It uses the blanket permit to approve qualifying pipelines and other utility projects after only minimal environmental review. That's a longstanding sore point for environmentalists who say it amounts to a loophole in water protection laws and ignores the cumulative harm caused by thousands of stream and wetlands crossings.

Industry supporters describe the program as crucial for timely decisions on projects that can stretch across multiple states and cross hundreds of water bodies. Analyzing each of those crossings would be costly and is unnecessary because most involve little disturbance of land or water, they said.

Since the blanket permit in question, known as Nationwide Permit 12, was last renewed in March 2017, it has been used more than 37,000 times, Army Corps spokesman Garman said. To qualify, projects must not cause the loss of more than a half-acre of water or wetlands.

Last week's court ruling in Montana was in a lawsuit before U.S. District Judge Brian Morris involving the disputed Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada. Work began earlier this month on the 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) line stretching from Alberta to Nebraska that has been championed by President Donald Trump.

Morris said using the blanket permit for water crossings was illegal because the Army Corps did not adequately consider potential harm to imperiled wildlife species when it re-authorized the permit in 2017. The judge pointed to concerns among scientists that construction could stir up sediment and bury the food source of an endangered, dinosaur-like fish — the pallid sturgeon.

The judge did not limit his findings to Keystone, so the ruling is being interpreted for now to apply to any project using Nationwide Permit 12. The Montana case was cited last week in a lawsuit over a 430-mile (692-kilometer) natural gas pipeline in central Texas. Plaintiffs including the city of Austin said last week's ruling invalidated the Army Corps' work on the Permian Highway Pipeline.

Because there are no streams or other water bodies near the northern Montana border crossing where Keystone XL is currently under construction, that work was not immediately halted. Yet it's an obstacle to future work given the many water crossings along the line's path.

Army Corps regulatory program Chief Jennifer Moyer said in an April 17 email obtained by AP that "out of an abundance of caution" she was ordering agency personnel across the nation to stop verifying companies as compliant with the blanket permit.

Questions about the directive were referred to U.S. Department of Justice spokesman Wyn Hornbuckle, who declined comment because the case is still in litigation.

An attorney for one of the environmental groups that brought the Keystone lawsuit said critics of the permit program pushed for changes when it was last renewed but were rebuffed. To prevent the problem it now faces, the Army Corps should have consulted more closely with wildlife agencies to craft a program that would better avoid impacts, said Jared Margolis with the Center for Biological Diversity.

"They knew what they had to do and they were avoiding it and they got caught," Margolis said.

Labor and industry groups led by the American Petroleum Institute and Interstate Natural Gas Association of America said in a statement that the nationwide permit was "critical to the responsible and efficient development and maintenance of energy and other vital infrastructure." The groups said the permit had been successfully applied to pipelines, broadband cable, water mains and other utilities.

For electricity providers, the court ruling could jeopardize efforts to maintain the energy grid by calling into question the status of projects that use the permit, said Emily Sanford Fisher, general counsel for the Edison Electric Institute, which represents investor-owned electric companies in the U.S..

Cowan, the industry attorney, said he anticipates government attorneys will move quickly to file an appeal or a request with Morris to clarify his ruling.

"The fact that this case involves the Keystone pipeline will almost certainly elevate its profile within the administration," he said.

Follow Matthew Brown at <https://twitter.com/matthewbrownap>

CDC tells South Dakota pork plant how to operate more safely

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday recommended that the operators of a South Dakota meatpacking plant where about 800 workers contracted the coronavirus implement a strict social distancing policy and find ways to overcome language barriers.

The CDC memo specifically addressed the situation at the Smithfield Foods plant in Sioux Falls but that also may give an indication of the broader recommendations that the agency is working on for meat processing plants nationwide. Smithfield closed the plant indefinitely because of the outbreak and faced complaints that it wasn't doing enough to protect its workers.

A CDC team toured the plant last week and reported that the company had slowed down production lines to space workers farther apart and installed about 800 Plexiglas barriers along the lines. But even though there were only a few workers left in the plant, some were still gathering closer than 6 feet apart when not at their work stations or not wearing face masks, the team found.

Plant management told the CDC that over 40 languages were spoken at the plant, making it difficult to communicate guidance to employees. The agency recommended that Smithfield post signs with pictograms and in more languages to communicate vital information to employees.

Smithfield is also planning to give workers a new face mask every day and to equip production staff with face shields, according to the CDC.

The CDC memo also stresses the importance reconfiguring parts of the plant to accommodate social distancing, including making sure workers don't congregate in locker rooms, cafeterias or break areas.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said she would like to see the plant reopen as soon as possible.

Keira Lombardo, a spokeswoman for Virginia-based Smithfield Foods, said the company was still examining the report. Smithfield has not indicated when it might reopen the plant, which produces roughly 5% of the country's pork.

US position on tribal relief funds sets up court battle

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Alaska Native corporations are eligible for a share of \$8 billion in coronavirus funding for tribes, the U.S. Treasury Department said late Thursday, setting the stage for a court battle.

More than a dozen Native American tribes have sued the federal government to try to keep the money out of the hands of the corporations. They contend it should go only to the 574 tribes that have a government-to-government relationship with the United States.

The Treasury Department said a plain reading of the CARES Act makes the corporations set up under a 1971 settlement among the U.S., Alaska Natives and the state of Alaska eligible for the funding.

U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, D.C., has scheduled a Friday hearing on the tribes' request for a temporary restraining order to keep the Treasury Department from dispersing the funds until the judge settles the larger question of eligibility.

"Each day that goes by without receipt of these funds causes greater hardship to Native American tribes and associated entities," he said during a Thursday morning hearing in the case. "The sooner we get to a decision in this case, the better."

State and local governments started getting direct payments this week under the \$2.2 trillion package, under a formula based largely on population. No payments have been made to tribes.

The CARES Act includes the corporations under a definition of "Indian Tribe." But the tribes and the corporations disagree on the intent of Congress.

The Treasury Department's position that the corporations are eligible is in line with the Interior Department and the corporations themselves.

Tribes have said the corporations' reading of the definition is short-sighted, and they worry the corporations could receive a disproportionate share of the funding that would disfavor tribes.

The Treasury Department said it intends to "take steps to account for overlaps." The agency hasn't said exactly how it will determine who gets what. It asked tribes and the corporations last week for information

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on spending, and the number of tribal citizens, corporate shareholders and employees.

The corporations are unique to Alaska and own most Native lands in the state under the 1971 settlement that one of the corporations characterized as a modern-day treaty.

While they are not tribal governments, the corporations argue their roles are essential in supporting the more than 230 Alaska Native villages through employment opportunities, job training, scholarships, cultural preservation programs, land management and economic development.

One regional corporation, Ahtna Inc., noted that any Alaska Native tribe wanting to build a health care facility couldn't do so without the corporations because the corporations control the land.

"Plaintiffs understandably are trying to maximize the funds available to their communities," attorneys for Ahtna wrote in a friend of the court brief. "The solution is not to seek to deny critical funding to other Alaska Native communities who also need those funds and whom Congress specifically chose to include as eligible recipients under the Act."

The Treasury Department has said it would send payment to tribes no sooner than Tuesday, two days past the deadline set in the CARES Act.

Lynch and Riyaz Kanji, an attorney representing the tribes, told the judge that the Treasury Department wouldn't legally be barred from releasing the funding after Sunday.

Yet some tribes are desperately anticipating the money and worry about a malleable deadline, Kanji said. "At the end of the day, there's nothing like a strict deadline to focus a decision, and Congress provided that strict deadline," Kanji said.

Tribes are looking to the federal funds to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and stay afloat after shutting down casinos, tourism operations, agriculture and other businesses that are their main money-makers. Tribes have no property tax base because their land is held in trust by the federal government and cannot be sold or used as collateral.

The Akiak Native Community in Alaska said it has restored water and sewer service to residents who were shut off for non-payment, distributed cleaning supplies and started a food bank. The community of about 535 members along the Kuskokwim River currently is accessible only by air.

"Without income from any source we will be unable to provide any more services, at this time," Chief Mike Williams wrote in court documents.

The tribes that have sued are: The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, the Quinault Indian Nation and the Tulalip Tribes in Washington state; the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in Maine; the Akiak, Asa'carsarmiut Tribe and Aleut Community of St. Paul Island in Alaska; the Navajo Nation in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah; Picuris Pueblo in New Mexico; the Rosebud, Cheyenne River and Oglala Sioux tribes in South Dakota; San Carlos Apache in Arizona; and the Elk Valley Rancheria in California.

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of an Alaska Native corporation to Ahtna, Inc.

Canada mass shooting erupted from argument, official says

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada's worst mass shooting erupted from an argument between the gunman and his girlfriend, who survived the attack, a police official said.

The official confirmed to The Associated Press late Thursday that the weekend shooting rampage in Nova Scotia stemmed from a domestic dispute involving the couple. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said more details would be provided at a news conference Friday.

Police have said 51-year-old Gabriel Wortman acted alone in the shooting spree that killed at least 22 people across northern and central Nova Scotia. There are 16 crime scenes in five different rural communities throughout northern and central Nova Scotia.

The suspect was shot to death Sunday morning, about 13 hours after the attacks began.

Several bodies were found inside and outside one house in the rural town of Portapique, police have said. Bodies were also found in four other communities, and authorities believe the shooter targeted his

first victims but then began attacking randomly as he drove around.

Police have said Wortman carried out much of the attack disguised as a police officer in a vehicle marked to seem like a patrol car. They say he shot people in and around their homes and set fires to homes in Portapique.

Wortman, who owned a denture practice in the city of Dartmouth, near Halifax, lived part time in Portapique, according to residents. Atlantic Denture Clinic, his practice, had been closed the past month because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Authorities said Wortman did not have a police record, but information later emerged of at least one run-in with the law. Nova Scotia court records confirm he was ordered to receive counselling for anger management after pleading guilty to assaulting a man in the Halifax area on Oct. 29, 2001.

The guilty plea came on Oct. 7, 2002, as his trial was about to begin. He was placed on probation for nine months, fined \$50 and told to stay away from the man, and also prohibited from owning or possessing a weapon, ammunition or explosive substances.

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

Two years ago Thursday, a man drove a van along a busy Toronto sidewalk and killed 10 people and injured 16. The suspect, who is awaiting trial, said he carried out the attack in retribution for years of sexual rejection and ridicule by women.

Republicans leap to reopen economy; Democrats more cautious

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Announcing plans to begin reopening his state, South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster cited the ongoing economic damage from the coronavirus pandemic.

"South Carolina's business is business," he declared this week as he lifted restrictions on department stores, florists, music shops and some other businesses that previously had been deemed nonessential.

At the same briefing, the state's chief epidemiologist, Dr. Linda Bell, seconded the importance of economic recovery but quickly inserted a note of caution: "The risk of exposure remains for everyone," she said.

It is a scenario playing out across the country as governors wrestle with weeks of quarantine-fueled job losses and soaring unemployment claims and the simultaneous warnings of public health officials who say lifting stay-at-home orders now could spark a resurgence of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, as scattered groups of protesters have staged loud demonstrations in favor of rescinding quarantine orders, a recent public opinion poll finds that a majority of Americans believe it won't be safe to stop following social distancing guidelines anytime soon.

The dire hit to the economy is clear: Jobless numbers released Thursday show Depression-era levels of unemployment, with 1 in 6 American workers losing their job amid the pandemic. In South Carolina, more than 14% of the labor force has claimed to be out of work due to the outbreak.

But most state leaders acknowledge they have not met many of the key benchmarks that federal guidelines recommend before reopening, such as having robust systems in place for testing and tracing the contacts of those who are positive for the virus.

The difference in how governors are responding to that reality depends largely on their political party, with a handful of Republican leaders moving eagerly forward despite the discrepancies, while most Democratic governors have slammed on the brakes.

McMaster and other Republicans, most notably Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, have pushed forward in accordance with President Donald Trump's ongoing call to reopen the U.S. economy — only to have the president publicly question such actions.

Late last week, Trump used Twitter to urge his supporters to "liberate" three states led by Democratic governors. But on Wednesday, Trump did an about-face, saying he "disagreed strongly" with Kemp's ag-

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gressive plan to reopen nail salons, barbershops, tattoo parlors, gyms and other close-contact businesses on Friday.

Kemp is undeterred. He, like McMaster, said he trusts people in the state to take the necessary precautions to stay safe and not further the spread of the virus.

"I am confident that business owners who decide to reopen will adhere to minimum basic operations, which prioritize the health and well-being of employees and customers," Kemp wrote in a tweet Wednesday night responding to the president's criticism.

In defending his decision, Kemp also has cited his state's efforts to ramp up testing and tracing of the virus. McMaster has alluded to starting up contact tracing efforts at some point, but has not elaborated.

In Oklahoma, Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt said his decision to reopen barbershops, hair salons, spas and pet groomers as early as Friday is in line with the phased-in approach recommended by the White House and is supported by data showing hospitalizations in the state have gone down. But the decision was criticized as "hasty" by the Oklahoma State Medical Association.

"Even without widespread testing, Oklahoma has seen an ongoing growth in the number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths in the past week alone," Dr. George Monks, the association's president, said in a statement. "According to the Trump administration, states should not begin this process until they've seen a two-week downward trajectory in COVID-19 cases, and we are far from this point."

In Tennessee, public health officials have defended Republican Gov. Bill Lee's plan to reopen most businesses by May 1, citing a downward trajectory in the growth rate of positive cases.

The governors' actions stand in stark contrast to the decidedly more cautious approach of their Democratic counterparts in California, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Virginia and Washington, who say they will base their decisions on reopening the economy primarily on public health data and their ability to keep the virus outbreak in check.

"This is going to move slower than any of us would want, but it is the only way to protect the health and lives of Oregonians," said Oregon Gov. Kate Brown.

Jay Inslee, governor of Washington, one of the first states to report confirmed cases of the virus in January, said any return to public life will happen in small steps and only after the state has met federal benchmarks, including adequate testing and a vaccine.

"To turn back on this successful temporary approach now would be disastrous," he said this week.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has framed his decision-making process on lifting restrictions as a "health-first" approach.

He recently allowed scheduled surgeries to resume, but has warned the state's nearly 40 million residents that, while he understands the desire to get back to work and reclaim a sense of normalcy, lifting the orders too soon would be a public health mistake.

"This phase is one where science, public health — not politics — must be the guide, where we must be open to argument, interested in evidence, where we cannot be ideological in any way shape or form," Newsom said.

McMaster, one of the last to implement stay-at-home orders and now one of the first to begin opening his state back up, says he has no desire to endanger residents. But he says it's imperative that people go back to work. He has said the federal government's guidelines are recommendations, not requirements.

"Our goal is to save lives, but also to save jobs and to save families and save the futures that are depending on these businesses that are so heavily hit and impacted," he said.

Associated Press writers Jeff Amy in Atlanta; Chris Grygiel in Seattle; Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tennessee; Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City; Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California; and Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon, contributed to this report.

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com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak.

The Latest: Champion KC picks LSU RB Clyde Edwards-Helaire

By The Associated Press undefined

The Latest on the first round of the NFL draft.

Twenty-five spots after Georgia left tackle Andrew Thomas went to the Giants, Tennessee grabbed the Bulldogs right tackle, Isaiah Wilson, as the first round neared its conclusion. A former wrestler, he's a bit raw in pass protection, but excels in the run game.

Miami owned the 30th selection following an earlier trade with Green Bay. The Dolphins already chose Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa and Southern California tackle Austin Jackson. They completed their first-round hat trick with Auburn cornerback Noah Igbinoghene, whose parents completed in the Summer Olympics.

Minnesota's second choice — the Vikings got LSU wideout Justin Jefferson at No. 22 before trading down from 25th to 31st — aided its defense with TCU cornerback Jeff Gladney. He has been plagued by knee issues.

Super Bowl champion Kansas City finished it off with yet another player from the national champion LSU Tigers. Multi-dimensional running back Clyde Edwards-Helaire was the choice and should quickly fit into Andy Reid's offense .

Green Bay has a likely Hall of Fame quarterback, Aaron Rodgers. The Packers now have perhaps his successor, Utah State's Jordan Love.

After trading up with Miami to go from 30th to 26th, the Packers pulled off probably the most stunning move of the first round.

Love is a developmental project compared to the other three quarterbacks taken earlier — LSU's Joe Burrow, Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa and Oregon's Justin Herbert. And remember that Rodgers, now 36, sat behind Brett Favre early in his career.

San Francisco also made a deal and moved up six positions by trading with Minnesota, and at No. 25 added a receiver to a group that lost veteran Emmanuel Sanders in free agency. Arizona State's Brandon Aiyuk was the pick, while the Vikings moved down to 31st overall.

Seattle boosted its linebacking group with Texas Tech's Jordyn Brooks, followed by Baltimore — which had the NFL's best record in the regular season — taking LSU linebacker Patrick Queen with the 28th pick.

Philadelphia started a little run on wide receivers.

The Eagles filled their need for a receiver by taking Jalen Reagor from TCU with the 21st overall pick. Reagor, whose father Montae was a defensive lineman in the NFL who won a Super Bowl with the Colts, is a speedster and skilled punt returner.

He had a 1,000-yard season as a sophomore in 2018, but his production fell off in 2019 because of injuries and inconsistent quarterback play.

The Minnesota Vikings filled the hole left by the trade of Stefon Diggs to Buffalo for this pick by selecting LSU's Justin Jefferson, who had 111 catches last season for the national champions.

The Chargers then traded up, taking the 23rd pick from New England and selecting Oklahoma linebacker Kenneth Murray, who had 17 tackles for loss, including four sacks last season.

The New Orleans Saints then fortified the interior of their offensive line, taking Michigan center Cesar Ruiz.

Dallas bolstered an already strong receiving unit that includes Amari Cooper and Michael Gallup by taking Oklahoma playmaker CeeDee Lamb, another All-American. Lamb was a Biletnikoff Award finalist last season.

Miami added some protection up front for Tagovailoa with Southern California tackle Austin Jackson. At 6-foot-4, 322, he has long arms and is light on his feet. He's also only 20 years old, one of the youngest

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players available in the draft.

The Raiders, moments after being told by Commissioner Roger Goodell that the 2022 draft will be staged in Las Vegas, might have gone gambling at No. 19. They took Damon Arnette, the No. 2 cornerback at Ohio State behind third overall selection Jeff Okudah.

Jacksonville's second pick was K'lavon Chaisson, a dynamic linebacker from national champion LSU. He led the Tigers in tackles for loss (13 1-2) last season, but has an injury history.

Las Vegas, which was supposed to host this year's draft before it was converted to a virtual format because of the coronavirus pandemic, will host the 2022 draft.

Commissioner Roger Goodell announced Vegas' selection on Thursday night's draft broadcast, saying, "We think you deserve another shot."

Next year's draft will be held in Cleveland.

The 2022 draft will use the same locations that had been planned for this year, including a main stage next to the Caesars Forum Conference Center on the Strip. Caesars Entertainment is the NFL's official casino sponsor.

The NFL had long been opposed to betting on its games but has softened its stance on gambling since a Supreme Court decision allowed all 50 states to legalize betting on sports.

The Raiders will play in Las Vegas starting this season after leaving their longtime home in Oakland.

It took until the 13th spot before a trade was made, Tampa Bay moving up one slot to get tackle Tristan Wirfs of Iowa to help protect new/old QB Tom Brady.

The Buccaneers got that pick from NFC champion San Francisco, which went next and selected Javon Kinlaw of South Carolina. That made five defensive linemen in the first round of the past six drafts for the 49ers, who last month traded DT DeForest Buckner to Indianapolis for the pick they dealt to the Bucs.

San Francisco got the 117th overall selection and sent a seventh-rounder (No. 245) to Tampa.

A second Crimson Tide receiver, Jerry Jeudy, was taken by Denver, at No. 15, perhaps hoping to emulate the fast-paced Super Bowl champion Chiefs who dominate the AFC West.

Atlanta, desperate to upgrade the defense, took matters to the halfway point by grabbing cornerback A.J. Terrell of Clemson.

Sam Darnold has a protector.

Louisville's massive but quick Mekhi Becton, who at 6-foot-7, 365 pounds ran a 5.1-second 40 at the scouting combine, is headed to the Jets.

General manager Joe Douglas promised he would find a target and a blocker for his third-year quarterback. Becton, who went 11th overall, has a 7-foot wingspan.

The first pick in the history of the Las Vegas Raiders was next and made plenty of sense. Coach Jon Gruden loves speed, and in Henry Ruggs III of Alabama, he has a burner who finds the end zone.

Get this: Ruggs, who has run a 4.27 40, has 24 touchdown receptions in 98 career catches.

After signing right tackle Jack Conklin as a free agent, the Cleveland Browns added a bookend in the draft with Alabama's Jedrick Wills.

Quarterback Baker Mayfield must be smiling at those moves.

How good a pass protector is Wills? He allowed one sack in 39 college games, playing exclusively at right tackle. Of course, the Crimson Tide had a left-handed QB, Tua Tagovailoa, so Wills was protecting the blind side.

Look for him to move to the left side and do the same for Mayfield.

C.J. Henderson doesn't have to go very far for his pro football job.

The Florida cornerback was selected ninth overall by Jacksonville. The Jaguars are seeking a solid cover-

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age guy after trading Jalen Ramsey to the Rams last year.

Henderson has good size at 6-foot-1, 204 pounds, and is very quick. He covered the top wideouts the Gators played and usually dominated when healthy — an ankle injury limited him to nine games last season, but he still had 11 passes broken up.

The Arizona Cardinals picked Clemson linebacker Isaiah Simmons with the eighth overall pick, grabbing maybe the most versatile defensive player available.

Simmons was the Butkus Award winner as the nation's top linebacker last year, but he was used in numerous positions for the Tigers. He lined up at safety, slot corner and edge rusher at times. He has defensive back speed at 6-foot-4, 238 pounds.

The Carolina Panthers selected Auburn defensive tackle Derrick Brown with the seventh overall selection. Brown returned for his senior year and was a finalist for the Chuck Bednarik Award (top defensive player) and Outland Trophy (best lineman) last season and considered the clear top interior defensive lineman available.

The selection is the first for a new regime with Carolina as coach Matt Rhule looks to rebuild. The 6-foot-5, 326-pound Brown could be the anchor of the defense going forward.

Oregon's Justin Herbert became the third quarterback selected in this year's NFL draft, going sixth overall to the Los Angeles Chargers.

Herbert had a strong postseason, including a terrific Senior Bowl week that raised his stock. At 6-foot-6, 236 pounds, he has the size the pros like, and he's a good athlete. But he also is not as accurate passing as he'll need to be.

Los Angeles had a burning hole at quarterback after letting go of long-time starter Philip Rivers. Plus, the Chargers plan to move into a new stadium and could use someone to help sell tickets.

A former sixth-stringer for the Ducks, he comes from a football-playing family going back to his grandfathers.

Tua Tagovailoa's health issues didn't turn off the Miami Dolphins.

The Alabama quarterback, whose resume is as strong as any player in this draft were it not for several injuries in his college career, went fifth overall to a team that was accused going into last season of "Tank-ing for Tua." Tagovailoa comes off major hip surgery, which made his landing spot one of the first round's biggest uncertainties. A completely healthy Tagovailoa might have been the top overall pick.

Blessed with a quick release, excellent mid-range accuracy and nimble feet, Tagovailoa threw 76 touchdown passes in 24 starts the past two seasons. He helped the Crimson Tide to the 2017 national title.

The first offensive tackle in a strong group went off the board fourth overall when the New York Giants selected Georgia's Andrew Thomas.

A team leader with the Bulldogs, he can play left or right tackle. Thomas goes 6-foot-5, 315, has strong hands and experience. He was a three-year starter and an All-American last season.

The Giants sought a young tackle to protect last year's first-rounder, quarterback Daniel Jones. They now have him.

The Detroit Lions grabbed the highest-rated cornerback in this year's draft by taking All-American Jeff Okudah of Ohio State.

Okudah was the second Buckeye taken early, third overall and one spot behind edge rusher Chase Young to Washington. The top overall selection, LSU quarterback Joe Burrow, previously played at Ohio State.

A smooth and physical presence on the corner, Okudah can handle all sorts of coverages. He became the 11th Ohio State cornerback taken in the first round since 1999. He figures to start in a division featur-

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ing opposing receivers Davante Adams and Adam Thielen.

Ohio State edge rusher Chase Young is headed to the Washington Redskins.

Many scouts and NFL personnel people believed Young was the best overall talent in this draft. With the heavy focus on (obsession with?) finding quarterbacks, Young went second overall behind LSU QB Joe Burrow to Cincinnati.

At 6-foot-5, 264 pounds, Young led the nation in sacks with 16 1-2 and forced fumbles with six last season. The All-American won the prestigious Bednarik and Nagurski awards in 2019, leading the Buckeyes to the Big Ten title.

He joins a team that went 3-13 and allowed 435 points.

No surprise atop this NFL draft as the Cincinnati Bengals have selected Joe Burrow, quarterback of national champion LSU, as the centerpiece of yet another rebuilding job.

Burrow, the third straight Heisman Trophy winner taken with the first overall selection, joins a team that went 2-14 in 2019 under first-year head coach Zac Taylor. The Bengals scored 279 points last season, third worst in the league, and also ranked 30th in total offense.

The previous time Cincinnati grabbed a Heisman quarterback to open the draft, it was Southern California's Carson Palmer in 2003. Palmer led the Bengals to the playoffs twice.

In his spectacular season, Burrow threw for 60 — yes, 60 — touchdowns with only six interceptions. The Tigers beat six top 10 teams on their way to the national title.

ESPN analyst Todd McShay said he won't be part of the network's broadcast of the NFL draft because he's recovering from the coronavirus.

McShay said in a statement that he'd be back and thanked the tireless work of health care workers and first-responders, calling them "truly our nation's heroes."

Because of the pandemic, this year's draft will be held remotely and broadcast on ESPN, ABC and NFL Network.

The first round is Thursday night and McShay, who has been at ESPN since 2006, was slated to be part of ABC's prime-time network coverage.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell will take a special, virtual hand-off before announcing Cleveland's first draft pick.

Fletcher Rollinson, a 12-year-old Browns fan who has been battling a rare form of brain cancer, will make a video introduction before passing things over to Goodell, who has been forced to serve as master of ceremonies in his basement in a New York City suburb because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fletcher and his family live in Rocky River, Ohio, near Cleveland and the youngster recently returned home following a lengthy stay at St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis.

Last year, Fletcher had a tumor removed and the youngster has undergone a series of proton therapy and chemotherapy treatments during his recovery.

During a break from therapy, he visited the Browns' facility last season and struck up a friendship with star wide receiver Jarvis Landry, who gave Fletcher a pair of gloves before a home game. Landry also wore one of Fletcher's wristbands during every 2019 game.

St. Jude and the NFL have partnered for the past eight years to raise awareness and funds for pediatric care.

Six teams are scheduled to sit out the first round of the NFL draft, though that could be a mirage.

The Colts, Rams, Texans, Bills, Bears and Steelers don't own opening-round picks after previous trades. They certainly could trade back into the round, which could, of course, cost them next year's top selection.

Indianapolis gave up the highest spot when it traded for the 13th pick to San Francisco for defensive tackle DeForest Buckner, who then signed a new contract worth about \$21 million per year.

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The Dolphins, who have three first-round selections, got No. 18 overall from Pittsburgh for defensive back Minkah Fitzpatrick, who was a star for the Steelers in 2019.

The 19th spot belongs to Las Vegas — that's the Raiders, folks — as part of the 2018 deal that sent Khalil Mack to Chicago. No. 20 belongs to Jacksonville in exchange for cornerback Jalen Ramsey, a deal made during last season with the Rams.

Buffalo acquired wide receiver Stefon Diggs from Minnesota for the 22nd spot, and Miami has Houston's slot, No. 26, from last year's deal for tackle Laremy Tunsil.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Somber Congress delivers nearly \$500B more in virus aid

By **ANDREW TAYLOR** and **ALAN FRAM** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will be holding a signing ceremony Friday for a bill providing a nearly \$500 billion infusion of coronavirus spending, rushing new relief to employers and hospitals buckling under the strain of a pandemic that has claimed almost 50,000 American lives and one in six U.S. jobs.

The measure passed Congress almost unanimously Thursday, but the lopsided tally belies a potentially bumpier path ahead as battle lines are being formed for much more ambitious future legislation that may prove far more difficult to maneuver through Congress.

The bipartisan measure passed as lawmakers gathered in Washington as a group for the first time since March 27, adopting stricter social distancing rules while seeking to prove they can do their work despite the COVID-19 crisis.

Lawmakers' face masks and bandannas added a somber tone to their effort to aid a nation staggered by the health crisis and devastating economic costs of the pandemic.

"Millions of people out of work," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. "This is really a very, very, very sad day. We come to the floor with nearly 50,000 deaths, a huge number of people impacted, and the uncertainty of it all. We hope to soon get to a recovery phase. But right now we're still in mitigation."

Anchoring the bill is the Trump administration's \$250 billion funding request to replenish a fund to help small- and medium-size businesses with payroll, rent and other expenses. The payroll program provides forgivable loans so businesses can continue paying workers while forced to stay closed for social distancing and stay-at-home orders.

It also contains \$100 billion demanded by Democrats for hospitals and a nationwide testing program, along with a \$60 billion set-aside for small banks and an alternative network of community development banks that focus on development in urban neighborhoods and rural areas ignored by many lenders. There's also \$60 billion for small-business loans and grants delivered through the Small Business Administration's existing disaster aid program.

Trump celebrated the bill's passage at his daily White House briefing Thursday. "At a time when many Americans are enduring significant economic challenges, this bill will help small businesses to keep millions of workers on the payroll," he said.

The 388-5 vote — with Rep. Justin Amash, I-Mich., voting "present" — came at the end of a nettlesome path to passage. Republicans sought immediate action on Trump's "clean" request for the small business money — backed by powerful, GOP-leaning business groups — but Democrats demanded equal funding for their priorities, frustrating Republicans who accused them of seeking leverage during the crisis. Republicans said delays in replenishing the paycheck subsidy program probably pushed some struggling businesses over the edge into closure.

Signs of the pandemic were everywhere in the House chamber Thursday. As Pelosi spoke from the floor, she lowered a white scarf that had covered much of her face. House Chaplain Patrick Conroy delivered the opening prayer wearing a yellow protective mask, and most lawmakers and aides on the chamber's sparsely populated floor wore masks as well.

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With the entire Capitol closed to the public, visitors' galleries were set aside for lawmakers in an effort to separate them.

Passage of more coronavirus relief is likely in the weeks ahead. Supporters are already warning that the business-backed Payroll Protection Program will exhaust the new \$250 billion almost immediately. Launched just weeks ago, the program quickly reached its lending limit after approving nearly 1.7 million loans. That left thousands of small businesses in limbo as they sought help.

Pelosi and allies like Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., said the next measure will distribute more relief to individuals, extend more generous jobless benefits into the fall, provide another round of direct payments to most people and help those who are laid off afford health insurance through COBRA.

Democrats tried to win another round of funding for state and local governments in Thursday's bill but were rebuffed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who says he's going to try pump the brakes on runaway deficit spending. McConnell says he doesn't want to bail out Democratic-governed states for fiscal problems that predated the pandemic, but there's plenty of demand for state fiscal relief among Republicans, too.

After the Senate passed the latest bill Tuesday, McConnell declared that Republicans would entertain no more coronavirus rescue legislation until the Senate returns to Washington, promising rank-and-file Republicans greater say in the future legislation, rather than leaving it in the hands of top bipartisan leaders.

Pelosi attacked McConnell for at first opposing adding any money to his original \$250 billion package and saying cash-strapped states should be allowed to declare bankruptcy, a move that they currently cannot do and that would threaten a broad range of state services. McConnell's comments provoked an outcry — including from GOP governors — and he later tempered his remarks.

"Oh, really?" Pelosi said. "What made you think that was a good idea?"

Thursday's measure brings total rescue funding over the four measures, as measured by the cumulative deficit impact of spending proposals and tax cuts, to \$2.4 trillion, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Each day brings new evidence of the economic calamity wrought by the virus. Thursday morning the government reported that 4.4 million people filed for unemployment benefits last week as layoffs sweep the economy. Over the last five weeks, roughly 26 million people have filed for jobless aid, or about one in six U.S. workers.

The state of Michigan announced this week that it is temporarily laying off almost 3,000 workers.

All told, the four coronavirus relief bills crafted by Congress would deliver at least \$2.4 trillion for business relief, testing and treatment, and direct payments to individuals and the unemployed, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The deficit is virtually certain to breach \$3 trillion this year and is likely to go well above that when CBO issues new data as early as Friday.

Among the candidates for aid in the next bill is the Postal Service, which has more than 600,000 workers but is getting clobbered by COVID-19-related revenue losses.

In related matter, the House used a party-line 212-182 vote Thursday to establish a special committee to oversee how the Trump administration spends the huge sums of money Congress is providing to battle the coronavirus. Republicans accused Democrats of playing politics with the crisis, but Democrats said Congress needs to keep an eye on the effort.

Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman contributed to this report.

'Republicans are nervous': Some in GOP eye protests warily

By SCOTT BAUER and SARA BURNETT Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The latest demonstration by right-wing groups against measures to contain the coronavirus will be held Friday in Wisconsin, where hundreds, and possibly thousands of people plan to descend on the state Capitol to protest the Democratic governor's stay-home ordinance.

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It's expected to be among the biggest of the protests that have popped up around the U.S. in recent days. But as with some earlier events, one group will be noticeably absent: the state's most prominent Republicans.

That includes Sen. Ron Johnson, a Trump ally, who says he'll be sheltering in place at his home in Oshkosh about 90 miles from Madison.

"I'm neither encouraging nor discouraging them," said Johnson, 65, whose career was launched by the tea party movement, a protest effort with ties to the current one. He urged anyone who decides to attend the protest to practice good personal hygiene and social distancing.

Johnson's distance and ambivalence is shared by many Republicans as they warily watch the protests — with their images of gun-toting activists, the occasional Confederate flag, and protesters wearing Trump hats but no face masks. Six months away from an election, the protests are forcing some Republicans to reckon with a restless right flank advocating an unpopular opinion even as the party seeks to make gains with moderates, women and suburban voters.

Polls show the sentiment behind these groups is currently unpopular. A survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found only 12% of Americans say the measures in place where they live to prevent the spread of the coronavirus go too far, though Republicans are roughly four times as likely as Democrats to say so — 22% to 5%. The majority of Americans — 61% — feel the steps taken by government officials in their area are about right.

Still, a network of conservative groups has activated to support the efforts — seizing on the anxiety and distrust that comes with a moment of turmoil. Conservative groups with national networks, including FreedomWorks and Tea Party Patriots, have pushed the "reopen" message on social media.

Friday's rally was promoted by Thomas Leager, a prominent Wisconsin gun-rights advocate. Those who are members of the Facebook group for the event or have advocated for rallying to reopen the state include Matt Batzel, the executive director of the Wisconsin chapter for American Majority, a group that helps conservative candidates get elected; Christian Gomez, research project manager at the John Birch Society; and Stephen Moore, a fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation.

"The polls are very clear. That's why I think Republicans are nervous about this," said Moore, who is on Trump's economic task force and has promoted some of the protests provided attendees should follow social distancing guidelines. "But these things can change. That's the point of these protests — to change public opinion."

The many unknowns of pandemic — including what the death toll might be if restrictions like stay-home orders are lifted — complicate the political calculations. And Trump himself has positioned himself on both sides of the divide in this party. After issuing guidelines for states to reopen, he tweeted support for protesters who were violating them, calling on them to "LIBERATE" three states with Democratic governors. He empathized with protesters, saying they have "cabin fever" and "want their lives back," then criticized Georgia's governor for reopening his state too early.

That's left most Republicans — particularly those in tough re-election fights this fall — playing it safe by staying away from protests or from being overly vocal about reopening things.

In North Carolina, Sen. Thom Tillis, who is among the GOP senators whose elections could determine if the party keeps control of the Senate, has been repeatedly complimentary in public of Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper and his decisions.

"We need to let people know that now is not the time to let their guard down," Tillis said on Thursday during a coronavirus conference call with constituents. He said he thinks one or two other states talking about reopening are "doing just a little bit too soon based on the data and the presidential guidelines."

"People need to wear a mask, they need to avoid going out if they don't need to," Tillis said. "That's the only way that we are ultimately going to be beat this virus and get our economy back on sound footing."

For some Republican candidates and elected officials the protests have been a way to get attention from a vocal faction of the party. said Wisconsin-based pollster Charles Franklin.

In Minnesota, former GOP congressman and Senate candidate Jason Lewis made a protest outside the governor's mansion one of the first stops on an RV tour of the state where he's pushing for an end to the

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shutdowns. Lewis said he's skeptical of the polling on the question, noting people are honking in support and giving thumbs up as his RV passes by, particularly in smaller towns where people feel like the restrictions are unfair and killing their businesses and livelihood.

"People are saying 'Finally someone is saying what I feel,'" he said, predicting the shutdowns will be "the defining issue" in his race against Sen. Tina Smith.

In Maine, where moderate Republican Sen. Susan Collins is up for reelection, rural residents were behind a protest Monday in the capital city of Augusta. The event divided GOP contenders in a congressional primary: One Republican, Eric Brakey, joined the protesters, while one of his opponents skipped the event but called on others to join her in a "virtual" protest using social media.

Republican Adrienne Bennett said it's important to be "safe and responsible." Collins did not respond to request for comment about the protest.

Wisconsin Republicans were initially generally supportive of Democratic Gov. Tony Evers approach to fighting coronavirus, but they broke last week when he extended a stay-at-home order for another month until May 26, which was the latest in the Midwest and one of the latest in the country. This week Republican legislative leaders asked the Wisconsin Supreme Court to block the order and force the state Department of Health Services to work with them on a new approach to reopening the state.

"There's a lot of frustration out there," said Republican state Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, among those filed the lawsuit against Evers. "The fact that Governor Evers' voicemail is full and people aren't getting a reply to their emails makes people feel like they're not being heard."

Vos, who made headlines for declaring Wisconsin polling places safe for voters while covered in protective gear, would not say whether he will attend Friday's rally. His counterpart in filing the lawsuit, and candidate for Congress, state Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald did not respond to requests for comment.

One of the rally's organizers, Madison Elmer, said they were approached by at least one office holder who wanted to speak but organizers turned them down. Elmer would not identify the person. Instead, the rally will feature speeches from business owners, farmers, a doctor and a nurse.

Burnett reported from Chicago. Associated Press reporters David Sharp in Portland, Maine and Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina contributed.

Coronavirus shakes the conceit of 'American exceptionalism'

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — What if the real "invisible enemy" is the enemy from within — America's very institutions?

When the coronavirus pandemic came from distant lands to the United States, it was met with cascading failures and incompetencies by a system that exists to prepare, protect, prevent and cut citizens a check in a national crisis.

The molecular menace posed by the new coronavirus has shaken the conceit of "American exceptionalism" like nothing big enough to see with your own eyes.

A nation with unmatched power, brazen ambition and aspirations through the arc of history to be humanity's "shining city upon a hill" cannot come up with enough simple cotton swabs despite the wartime manufacturing and supply powers assumed by President Donald Trump.

The crisis turned doctors in the iconic American shining city, New York, into beggars with hands outstretched for ponchos because they couldn't get proper medical gowns. "Rain ponchos!" laments tech entrepreneur Marc Andreessen. "In 2020! In America!"

It's turned a Massachusetts hospital executive into an under-the-radar road warrior, working up a deal through a friend of a friend of an employee who heard about a warehouse more than five hours away with masks. Two tractor-trailers disguised as grocery trucks picked them up, dodged interference from Homeland Security and took separate routes back in case one load got intercepted on highways through the northeast "pandemic alley."

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"Did I foresee, as a health-system leader working in a rich, highly developed country with state-of-the-art science and technology and incredible talent, that my organization would ever be faced with such a set of circumstances?" asked Dr. Andrew W. Artenstein of Baystate Health, who was on hand at the warehouse to help score the booty. "Of course not."

But, he said, "the cavalry does not appear to be coming."

At the time of greatest need, the country with the world's most expensive health care system doesn't want you using it if you're sick but not sick enough or not sick the right way.

The patchwork private-public health care system consumes 17% of the economy, unparalleled globally. But it wants you to stay home with your COVID-19 unless you are among the minority at risk of death from suffocation or complications. It wants you to heal from anything you can without a doctor's touch and put off surgeries of all kinds if they can wait.

In the pandemic's viral madhouse, the United States possesses jewels of medical exceptionalism that have long been the envy of the world, like the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.

But where are the results?

For effective diagnostic testing, crucial in an infectious outbreak, look abroad. To the United Arab Emirates, or Germany, or New Zealand, which jumped to test the masses before many were known to be sick.

Or to South Korean exceptionalism, tapped by Maryland's Republican governor, Larry Hogan, who accepted a planeload of 500,000 testing kits from Seoul to make up for the U.S. shortfall. The aid was dubbed Operation Enduring Friendship and annoyed Trump, the "America First" president.

Simple gloves. Complicated ventilators. Special lab chemicals. Tests. Swabs. Masks. Gowns. Face shields. Hospital beds. Emergency payouts from the government. Benefits for idled workers. Small business relief. Each has been subject to chronic shortages, spot shortages, calcified bureaucracy or some combination.

"This monumental failure of institutional effectiveness will reverberate for the rest of the decade," Andreesen, a tech investor best known for the Netscape browser in the 1990s, said in his company newsletter.

Yet Trump uses his daily White House briefings to claim success and talk about his poll numbers, TV ratings, favorite theories about science and the praise he gets from governors, who may be at risk of seeing their states intentionally shortchanged by Washington if they don't say something nice about him.

"A lot of people love Trump, right?" Trump asked himself at the briefing Monday.

He then answered himself. "A lot of people love me. You see them all the time, right? I guess I'm here for a reason, you know. ... And I think we're going to win again, I think we're going to win in a landslide."

Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont, a Democrat, found something nice to say about the administration this past week: It's relaxing some regulations. "They've now said you can come up with your own swab," he said. "One good thing is, the federal government is getting out of the way."

That is one iteration of American exceptionalism now — a national government responding to a national crisis by getting out of the way.

The cavalry isn't coming.

That's what plunged Dr. Artenstein into his great mask caper.

WINGING IT

If the Strategic National Stockpile has been of any benefit to Baystate Health in western Massachusetts, Artenstein, the organization's chief physician executive, is not aware of it.

The backup emergency medical supply worked in 2015, speeding 50 doses of botulinum antitoxin to Ohio when people ate bad potatoes at a church potluck. One person died, dozens got sick, but botulism was nipped in the bud. But in today's pandemic, the stockpile drained before the peak.

Artenstein and his team were drawn into what seemed like a zero-sum game to keep their doctors, nurses and staff protected with the most basic gear. Purchases have been known to fall apart at every stage of a transaction over the past six weeks, he said, at times because the federal government has apparently outbid his team for supplies.

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So when Baystate Health learned about a large shipment of three-ply face masks and N95 respirators in the mid-Atlantic region, it was time for a road trip. Baystate Health was using up to 2,000 disposable masks a day and within several days of running out.

Two disguised trucks headed south, several members of a supply team flew down and Artenstein decided he'd best go, too, in his car. "It was felt by all that a little executive muscle might help in this situation," he told The Associated Press, expanding on his account in The New England Journal of Medicine.

Baystate Health was paying five times the normal rate for the masks and found out that only one-quarter of the original order would be available. But the team converged at the distant warehouse and verified that the masks were good.

Then two FBI agents, on the lookout for illegal reselling, flashed their badges and began asking questions. "They were doing their job," Artenstein said, "and that was fine with me because we were doing our job."

But passing muster with the FBI was not the last hurdle. Homeland Security, the agents said, was considering whether masks in the shipment should be allocated elsewhere. "They had to hoist it up the chain," he said of the agents. "The wheels turn slowly." That took hours. "I really was nervous the whole time."

Driving back on his own with the shipment still in limbo, Artenstein got on the phone to "try to thaw this frozen structure a little bit." Baystate Health's CEO contacted Rep. Richard Neal of Massachusetts, chairman of a powerful House committee, who got on the case. The shipment was eventually cleared and the trucks set off through the Northeast Corridor.

Artenstein got the call around midnight that the masks were coming off the trucks and into hospital inventory.

With that, the acute mask shortage was resolved. But when Artenstein spoke with the AP, Baystate Health was two days from running out of disposable gowns.

PLANNING IT

Public institutions are measured by their foresight as well as by their response. Why didn't you see this coming? they get asked when things go wrong — when terrorists strike, hurricanes flood a city, a pandemic arrives.

The United States saw this coming 15 years ago and still wasn't prepared.

"If a pandemic strikes, our country must have a surge capacity in place that will allow us to bring a new vaccine online quickly and manufacture enough to immunize every American against the pandemic strain," President George W. Bush said in a call for readiness in 2005.

The principal goal was "the capacity for every American to have a vaccine in the case of a pandemic, no matter what the virus is," said Michael Leavitt, then the health and human services secretary.

Bush announced billions of dollars for a wide-ranging plan for a pandemic like this one. It accelerated a new method of vaccine research, beefed up stockpiles and steered aid to states to build mobile hospitals and more.

Many of the needs of today were anticipated in a mix of federal and state plans. Children would be schooled remotely — TV was the medium of choice then. People would need ready access to advice about whether to leave home quarantine to seek care — in Texas, the plan was to have retired doctors staff phone banks for that purpose. If 911 dispatchers got sick, librarians would step in.

Colorado parked trailers filled with medical supplies and cots in secret locations. In emergency simulations, officials in Idaho and Hawaii dispensed M&Ms for antiviral pills.

But for all the creativity and ambition, a year later almost half the states had not spent any of their own money for the preparedness subsidized by Washington, and in the years that followed — through the Great Recession, more war, more time passing — the federal effort languished, too.

"Our country has been given fair warning of this danger," Bush said at the launch, recalling the lethal 1918 pandemic and bird flu outbreak then spreading overseas. Americans have "time to prepare."

But foresight became a thing of the past. And to hear Trump, it's as if it never existed.

"Unforeseen problem," Trump says of the pandemic. "Came out of nowhere."

"This is something," he said, "that you can never really think is going to happen."

Associated Press writers Lauran Neergaard in Washington, Ted Anthony in Pittsburgh and Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

Pandemic job losses hit new high, antiviral tests disappoint

By DAVID CRARY, REGINA GARCIA CANO and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Discouraging results from a study into a possible coronavirus treatment and fresh data showing one in six American workers have lost their jobs tempered relief Friday over the passage by Congress of a nearly \$500 billion spending package to help embattled businesses and hospitals.

In a trend seen around the globe, roughly 26 million Americans — the population of the 10 biggest U.S. cities combined — have filed for jobless aid in five weeks, pushing unemployment to levels last seen during the Great Depression of the 1930s and raising the stakes over how and when to ease shutdowns of factories and other businesses.

Dampening hopes for discovery of an effective treatment for COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, results of a Chinese study on the antiviral drug remdesivir (rehm-DEHZ'-ih-veer), found no positive effect, though the sample size was too small to draw scientifically valid conclusions.

The data came from documents published accidentally by the World Health Organization and reported Thursday by the Financial Times. The Foster City, Calif.-based company behind the drug, Gilead Sciences, said the data represented "inappropriate characterizations" of the China study. It is conducting tests in several places around the world.

The news cut short a rally in share prices on Wall Street powered by near-unanimous approval by lawmakers, many in face masks and bandannas, of the latest coronavirus spending package. The law was sent to President Donald Trump in the evening.

Anchoring the bill is a \$250 billion request by the Trump administration to replenish a fund to help small- and medium-size businesses with payroll, rent and other expenses. Trump said the bill "will help small businesses to keep millions of workers on the payroll."

He was expected to sign the bill on Friday.

The coronavirus has killed more than 190,000 people worldwide, including more than 100,000 in Europe and nearly 50,000 in the United States, according to a tally compiled by John Hopkins University from official government figures. The true numbers are almost certainly far higher, and new cases are surging in Africa and Latin America as infections subside in some places hit by early outbreaks.

In the U.S., the economic consequences of the shutdowns have sparked angry rallies in state capitals by protesters demanding that businesses reopen, and Trump has expressed impatience over the restrictions.

Some U.S. governors have begun loosening up despite warnings from health authorities that it may be too soon to do so without sparking a second wave of infections. In Georgia, gyms, hair salons and bowling alleys can reopen Friday. Texas has reopened its state parks.

In northern Colorado, a major meatpacking plant that closed because of an outbreak that killed four workers was set to reopen Friday after a two-week disinfection, even as some questioned how employees can maintain social distancing inside the facility.

On the economic front, few experts foresee a downturn as severe as the Great Depression, when unemployment remained above 14% from 1931 to 1940, peaking at 25%. But unemployment is considered likely to remain elevated well into next year and probably beyond, and will surely top the 10% peak of the 2008-09 recession.

Janet Simon, laid off as a waitress at a Miami IHOP restaurant, said she has just \$200 and is getting panic attacks over how she will care for her three children. Simon, 33, filed for unemployment a month ago, and her application is still listed as "pending."

"I'm doing everything to keep my family safe, my children safe, but everything else around me is falling apart," Simon said. "But they see it, no matter how much I try to hide my despair."

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Corey Williams, 31, lost his warehouse job in Michigan a month ago and saw his rent, insurance and other bills pile up while he anxiously awaited his unemployment benefits. That finally happened on Wednesday, and he quickly paid \$1,700 in bills.

"It was getting pretty tight, pretty tight," he said. "It was definitely stressful for the last few days."

Huge lines have formed at food banks from El Paso, Texas, to the Paris suburbs, and food shortages are hitting Africa especially hard.

In Africa, COVID-19 cases have surged 43% in the past week to 26,000, according to John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The figures underscored a recent warning from the World Health Organization that the virus could kill more than 300,000 people in Africa and push 30 million into desperate poverty.

Across the Muslim world, the pandemic was casting a shadow over the holy month of Ramadan — marked by daytime fasting, overnight festivities and communal prayer. Ramadan begins for the world's 1.8 billion Muslims with this week's new moon. Many Muslim leaders have closed mosques or banned collective evening prayer to ward off infections.

The virus has already disrupted Christianity's Holy Week, Judaism's Passover, the Muslim hajj pilgrimage and other major religious events.

While the health crisis has eased in places like Italy, Spain and France, experts say it is far from over, and the threat of new outbreaks looms large.

"The question is not whether there will be a second wave," said Dr. Hans Kluge, the head of the WHO's Europe office. "The question is whether we will take into account the biggest lessons so far."

Some German states were moving too quickly to reopen, said Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose government has won praise for how it has handled the pandemic and how its death toll has remained much lower than in other large European countries.

"We're not living in the final phase of the pandemic, but still at the beginning," Merkel warned. "It would be a shame if premature hope ultimately punishes us all."

In the hardest-hit corner of the U.S., evidence emerged that perhaps 2.7 million New York state residents have been infected by the virus — 10 times the number confirmed by lab tests.

A small, preliminary statewide survey of around 3,000 people found that nearly 14% had antibodies showing they had been infected, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. Just in New York City, with a population of 8.6 million, Health Commissioner Oxiris Barbot said as many as 1 million may have been infected.

Garcia Cano reported from Washington, and Kurtenbach from Bangkok. Associated Press reporters from around the world contributed.

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

Africa dangerously behind in global race for virus gear

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — As Africa braces for a surge in coronavirus cases, its countries are dangerously behind in the global race for scarce medical equipment. Ten nations have no ventilators at all.

Outbid by richer countries, and not receiving medical gear from top aid donor the United States, African officials scramble for solutions as virus cases climb past 25,000. Even in the best scenario, the United Nations says 74 million test kits and 30,000 ventilators will be needed by the continent's 1.3 billion people this year. Very few are in hand.

"We are competing with the developed world," said John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "The very future of the continent will depend on how this matter is handled."

Politicians instinctively try to protect their own people and "we know that sometimes the worst in human

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behavior comes out," said Simon Missiri, Africa director with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, urging an equitable approach to help developing nations.

The crisis has jolted African nations into creating a pooled purchasing platform under the African Union to improve negotiating power. Within days of its formation, the AU landed more than 100,000 test kits from a German source. The World Health Organization is pitching in, approaching manufacturers for supplies.

Africa also benefits from the U.N.'s largest emergency humanitarian operation in decades, with medical cargo including hundreds of ventilators arriving in Ethiopia this month and sent to all countries across the continent. Another shipment from the Jack Ma Foundation is on the way.

But Africa isn't holding out a begging bowl, Nkengasong said. Instead, it's asking for a fair crack at markets — and approaching China for "not donations. Quotas that Africa as a continent can purchase."

Such efforts are a response to a global thicket of protectionism: More than 70 countries have restricted exports of medical items, putting Africa in a "perilous position," the U.N. says. New travel bans have closed borders and airports, badly wrenching supply chains.

"It's like people hoarding toilet paper, which I still don't understand," Amer Daoudi, the U.N. World Food Program's senior director of operations, told The Associated Press. "Countries in Europe and North America are paying attention to their own internal needs, but we think that will ease off very soon."

While nations that are traditionally the world's top humanitarian donors are distracted, the WFP, the U.N.'s logistics leader, heaved the emergency operation into place with unprecedented reach. Normally in about 80 countries, this effort involves almost 120, Daoudi said.

The WFP seeks \$350 million to keep the operation running for Africa and elsewhere, delivering aid for the pandemic and other crises like HIV and cholera that need drugs and vaccines to keep flowing. Africa imports as much as 94% of its pharmaceuticals, the U.N. says.

"I've never been involved in anything like this before. I don't think any of us have," said Stephen Cahill, WFP's director of logistics. "We're seeing countries taking measures we think aren't always rational. When you start closing borders, we start to get very nervous."

Some African nations, after securing medical equipment, have complicated delivery by causing cargo to stall at ports; 43 have closed their borders.

The global supply crisis is so pressing that the U.N. General Assembly this week approved a resolution urging countries to immediately end "speculation and undue stockpiling." Separately, China said it won't restrict exports of needed medical goods.

Developing regions are taking different approaches. China is the main source of help in Southeast Asia. In South Asia, several countries have committed to India's proposed COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Small South Pacific island nations have teamed up to get equipment. And some Latin American nations are trying to free equipment stuck in U.S. ports or making supplies themselves.

But the global disruptions are especially felt across Africa, where governments that have historically underfunded health systems are partnering in an effort that's been compared to going to war.

"Where a product cost, for example, a dollar before, it's now gone up a hundred-fold," said the Africa CDC deputy director, Ahmed Ogwel. While many African nations have money on hand, the trading companies they use face extreme challenges: "Country X can go and say, 'I'll pay you double what you're offered.'"

In the United States, the Trump administration has said coronavirus aid to at-risk countries would not include key medical equipment, to meet demand at home.

"I've heard no situation yet in any of our countries where the U.S. has made any medical supplies available anywhere," said Charles Franzen, director of humanitarian and disaster response for World Relief.

When asked how many ventilators and test kits have been sent to Africa, a senior U.S. administration official said aid has focused on water, sanitation and messaging: "We're also looking at the PPE and ventilator needs and will be making those decisions very quickly."

In response, African public and private health sectors have teamed up as never before. "Irresponsible behavior by richer countries" will not solve the pandemic, said Amit Thakker, president of the Africa Healthcare Federation, criticizing "any country that diverts supplies for the sake of their own citizens" at

developing countries' expense.

In South Africa, Business for South Africa works closely with the health ministry to get supplies. With better-resourced countries more likely to score deals, "that's not great for Africa. ... Ventilators are like trying to spot a dodo bird at the moment, literally," said Stavros Nicolaou, who leads BSA's efforts.

But South Africa has used relationships with economic allies to obtain drugs from India and protective gear from China.

And yet, South Africa has only about four weeks' worth of protective gear, Nicolaou said. With the pandemic arriving in Africa later than elsewhere, "we have entered the fray quite late when the supply chain is highly, highly constrained."

Global powers must share, especially as the pandemic hits countries at different times, said one of Africa's most prominent philanthropists, Sudanese-born billionaire Mo Ibrahim. "This is the time for everybody to act together, not to compete."

Associated Press reporters around the world contributed.

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

Staff count emotional cost as virus savages UK nursing homes

By JO KEARNEY and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

SELSTON, England (AP) — Lucy Dawson is haunted by a sense of powerlessness.

The nurse has equipment to treat the residents of the nursing home where she works when they become sick with the coronavirus — but it doesn't seem to make any difference.

"We've got fluids, or we've got oxygen on the go. You know, you name it, we've got it," said the nurse at Wren Hall, a small home for elderly people with dementia in the central England village of Selston.

But still, "it's bereavement after bereavement," said Dawson, who has worked at the home for two decades. "We're losing people that we've loved and looked after for years."

The coronavirus pandemic is taking a huge emotional and physical toll on staff in Britain's nursing homes, who often feel like they're toiling on a forgotten front line.

The virus is sweeping like a scythe through Britain's 20,000 care homes and has left thousands of elderly people sick and dead. At Wren Hall, 12 of 54 residents died in three weeks after contracting COVID-19.

"To be putting your heart and soul into nursing somebody to sustain life, it's just a massive devastation when ...," Dawson trailed off. "I've just got no words."

It's a tragedy being repeated across the U.K. and around the world. While the coronavirus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most who contract it, it can result in severe illness in some, especially older people.

Britain's official tally of almost 19,000 coronavirus-related deaths — including at least 15 nursing home workers — counts only those who died in hospitals. Official statistics show over 1,000 more virus-related deaths in homes in England and Wales up to April 10. In Scotland, which keeps separate records, a third of virus deaths have been in homes for the elderly. It is likely that all of these counts are underestimates. The World Health Organization says up to half of COVID-19 deaths in Europe may be in nursing homes.

Each death is felt painfully at Wren Hall, a homey, close-knit place bedecked with cheerful signs — "Happiness is not a destination, it is a way of life" — where many residents and staff have lived for years.

"There's some people in this building who I see more than my actual family," said nursing associate Damian Mann, who has worked at the home for 11 years.

He said the outbreak had left him feeling "helpless."

"You start to question yourself, I think, as a professional," he said. "You come in every day and someone is dying every day that you're here. It's not normal for that to happen ... in this setting. So we look back and we think, is there anything we could have done?"

That frustration is compounded by physical barriers — masks, gloves and plastic aprons — and by the

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need to keep families away from sick relatives.

In such extreme circumstances, even a kind act can elicit pain. Care assistant Pat Cornell made cards with residents' photos to send to family members unable to visit in person.

"The sad part is, I sent one on Friday, and the lady died on the Saturday," Cornell said. She's haunted by the thought that the bereaved family will be upset all over again when they get the card.

The emotional strain is intensified by a feeling among many staff — often poorly paid — that they have been overlooked. When the government offered health care workers tests for the virus, nursing home staff were not included. Homes for the elderly were also low down the pecking order for personal protective equipment, as authorities scrambled to meet the demand from hospitals.

"It was like we were the forgotten people, the people in the care homes and the staff in the care homes," said Sally Bentley, who has worked at Wren Hall for nine years. "Like we're expendable, really, I suppose."

Wren Hall's owner-manager, Anita Astle, went on TV earlier this month in desperation, seeking more protective gear. She found that suppliers had hiked their prices as much as sixfold.

Since then, the home has received donations from local people and businesses, but Astle says some items, especially gowns, are still scarce.

She said the role nursing homes are playing in the pandemic has not been fully recognized.

"People with and without COVID-19 are being discharged from hospitals to care homes to free up (hospital) beds," she said. "We are being asked to do things in care homes that we've never been asked to do before, (like) verification of death."

The British government, stung by criticism of its handling of the outbreak, has announced that nursing home staff, along with health care workers, can now be tested for the virus at drive-thru centers and mobile sites. But Astle says so far she has not managed to get anyone tested — even though more than half of Wren Hall's 142 staff have showed symptoms at some point.

For now, the staff are coping as best they can. They are encouraged that some residents who have been sick in the home's "red zone" are recovering and leaving isolation.

"We've all cried," Cornell said. "We've all had — even though we shouldn't — we've all had hugs, we've all talked about it to each other."

But Mann worries about the lingering toll.

"The impact that it's having on the team, even though they're soldiering on through," he said, "The long-term effects of it are going to be massive."

Lawless reported from London.

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

Lives Lost: Sudan-born doctor saw himself as ordinary Briton

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — During a pandemic, heroes wear scrubs.

Amged El-Hawrani was one of them, a doctor who went to work every day as the coronavirus took hold even though he might be exposed, risking his own life to treat patients at a hospital in central England.

The 55-year-old died on March 28, becoming one of the first doctors in Britain's National Health Service to succumb to COVID-19 and a symbol of the acute danger all health workers brave.

Yet in life, he shunned attention, and would have been embarrassed to be described as a hero, according to his youngest brother, Amal.

"He would kind of nervously laugh or punch, brush it off as people over-exaggerating," Amal said. "He would say to you, 'I'm just doing my job.'"

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people who have died from

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coronavirus around the world.

Amged El-Hawrani never saw himself as extraordinary.

Born in Sudan as the second of six brothers, he told friends about a carefree childhood in Africa, memories of playing soccer in the family's yard before his father, a radiologist, sought a new life for his family in the U.K..

It was before the era of mass immigration to Britain, and the El-Hawrani brothers found they often were the only non-white children starting out in their new neighborhood in Taunton, a large town in western England, and other places they moved.

That didn't trouble Amged, who was 11 when they arrived. He considered himself as British as tea and crumpets.

"I don't think he looked at himself and said that I'm different than everyone else," his brother Amal said. "He was just a kid in a school, and he was very, very strong, very confident, and never let anything worry him or make him doubt himself. He just always persevered."

El-Hawrani's self-assurance took him to what is now known as London Metropolitan University, where he studied science and embraced the capital's multiculturalism at a time of dramatic change in British society.

Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had begun transforming - and dividing - the nation by selling off state-owned industries, cutting taxes and reducing spending on social services. In 1981, complaints about police discrimination against minorities and rising unemployment fueled riots in London and other cities.

El-Hawrani responded by making friends from all over the world. Greeks. Zimbabweans. People from all corners of Asia.

He enjoyed his youth, reveling in the music of Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson, and the comedy of Richard Pryor and Robin Williams together with his brother Ashraf, just 11 months older.

They both liked cars, too. El-Hawrani zipped around in an Alfa Romeo GT6. Years later, he would recall how the sports car smelled -- something like Paco Rabanne cologne mixed with the wood of the steering wheel.

The brothers also shared a vision of medicine as a cool and noble profession. They went off together to study at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Life in Dublin brought events of life-altering joy and sorrow.

While driving around looking for frogs to dissect, El-Hawrani and a fellow student offered a ride to two Irish sisters who had missed the last bus into town. Amged's classmate tried to strike up a conversation with Pamela Foley, but she was more intrigued by the quiet one. They eventually married and had a son.

Tragedy intervened in 1992. El-Hawrani went to check on his brother at their mother's urging when she couldn't reach her eldest son. He banged on the door of Ashraf's apartment and finally forced his way in. He found his 29-year-old brother dead from a severe asthma attack.

That left El-Hawrani as the eldest, with all the responsibility that came with it. Yet Amal can't recall ever hearing him complain about a problem or issue.

"The opposite was true, in that we would all lean on him very heavily," he said.

Outside his family, work was El-Hawrani's life.

He clawed his way up in a system that didn't always support people of color. He sought post-medical school training in London or another big city in England but ended up in Wales, where he would jokingly tell his brothers that he could see "sheep outside of my front window and cows outside my back window."

He worked in Ireland and Canada, and became an ear, nose and throat specialist.

Eventually, he found recognition. He was a physician, a trainer and an associate clinical director.

NHS officials credited El-Hawrani with playing a key role in the merger of two hospitals that had struggled with low staff morale and retention. He brought the teams together, said Gavin Boyle, chief executive of University Hospitals of Derby and Burton.

El-Hawrani loved to travel when he wasn't caring for patients or teaching future doctors at Queen's Hospital Burton, an acute care facility in a town known for beer brewing. He made several visits to Disney

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World in Florida with Pamela, and their son, Ashraf, who is named after his late uncle and is now 18.

On one visit, the family saw a sign with the words "A hero is..." on it and a spot to take a picture. His wife and son tried to get El-Hawrani to pose beneath it. He resisted. So typical.

"He did not seek the praise and approval of others. He was satisfied by viewing the positive effects of his actions and the well-being of his family," Ashraf said in a statement. "I am incredibly proud to say that for 18 years of my life, Amged El-Hawrani was my father."

China's diplomats show teeth in defending virus response

By **DAKE KANG Associated Press**

BEIJING (AP) — From Asia to Africa, London to Berlin, Chinese envoys have set off diplomatic firestorms with a combative defense whenever their country is accused of not acting quickly enough to stem the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

They belong to a new generation of "Wolf Warrior" diplomats, named after patriotic blockbuster films starring a muscle-bound Chinese commando killing American bad guys in Africa and Southeast Asia with his bare hands.

The tougher approach has been building for several years under President Xi Jinping, who has effectively jettisoned former leader Deng Xiaoping's approach of hiding China's ambitions and biding its time. His government has urged its diplomats to pursue "major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" — a call for China to reassert its historic status as a global power.

"The days when China can be put in a submissive position are long gone," said an editorial in the Global Times, a state-run newspaper known for its outspoken views. The Chinese people, it said, "are no longer satisfied with a flaccid diplomatic tone."

Ambassador Gui Congyou has belittled journalists in Sweden, comparing them to a lightweight boxer seeking to go toe-to-toe with a heavyweight China. A commentary on the embassy website last month assailed a Swedish reporter for an article on the impact of China's one-party political system on its virus response.

"Using this epidemic for political purposes, waging ideological attacks and spreading lies in the name of 'freedom of speech' will only lead to self-sabotage. It's like lifting a rock and dropping it on your own toes," it said.

Experts say Beijing sees critics as assailing not just its actions, but also its leadership and right to rule. "If anyone tries to attack China on this issue, China will resolutely fight back," said Shi Yinhong, professor of International Studies at Renmin University. "Chinese leaders may think if China doesn't fight back, it will hurt China even more."

Chinese diplomats are increasingly taking to Twitter and Facebook — platforms that are blocked in their own country. They're following in the footsteps of Zhao Lijian, a pioneering firebrand whose tweets while stationed in Pakistan attracted a huge following and also led America's former U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice to call him a "racist disgrace" who should be dismissed.

Instead, China promoted him — to foreign ministry spokesman.

Xi has clearly indicated a preference for 'wolf-warrior' diplomats, said Carl Minzner, an expert on Chinese politics at Fordham Law School in New York City.

These new-style diplomats are "reading the tea leaves, and are using bombastic language overseas as a tool to garner attention from nationalistic audiences at home — both among the party elite and among society at large — regardless of the impact on China's image abroad," Minzner said.

Overseas, the newly strident tone has been less appreciated. The French foreign minister summoned the Chinese ambassador after an embassy statement, in apparent response to Western criticism, accused French nursing home workers of deserting and "letting their residents die from starvation and disease."

The U.S. protested after Zhao tweeted unsubstantiated speculation that the American military may have brought the virus to China.

China's envoys in Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda have been berated over reports of virus-related harass-

ment of Africans in the city of Guangzhou, a rare public rebuke of Beijing by African nations. The Chinese Embassy in Zimbabwe waved away the anger, tweeting dismissively about "so-called racial discrimination."

Chinese officials fume at what they see as Western hypocrisy. They say President Donald Trump and other leaders ignored the brewing pandemic, then began scapegoating China once the virus arrived on their shores.

French President Emmanuel Macron has questioned China's virus response, telling the Financial Times that "there are clearly things that have happened that we don't know about." Britain's top diplomat said it couldn't go back to "business as usual" with China.

China's Embassy in Berlin posted an open letter to Bild that accused the mass-circulation tabloid of "bad taste" for blaming the pandemic on China and calculating how much it owes Germany in damages for failing to contain it. The embassy in Spain tweeted "Freedom of expression has limits," in response to a far-right politician who posted a video about "Spanish antibodies fighting the damned Chinese viruses."

Under Xi, Beijing has launched coordinated efforts to shape China's image abroad. Lifting a page from Russia's playbook, it has mobilized thousands of bots to tweet the Communist Party line, according to Twitter. China has pumped funds into state media outlets broadcasting in Swahili, Arabic, Spanish, and dozens of other languages.

"In the past, China's diplomacy was far away from the people," said Chu Yin, a professor at China's University of International Relations. Now, Chinese diplomats feel "it's safe for them to show they are tough. Being tough won't be wrong, at least."

In Thailand, the embassy on Facebook called critics "disrespectful" and accused them of "betraying history" in a social media battle over the origin of the virus and the status of Hong Kong and Taiwan. In Sri Lanka, the mission erupted in fury this month after Twitter suspended its account, demanding "free speech" and accusing the tech giant of "double standards." Twitter reversed the suspension the next day.

Beijing's diplomats see the virus as a chance to assert leadership among countries critical of the West. Many leaders have praised China for sending medical equipment and teams, with one flight greeted by the president of Serbia kissing the Chinese flag.

In the 1990s, some in China dismissed their diplomats as the "Ministry of Traitors," annoyed at perceived deference to Western powers. No more.

"We've approached the center of the world stage like never before, but we still don't have full grasp of the microphone in our hands," said Hua Chunying, the foreign ministry's chief spokeswoman. "We must assert our right to speak."

Associated Press writers David Keyton in Stockholm, Sweden, Frank Jordans in Berlin, Angela Charlton in Paris and Aritz Parra in Madrid contributed to this report.

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By **DAKE KANG** Associated Press

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They belong to a new generation of "Wolf Warrior" diplomats, named after patriotic blockbuster films starring a muscle-bound Chinese commando killing American bad guys in Africa and Southeast Asia with his bare hands.

The tougher approach has been building for several years under President Xi Jinping, who has effectively jettisoned former leader Deng Xiaoping's approach of hiding China's ambitions and biding its time. His government has urged its diplomats to pursue "major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" — a call for China to reassert its historic status as a global power.

"The days when China can be put in a submissive position are long gone," said an editorial in the Global Times, a state-run newspaper known for its outspoken views. The Chinese people, it said, "are no longer

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satisfied with a flaccid diplomatic tone.”

Ambassador Gui Congyou has belittled journalists in Sweden, comparing them to a lightweight boxer seeking to go toe-to-toe with a heavyweight China. A commentary on the embassy website last month assailed a Swedish reporter for an article on the impact of China’s one-party political system on its virus response.

“Using this epidemic for political purposes, waging ideological attacks and spreading lies in the name of ‘freedom of speech’ will only lead to self-sabotage. It’s like lifting a rock and dropping it on your own toes,” it said.

Experts say Beijing sees critics as assailing not just its actions, but also its leadership and right to rule. “If anyone tries to attack China on this issue, China will resolutely fight back,” said Shi Yinhong, professor of International Studies at Renmin University. “Chinese leaders may think if China doesn’t fight back, it will hurt China even more.”

Chinese diplomats are increasingly taking to Twitter and Facebook — platforms that are blocked in their own country. They’re following in the footsteps of Zhao Lijian, a pioneering firebrand whose tweets while stationed in Pakistan attracted a huge following and also led America’s former U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice to call him a “racist disgrace” who should be dismissed.

Instead, China promoted him — to foreign ministry spokesman.

Xi has clearly indicated a preference for ‘wolf-warrior’ diplomats, said Carl Minzner, an expert on Chinese politics at Fordham Law School in New York City.

These new-style diplomats are “reading the tea leaves, and are using bombastic language overseas as a tool to garner attention from nationalistic audiences at home — both among the party elite and among society at large — regardless of the impact on China’s image abroad,” Minzner said.

Overseas, the newly strident tone has been less appreciated. The French foreign minister summoned the Chinese ambassador after an embassy statement, in apparent response to Western criticism, accused French nursing home workers of deserting and “letting their residents die from starvation and disease.”

The U.S. protested after Zhao tweeted unsubstantiated speculation that the American military may have brought the virus to China.

China’s envoys in Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda have been berated over reports of virus-related harassment of Africans in the city of Guangzhou, a rare public rebuke of Beijing by African nations. The Chinese Embassy in Zimbabwe waved away the anger, tweeting dismissively about “so-called racial discrimination.”

Chinese officials fume at what they see as Western hypocrisy. They say President Donald Trump and other leaders ignored the brewing pandemic, then began scapegoating China once the virus arrived on their shores.

French President Emmanuel Macron has questioned China’s virus response, telling the Financial Times that “there are clearly things that have happened that we don’t know about.” Britain’s top diplomat said it couldn’t go back to “business as usual” with China.

China’s Embassy in Berlin posted an open letter to Bild that accused the mass-circulation tabloid of “bad taste” for blaming the pandemic on China and calculating how much it owes Germany in damages for failing to contain it. The embassy in Spain tweeted “Freedom of expression has limits,” in response to a far-right politician who posted a video about “Spanish antibodies fighting the damned Chinese viruses.”

Under Xi, Beijing has launched coordinated efforts to shape China’s image abroad. Lifting a page from Russia’s playbook, it has mobilized thousands of bots to tweet the Communist Party line, according to Twitter. China has pumped funds into state media outlets broadcasting in Swahili, Arabic, Spanish, and dozens of other languages.

“In the past, China’s diplomacy was far away from the people,” said Chu Yin, a professor at China’s University of International Relations. Now, Chinese diplomats feel “it’s safe for them to show they are tough. Being tough won’t be wrong, at least.”

In Thailand, the embassy on Facebook called critics “disrespectful” and accused them of “betraying history” in a social media battle over the origin of the virus and the status of Hong Kong and Taiwan. In

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Sri Lanka, the mission erupted in fury this month after Twitter suspended its account, demanding “free speech” and accusing the tech giant of “double standards.” Twitter reversed the suspension the next day.

Beijing’s diplomats see the virus as a chance to assert leadership among countries critical of the West. Many leaders have praised China for sending medical equipment and teams, with one flight greeted by the president of Serbia kissing the Chinese flag.

In the 1990s, some in China dismissed their diplomats as the “Ministry of Traitors,” annoyed at perceived deference to Western powers. No more.

“We’ve approached the center of the world stage like never before, but we still don’t have full grasp of the microphone in our hands,” said Hua Chunying, the foreign ministry’s chief spokeswoman. “We must assert our right to speak.”

Associated Press writers David Keyton in Stockholm, Sweden, Frank Jordans in Berlin, Angela Charlton in Paris and Aritz Parra in Madrid contributed to this report.

Empty stadiums for soccer games? It’s not quite that simple

By **STEVE DOUGLAS** and **JAMES ELLINGWORTH** AP Sports Writers

It will soon be the new norm, a cold and often unnerving sight that soccer and many other sports will have to get accustomed to over the coming months.

Games taking place in empty stadiums.

But will these stadiums actually be empty? Far from it.

“It’s not about 22 players walking onto a pitch and (kicking) a ball about,” FIFA vice president Victor Montagliani told The Associated Press, referring to what he called the “phased-in approach” that soccer — and society as a whole — will need to take to get back to normal following the coronavirus outbreak.

Some teams in Europe have experience in staging games without flag-waving and loudly cheering fans — be it while serving a punishment for crowd trouble or, as was the case in February and March, because of a rapidly spreading virus that turned into a pandemic.

Now, almost every club will be planning for such a scenario as soccer leagues start to ramp up preparations for a resumption which will be staggered depending on how well countries have managed to contain the virus.

Of Europe’s major leagues, Germany appears to be closest to lifting its suspension, with some state governors even hoping to resume games on May 9. The Bundesliga is planning to have a maximum of 213 people in the stadium — everyone from players to TV cameramen.

In Britain, which is in the peak of the virus outbreak, a return in late June is the possible — albeit optimistic — call from clubs in the Premier League. One leading club official spoke of the need for at least 300 people at matches.

In Sweden, where soccer authorities are planning for a June 14 restart, a venue official at champion Djurgarden told the AP that it would be possible to limit numbers to 50 if fans aren’t allowed in stadiums. In Switzerland, leaked plans attained by daily newspaper Blick this week stated there should be no more than 200 essential staff at games.

Much depends on the directives from governments and the demands of domestic and international broadcasters, whose money clubs increasingly rely on.

INSIDE STADIUMS

Players and match officials obviously are on the list. Each squad for a match has 18 or 20 players in major European leagues, and some back-ups will be required in case of late withdrawals. There is a four-person team of match officials (referee, two assistant referees and a fourth official), along with a replacement official.

Then there’s the coaching staff — managers, assistants, fitness coaches, physios and a club doctor.

Other essential people include a match delegate, an anti-doping official, official photographers and staff from broadcasters (like sound engineers, technicians, camera crew and producers), and medical workers.

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In England, for example, there needs to be four paramedics and an ambulance driver at every game.

In a list provided by the Spanish league while it planned for games without fans in March, other groups getting stadium access included both teams' board of directors, community managers, integrity officials and what it termed "technical staff with functions strictly related to holding the games," which could be a group of up to a maximum of 100 people. That could include caterers, ground staff, ball boys and girls, maintenance, ground-safety officers, people who run advertising hoardings and stewards.

The number of journalists attending would vary from country to country, but that could easily be slimmed down. However, what's unlikely to be altered is the TV set-up for top European competitions that generally uses between 10 and 15 cameras, plus technicians and interviewers for the host broadcaster.

When Borussia Mönchengladbach played Cologne last month, under different societal circumstances, there were 600 people in the stadium, Gladbach said. That included 250 media representatives, 200 security staff, 80 players and team staff members, 50 other club employees and smaller numbers of ball boys and paramedics.

Tomas af Geijerstam, head of matches and venues at Djurgarden, said if a game was restricted to 50 attendees, as mass gatherings in Sweden currently are, the number of coaches needed could be shrunk, fewer ball boys could be used and press could be limited. He said two locker rooms could be used by each team.

"We can manage a match with 50 people," af Geijerstam said. "We have to if we want to play."

OUTSIDE THE STADIUM

Games can still attract a crowd even when spectators are not in the stands.

Thousands of fans gathered outside the empty Parc des Princes to celebrate a Paris Saint-Germain win over Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on March 11, tightly packed together and waving flares. Players went to celebrate with them.

So, any game played in an empty stadium still will need security guards or police posted around the venue to stop people from gathering. Information from Spain included the need for "public and private security agents," firefighters and first-response personnel.

Some public officials have expressed concern about people crowding together for TV viewing parties. Liverpool manager Jürgen Klopp made similar comments before the shutdown.

BEFORE AND AFTER MATCHES

There's also the question of what players do away from the stadium.

Germany is proposing coronavirus tests for players before each game, which risks a public backlash. The league says it would use "less than 0.5%" of the national testing capacity, but that still means thousands of tests to finish the season.

The deputy head of Germany's public health body has criticized the plan, saying that tests should be reserved for people who have symptoms or are suspected to be part of an outbreak.

The National Rugby League in Australia has come up with its own idea. Its "Project Apollo" think tank proposed making players live on a remote island camp. No soccer league has yet tried to copy that plan.

AP Global Soccer Writer Rob Harris contributed to this story.

More AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/Soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Despite risks, auto workers step up to make medical gear

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Cindy Parkhurst could have stayed home collecting most of her pay while the Ford plant where she normally works remains closed due to coronavirus fears.

Instead, she along with hundreds of workers at Ford, General Motors, Toyota and other companies has gone back to work to make face shields, surgical masks and ventilators in a wartime-like effort to stem shortages of protective gear and equipment.

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"I didn't give it a second thought," said Parkhurst, 55, a tow motor driver who is now helping Ford and its partner 3M manufacture and ship respirators. "It's a neat thing to do for the community, for the first responders who definitely need this kind of protective gear."

All over the country, blue-collar and salaried workers have raised their hands to make medical equipment as companies repurpose factories to answer calls for help from beleaguered nurses, doctors and paramedics who are treating patients with the highly contagious virus. Workers also are making soap and hand sanitizer, which early in the crisis were in short supply.

At Ford, over 800 people returned to work at four Detroit-area sites. General Motors, which President Donald Trump had alternately criticized and praised for its work, has about 400 at a now-closed transmission plant in suburban Detroit and an electronics factory in Kokomo, Indiana, working on shields and ventilators. About 60 Toyota workers, both salaried and blue-collar, are making protective equipment in Kentucky, Texas, Michigan and Alabama.

Most automakers in the U.S. temporarily stopped making vehicles about a month ago after workers complained about the risks of infection at the factories. Many white-collar workers are being paid to work remotely but members of the United Auto Workers who don't have that option are still collecting pay and unemployment benefits that equal about 95% of regular take-home wages.

Those workers making medical gear will get their full base pay, but that's not what's motivating them to keep coming to the factories. Many simply want to help.

Jody Barrowman has been making face masks at a repurposed former General Motors transmission factory near Detroit since early April.

"Instead of being home and not helpful, I thought I'd be productive here," she said.

She jumped at the chance to work because GM is donating the masks to hospitals and first responders "which is where it needs to go," she said.

Barrowman said that the operation has been so efficient that workers have been allowed to take masks home for family members.

"I dropped some off at my grandparents. My parents took a full packet of masks at my house. So, it's not just helping the first responders. It's helping me and my family feel safe," she said.

Inside a building on Toyota's giant factory complex in Georgetown, Kentucky, mechanical engineer Kirk Barber helps to ship thousands of face shields that workers are making while plants are shut down. Sometimes he personally delivers boxes to hospitals or the state government, which is distributing them.

All of the workers, he said, had to undergo a cultural change to make sure they stay more than 6 feet apart to protect themselves from possible contagion.

"It's a hard habit to break when you're typically up and talking to someone, pointing to a document," Barber said. "People are very quick to point out 'hey, you guys need to keep your distance.'"

Twenty-four UAW members have already died from COVID-19 but it's unclear when or where they contracted the disease. Ford, GM and Toyota said they aren't aware of any infections among workers who returned to make medical gear. Still, there's no denying the risks are likely higher at the factories than in the safety of one's home.

Joseph Holt, associate professor at Notre Dame's business school who specializes in ethics and leadership, said the workers and their companies are examples of business doing its best to quickly fill a critical unmet need.

"Courage is doing what you think is right even when it might cost you," Holt said. "Those workers being willing to go in to work to produce the medical equipment and personal protective gear, even at personal risk — that is moral courage in action."

The Detroit automakers are trying to restart production on their vehicles, perhaps as soon as early May, but both Ford and GM say medical gear production will continue. Ford says it has enough workers to do both while GM says it won't need all factory workers right away because it plans a gradual restart.

Back at the Ford complex in Flat Rock, Michigan, where Parkhurst works, she's hoping the respirators she's helping to ship make their way to the hospital in nearby Dearborn, where nurses treated her mother

with compassion before she died of a stroke about a year ago. She knows they must be “going through hell” now because the Detroit area one of the national hotspots for the virus.

“When I compared that to taking maybe a small risk and going in and making respirators, I feel all right,” she said.

AP Video Journalist Mike Householder contributed to this report from Warren, Michigan. This story has been corrected to show that Cindy Parkhurt’s mother died about one year ago, not 15 years ago.

Can I get the coronavirus from my pet?

By The Associated Press undefined

Can I get the coronavirus from my pet?

There’s no evidence pets are spreading the virus to people.

However, there have been a few cases worldwide where animals likely got the virus from humans, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A 4-year-old tiger tested positive at New York City’s Bronx Zoo, and officials think a zookeeper with the virus got the feline sick. Several other lions and tigers have also tested positive at the zoo.

Two house cats in different homes in New York have also contracted the virus, likely from their owners or someone in the neighborhood.

More research is needed to determine how the coronavirus affects animals. The USDA does not recommend routine testing for pets.

If you’re sick, avoid your furry companions — just like you would with people. If you’re the sole caretaker for an animal, it’s best to wash your hands before and after interacting with them.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this new series. Submit them at: FactCheck@ap.org.

Gig workers and self-employed keep waiting for jobless aid

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Like many Americans cooped up during the virus outbreak, Jeff Kardesch of Austin, Texas, is spending a lot of time on social media. It isn’t just idle talk with friends. Kardesch is struggling to find out when he’ll receive the unemployment benefits he needs.

His business as a self-employed film and commercial producer evaporated once Austin canceled the annual South by Southwest festival in early March. Since then, no other work has replaced it.

Yet because Kardesch is self-employed, it’s a headache for him to obtain unemployment aid — or even figure out when he will. A new federal relief package made freelancers like him eligible for unemployment benefits for the first time. But Texas, like most states, has had to establish a new system to process these new claims and distribute the money.

Kardesch, 23, applied in late March. He was quickly turned down. He has since reapplied. No luck.

“It’s really frustrating,” Kardesch said. “Nothing so far has really worked. The most I can do is just apply, get rejected and stay in the system.”

The number of Americans who have filed jobless claims is already stunning: More than 4.4 million last week and 26 million in the five weeks since the coronavirus shut down much of the nation’s economy. It’s easily the worst stretch of job losses in U.S. history. Economists say the layoffs could send the unemployment rate as high as 20%, which would be the worst level since the Great Depression.

But there are many more filings for jobless aid to come, including millions of independent contractors, gig workers and the self-employed. Most states have not begun approving applications from these pools of newly eligible people.

The Labor Department estimates that 10.6 million Americans work as contractors, which means their

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jobs tend to exist for a limited period, and they receive few, if any, benefits. An additional 16 million are self-employed. And perhaps 1.5 million are gig workers — Uber drivers, TaskRabbit workers and the like — though most of these people do such work as a second job.

If even a quarter of them file for jobless aid, it would add up to many more new claims for unemployment, though it's hard to say how many. Kardesch and others who have already applied and been turned down wouldn't count as a new claim once Texas starts approving such applications.

The delay stems from the fact that states already have records for traditional workers that receive W-2 forms and whose employers pay unemployment taxes. But the process is more complicated for contractors and other independent workers who typically receive 1099s. State agencies need additional documentation, which their systems aren't set up to handle.

On Wednesday, the Texas Workforce Commission said it had begun to process claims from the self-employed and to reconsider applicants who were previously turned down. Other states aren't yet ready. Ohio says it won't be until mid-May. California says it will start accepting applications next week. Pennsylvania and Massachusetts have only recently begun doing so.

Some experts expect more self-employed people to apply in coming weeks after failing to obtain a loan through the government's small business lending program, which ran out of money late Thursday. Congress is moving toward replenishing those funds. But banks say that amount will also soon be exhausted.

"We have been pretty much hearing non-stop from people," including anxious self-employed workers, said Julia Simon-Mishel, a lawyer with Philadelphia Legal Assistance. More contractors and self-employed have been participating in her Facebook Live seminars on jobless aid. The most recent seminar was viewed 7,500 times.

"They were looking for those (small business) loans, and now pandemic unemployment system is their only option," she said, referring to the expanded federal program.

Yet many gig workers will find that their extra income from side hustles won't help them if they have a regular job.

Wes Little, a drummer in Nashville, has made only about 5% of his income through traditional jobs. Even so, Tennessee, like all states, required him to file under its traditional unemployment system. That means his benefits are pegged only to his income from traditional work — not to his larger pay from music gigs. Laid-off workers can't receive benefits from both regular unemployment and the pandemic program.

He received \$69 the first week and \$54 the second week. He is, however, able to receive the additional \$600 a week in federally provided jobless aid that Congress recently approved.

The number of people who are receiving unemployment benefits has reached a record 16 million, surpassing a previous high of 12 million set in 2010, just after the 2008-2009 recession ended. This figure reflects people who have managed to navigate the application systems in their states, have been approved for benefits and are actually receiving checks.

Women make up a majority of workers in some industries that have been hit hardest, such as health care, where many jobs outside hospitals have been lost, and hotels and restaurants. Heidi Shierholz, an economist at the progressive Economic Policy Institute, calculates that 56% of the layoffs have involved women.

African-Americans and Latinos are typically among the first to be laid off in recessions. Though the government doesn't track the jobless claims data by gender or race, a survey by the University of Southern California found that 21% of African Americans and 18% of Latinos say they have lost jobs in the past month, compared with 15% of whites.

One factor in that disparity is the ability to work from home. A study by the Center for American Progress found that whites are more than twice as likely as blacks to say they can work from home and 50% more likely than Latinos.

In Michigan, 17% of the state's workforce is now receiving unemployment aid, the largest proportion in the country. It is followed by Rhode Island at 15%, Nevada at 13.7% and Georgia at 13.6%.

In the meantime, the self-employed keep waiting. Among them is Sasha McVeigh, a musician in Nashville. She had been working steadily until the city shut down music clubs in mid-March.

Since then, she's applied for unemployment benefits but so far has received nothing. To make ends meet, McVeigh has applied for some grants available to out-of-work musicians, held some live streaming concerts and pushed her merchandise sales. Still, she worries about what's ahead.

"It has been nagging on my mind — what if my unemployment doesn't come in or it keeps being delayed? What am I going to do? But if you keep focusing on that terrifying thought, it becomes impossible to function."

AP Writers Travis Loller in Nashville, Jim Vertuno in Austin, Texas, and Pan Pylas in London contributed to this report.

AP review: State supply stocks sparse and dated before virus

By DAVID A. LIEB and CUNEYT DIL Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo (AP) — Last autumn, when schools were in session, sports stadiums full and no one had even heard of the COVID-19 disease, the Missouri health department made an eerily foreshadowing request.

It asked the state for \$300,000 to buy supplies in case of a large-scale disease outbreak. The goal was to fill a gap between local and federal sources.

Today, as states spend billions of dollars in the fight against the coronavirus, that October funding request appears woefully insufficient. Yet it highlights a stark fact: States were not stocked for a pandemic and have been scrambling to catch up.

An Associated Press review of more than 20 states found that before the coronavirus outbreak many had at least a modest supply of N95 masks, gowns, gloves and other medical equipment. But those were often well past their expiration dates — left over from the H1N1 influenza outbreak a decade ago.

The supply shortage stemmed from a variety of factors — a decline in public health funding, a cost-saving dependence on having inventory on hand only for immediate use and a belief that the federal government could come to the rescue with its Strategic National Stockpile.

In hindsight, the federal stockpile proved insufficient for a nationwide viral outbreak, and a worldwide competition for scarce supplies revealed the folly of counting on rapid deliveries.

"You could see it in almost every state, in every locality, and the federal government level: depleting the resources, depleting the inventory, and hoping when you need them they will be available," said Gerard Anderson, a health policy professor at Johns Hopkins University, which has tracked coronavirus cases and deaths across the world.

The crisis spawned a political blame game over the shortage of protective gear for medical workers and the hunt for ventilators. Some governors harangued the federal government for leaving them in the lurch. President Donald Trump faulted states, tweeting earlier this month: "The complainers should have been stocked up and ready long before this crisis hit."

Before the World Health Organization issued a Jan. 9 advisory about the coronavirus emerging in China, Missouri had a supply of 663,920 N95 respirator masks, 253,800 surgical masks, 154,000 gloves, 17,424 face shields and 14,048 gowns. All were leftovers provided by the Centers for Disease Control after the H1N1 flu pandemic of 2009-2010, and well beyond their shelf life.

Other states also were relying on old supplies. Officials in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia all told the AP their stashes included at least some leftovers from the H1N1 flu.

Some old N95 masks no longer sealed properly on people's faces or had elastic bands that disintegrated. But a CDC study found that many expired masks still could work, and states distributed them to hospitals and clinics.

Missouri, like some other states, had spent nothing to replenish the expired equipment. And even when asking for \$300,000 last October, the state Department of Health and Senior Services stressed it wasn't to build a big reserve.

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"Since outbreaks and the resources needed are not predictable, purchasing a large stock of supplies that could expire or become obsolete is not a responsible use of state funds," the health agency said in a budget document submitted to Gov. Mike Parson and state lawmakers.

That funding request for the fiscal year that starts in July still was pending in the state House when Missouri's first coronavirus case was confirmed last month. Since then, Missouri has ordered about \$40 million of protective medical supplies for health care workers and emergency responders.

Missouri Health Director Randall Williams told the AP that it didn't make sense to load up on supplies without knowing what might be needed. For example, he said, bug spray would have been more useful than face masks during the 2015-2016 epidemic of the Zika virus, which is spread by mosquitoes.

"If you spend money on prevention and whatever comes your way isn't that, then you have less money for response" when an emergency occurs, Williams said.

Federal public health funding for states has been on a downward slide since new programs were launched after the 2001 terrorist attacks and anthrax scare. The Public Health Emergency Preparedness program provided \$675 million last year — down 28% since 2003, according to the nonprofit Trust for America's Health. The Hospital Preparedness Program provided \$265 million last year — down by almost half during that same period.

Colorado used to have two medical stockpiles. But the state received minimal federal funding for storing supplies from the H1N1 pandemic and none to buy more. The stockpile in Denver was dissolved last fall and its remnants transferred to one in Grand Junction. Those supplies had all been distributed by the beginning of March, as the coronavirus was spreading.

Ohio, like many states, began storing some supplies after the 2001 terrorist attacks. But its financial commitment waned after each crisis was averted, said Deborah Arms, president of the Ohio Nurses Association, who led the state health department's prevention division from the late 1990s to 2008.

"It's always difficult for public health in these kinds of disasters to be able to advocate for continual funding ... for something that might take 10 years to see a result," she said.

Michigan, which has the third-highest coronavirus death toll among U.S. states, had 53,500 gloves left over from past epidemics, 5,120 N95 masks, 5,000 surgical masks and just 500 face shields among its pre-coronavirus supplies.

The state could not afford to replace expired items or the warehouse fees for storing more, said Michigan Department of Health and Human Services spokeswoman Lynn Sutfin.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said the state had counted on the federal government to be prepared for a pandemic.

"No one could have said that they would come in and build a state stockpile. That's never been the role and the assumption," she said. "Yet if I could turn back the clock, that's precisely what we would have started doing."

Contrary to Trump's assertion that states bore the primary responsibility for stockpiling medical supplies, many states had depended on the federal government to store provisions in case of emergencies.

New Hampshire's emergency operations plans call for maintaining a small supply reserve, but then "very much relying on the national stockpile for anything more than, say a week," said state Health and Human Services Commissioner Lori Shibinette.

Virginia Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne said he had viewed stockpiling supplies as a federal responsibility.

"Are we probably going to start stockpiling stuff now?" Layne asked. "The answer is yes."

Even before the latest crisis, some experts had urged stocking up as a way to lessen the disruption to supply chains and avoid having to compete with other governments for scarce equipment. A June 2009 report published in the CDC's journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases* recommended a "stratified purchase plan" — buying essential items periodically as money became available.

"Supplies need to be ordered far in advance of a pandemic to avoid major problems with back orders and supply shortfalls," the report concluded.

Instead, public health offices, hospitals and clinics have largely been ordering supplies as they are needed.

But just-in-time buying doesn't work when supply chains collapse and every state and country competes in world markets.

"We've short-shrived our public health structure, because we don't need it until it happens. But then it's too late to build it when there's a pandemic," said California state Sen. Richard Pan, a pediatrician.

Sean Dunn, an Ohio lobbyist who has represented hospitals, product distributors and a health care services company, said government and health officials need to rethink their approach.

"The notion of having to keep stores of anything, until a couple of weeks ago, was an old-fashioned notion," Dunn said. "This is going to change our mindset."

Dil reported from Sacramento, California.

Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio; Alan Suderman in Richmond, Virginia; James Anderson in Denver; David Eggert in Lansing, Michigan; and Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed.

Governor: Antibody survey shows wide exposure to virus in NY

By KAREN MATTHEWS and DAVID B. CARUSO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — More evidence is emerging that far more New Yorkers have had the coronavirus than the number confirmed by lab tests, officials said Thursday, offering insight that could help authorities decide how and how quickly to let people stop isolating from friends and return to work.

Blood samples collected from about 3,000 people indicated that nearly 14% had developed antibodies to fight a coronavirus infection, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said at his daily news briefing.

In New York City, the epicenter of the pandemic in the U.S., 21% of the people tested had antibodies.

It's not known yet how much protection antibodies provide or how long that immunity might last, and Cuomo cautioned that the data was preliminary. The sample of people tested was small. Participants were hastily recruited at shopping centers and grocery stores, meaning they were healthy enough to be out in public.

But the governor said knowing how many people have antibodies — and who might possibly be immune to the virus — could potentially help set policy on when to reopen parts of the state.

"We'll have a larger and larger sample. But I want to see snapshots of what is happening with that rate. Is it going up, is it flat, is it down? And it can really give us data to make decisions," Cuomo said.

Earlier Thursday, New York City's health commissioner said as many as 1 million people in New York City may have been exposed to the coronavirus.

Across the country, scientists are rolling out blood tests that look for antibodies, proteins that the immune system makes to fight off infection. They don't detect active infection like the tests for the currently sick. They're intended to tell who had previously been infected whether they knew it or not.

The New York study is the latest in a small wave of early attempts to try to better determine how widespread infections have been in certain geographic areas. A study in Santa Clara County, California, put the figure at somewhere around 3% to 4%. Another California study, in Los Angeles County, came up with roughly the same percentage.

"I think we are beginning to get interesting little rays of light" into how widespread infections have been, but larger and more rigorous studies will be needed to get a better picture, said Stephen Morse, a Columbia University expert on the spread of diseases.

At least 263,000 people in New York state, including about 142,000 people in New York City, have tested positive for the coronavirus, but city Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot called those numbers "the tip of the iceberg."

She noted the city is still telling people who suspect they have the virus but aren't seriously ill that they don't need to seek a test, so the true number of people infected is unknown.

"It wouldn't surprise me if, at this point in time, we have probably close to 1 million New Yorkers who have been exposed to COVID-19," she said.

Another 438 people were killed by the virus in the state Wednesday, bringing its total death toll to more

than 15,700. That number doesn't include more than 5,100 other deaths in New York City that were believed to be caused by the virus but haven't been confirmed by a lab test.

More than 15,000 people remain hospitalized statewide, with nearly 1,400 new patients admitted each day over the past few days.

New York's attempts to learn how many people have virus antibodies are driven by the desire to know if the region is closer to achieving herd immunity, a state in which so many people have developed defenses against the infection that it becomes hard for the virus to spread.

But such tests need to be done with random sampling, ensuring that the people being tested are representative of geographic, social, racial and other conditions. There are also questions about the accuracy of the blood tests being used. Scientists have found that some of them aren't reliable enough, with too many false positives and false negatives.

New York's antibodies survey was done at 40 locations in 19 counties. Relatively few people were found with antibodies, just 3.6%, in areas of upstate New York.

Early on in the pandemic, health officials estimated that as many as half of all people in New York City would get the virus. Mayor Bill de Blasio said that's still plausible, though the lack of comprehensive, widespread testing makes it difficult to say for sure.

"We are still dealing with the great unknown in the absence of testing. We don't even 100% know when the first cases emerged in this city, because we didn't have testing in February," he said. "We know it was February, but we don't know how many people got it back then."

De Blasio said that "in a perfect world" hundreds of thousands of people a day would be tested.

He said the city needs help from the federal government to reach that level of testing but is building testing capacity and should reach 20,000 to 30,000 tests a day by next month.

Associated Press writers Mike Stobbe and Marina Villeneuve contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that 263,000 people in New York state have tested positive for the coronavirus, not just in New York City.

Probe sought in Trump administration's ouster of scientist

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Calls mounted Thursday for an investigation into the ouster of a senior government scientist who says he's being punished for opposing widespread use of an unproven drug President Donald Trump touted as a remedy for COVID-19.

Rick Bright, former director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, says he was summarily removed from his job earlier this week and reassigned to a lesser role because he resisted political pressure to allow widespread use of hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug favored by Trump.

On Thursday, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone, D-N.J., joined in calling for an investigation by the Health and Human Services inspector general.

"Removing Dr. Bright in the midst of a pandemic would raise serious concerns under any circumstances, but his allegations that political considerations influenced this decision heighten those concerns and demand full accountability," Pallone said. The inspector general's office had no immediate response.

Bright is seeking to be reinstated as head of the research agency, said his lawyers Debra Katz and Lisa Banks. A performance review shows he received a top rating.

Controversy has swirled around hydroxychloroquine since Trump started promoting it from the podium in the White House briefing room.

BARDA, the agency that Bright formerly headed, is a unit of HHS created to counter threats from bioterrorism and infectious diseases. It has recently been trying to jump-start work on a vaccine for the coronavirus.

"I am speaking out because to combat this deadly virus, science — not politics or cronyism — has to

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lead the way," Bright, who has a doctoral degree in immunology, said a statement released Wednesday by his lawyers.

"Specifically, and contrary to misguided directives, I limited the broad use of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine, promoted by the administration as a panacea, but which clearly lack scientific merit," Bright said.

"I also resisted efforts to fund potentially dangerous drugs promoted by those with political connections," he added.

Asked about Bright at Wednesday's briefing, Trump said he "never heard of him."

"The guy says he was pushed out of a job," Trump said. "Maybe he was. Maybe he wasn't. ... I don't know who he is."

Bright's lawyers said Thursday they will soon file formal complaints with the HHS inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel, an independent agency that has as part of its charge the protection of government whistleblowers.

"While I am prepared to look at all options and to think 'outside the box' for effective treatments, I rightly resisted efforts to provide an unproven drug on demand to the American public," Bright wrote in his statement.

He also alluded to "clashes with HHS political leadership" over his efforts to "invest early in vaccines and supplies critical to saving American lives." One of the major criticisms of the Trump administration's pandemic response is that little was done in the month of February to stockpile needed equipment.

"Science, in service to the health and safety of the American people, must always trump politics," Bright said.

Trump has repeatedly touted the malaria drug during his regular coronavirus briefings, calling it a "game changer," and suggesting its skeptics would be proved wrong. He has offered patient testimonials that the drug is a lifesaver.

But a recent study of 368 patients in U.S. veterans hospitals found no benefit from hydroxychloroquine — and more deaths. The study was an early look at the medication, which has prompted debate in the medical community, with many doctors leery of using it.

In a statement, HHS confirmed that Bright is no longer at the BARDA agency, but did not address his allegations of political interference in scientific matters.

HHS said it was Bright who had requested an emergency use authorization for chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine. For his part, Bright said he had insisted that the authorization be limited to a restricted group of patients, those hospitalized with confirmed COVID-19 under the supervision of a doctor.

Hydroxychloroquine was given to patients in the New York area, the nation's most intense COVID-19 hot spot. It is usually administered in combination with the antibiotic azithromycin.

An official biography describes Bright as a flu and infectious-disease expert who joined the agency 10 years ago and was focused on vaccine development. He also held the title of HHS deputy assistant secretary for preparedness and response, reporting to Dr. Robert Kadlec.

Bright's performance review shows he got the highest rating — "Level 5 - Achieved Outstanding Results" — in federal fiscal year 2019.

"Dr. Bright continues a very successful tenure in leading BARDA performing an essential (HHS) mission of developing and acquiring medical countermeasures for the Strategic National Stockpile," wrote Kadlec, his boss, adding, "I have confidence" that Bright would meet future challenges facing the agency.

A copy of Bright's performance review was provided to The Associated Press.

HHS said Bright is now assigned to the National Institutes of Health, working on new approaches to testing.

His allegations were first reported by The New York Times.

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani, Deb Riechmann and Dustin Weaver contributed to this report.

US delays oil pipeline approvals after environmental ruling

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has suspended a nationwide program used to approve oil and gas pipelines, power lines and other utility work, spurred by a court ruling that industry representatives warn could slow or halt numerous infrastructure projects over environmental concerns.

The directive from Army Corps headquarters, detailed in emails obtained by The Associated Press, comes after a federal court last week threw out a blanket permit that companies and public utilities have used for decades to build projects across streams and wetlands.

The Trump administration is expected to challenge the ruling in coming days. For now, officials have put on hold about 360 pending notifications to entities approving their use of the permit, Army Corps spokesman Doug Garman said Thursday.

The agency did not provide further details on types of projects or their locations.

Pipeline and electric utility industry representatives said the effects could be widespread if the suspension lasts, affecting both construction and maintenance on potentially thousands of projects. That includes major pipelines like TC Energy's Keystone XL crude oil line from Canada to the U.S. Midwest, the Mountain Valley natural gas pipeline in Virginia and power lines from wind turbines and generating stations in many parts of the U.S.

"The economic consequences to individual projects are hard to overstate," said Ben Cowan, a Houston-based attorney with Locke Lord LLP who represents pipeline and wind energy companies. "It could be fatal to a number of projects under construction if they are forced to stop work for an extended period in order to obtain individual permits."

The Army Corps has broad jurisdiction over U.S. waterways. It uses the blanket permit to approve qualifying pipelines and other utility projects after only minimal environmental review. That's a longstanding sore point for environmentalists who say it amounts to a loophole in water protection laws and ignores the cumulative harm caused by thousands of stream and wetlands crossings.

Industry supporters describe the program as crucial for timely decisions on projects that can stretch across multiple states and cross hundreds of water bodies. Analyzing each of those crossings would be costly and is unnecessary because most involve little disturbance of land or water, they said.

Since the blanket permit in question, known as Nationwide Permit 12, was last renewed in March 2017, it has been used more than 37,000 times, Army Corps spokesman Garman said. To qualify, projects must not cause the loss of more than a half-acre of water or wetlands.

Last week's court ruling in Montana was in a lawsuit before U.S. District Judge Brian Morris involving the disputed Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada. Work began earlier this month on the 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) line stretching from Alberta to Nebraska that has been championed by President Donald Trump.

Morris said using the blanket permit for water crossings was illegal because the Army Corps did not adequately consider potential harm to imperiled wildlife species when it re-authorized the permit in 2017. The judge pointed to concerns among scientists that construction could stir up sediment and bury the food source of an endangered, dinosaur-like fish — the pallid sturgeon.

The judge did not limit his findings to Keystone, so the ruling is being interpreted for now to apply to any project using Nationwide Permit 12. The Montana case was cited last week in a lawsuit over a 430-mile (692-kilometer) natural gas pipeline in central Texas. Plaintiffs including the city of Austin said last week's ruling invalidated the Army Corps' work on the Permian Highway Pipeline.

Because there are no streams or other water bodies near the northern Montana border crossing where Keystone XL is currently under construction, that work was not immediately halted. Yet it's an obstacle to future work given the many water crossings along the line's path.

Army Corps regulatory program Chief Jennifer Moyer said in an April 17 email obtained by AP that "out of an abundance of caution" she was ordering agency personnel across the nation to stop verifying companies as compliant with the blanket permit.

Questions about the directive were referred to U.S. Department of Justice spokesman Wyn Hornbuckle,

who declined comment because the case is still in litigation.

An attorney for one of the environmental groups that brought the Keystone lawsuit said critics of the permit program pushed for changes when it was last renewed but were rebuffed. To prevent the problem it now faces, the Army Corps should have consulted more closely with wildlife agencies to craft a program that would better avoid impacts, said Jared Margolis with the Center for Biological Diversity.

"They knew what they had to do and they were avoiding it and they got caught," Margolis said.

Labor and industry groups led by the American Petroleum Institute and Interstate Natural Gas Association of America said in a statement that the nationwide permit was "critical to the responsible and efficient development and maintenance of energy and other vital infrastructure." The groups said the permit had been successfully applied to pipelines, broadband cable, water mains and other utilities.

For electricity providers, the court ruling could jeopardize efforts to maintain the energy grid by calling into question the status of projects that use the permit, said Emily Sanford Fisher, general counsel for the Edison Electric Institute, which represents investor-owned electric companies in the U.S..

Cowan, the industry attorney, said he anticipates government attorneys will move quickly to file an appeal or a request with Morris to clarify his ruling.

"The fact that this case involves the Keystone pipeline will almost certainly elevate its profile within the administration," he said.

Follow Matthew Brown at <https://twitter.com/matthewbrownap>

At least 7 dead as storms hit Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana

MADILL, Okla. (AP) — Severe weather blew through the South on Thursday after killing at least seven people in Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana, including a worker at a factory hit by an apparent tornado, a man whose car was blown off the road and a man who went outside to grab a trash can and was swept away in a flood.

More than 150,000 businesses and homes from Texas to Georgia were without power as the severe weather blew eastward, snapping utility lines as trees fell, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utility reports.

In Georgia, an a suspected tornado swept through the city of Adel in Cook County, tearing off roofs and flipping at least one car and a small plane.

Johnny West, Cook County's emergency management director, told The Valdosta Daily Times there was damage throughout the county and "heavy damage" in the city. Photos submitted to WALB-TV show trees snapped in half and metal roofing material draped over some utility lines still standing.

Damage was caused by a combination of straight-line winds and the tornado, said Wright Dobbs, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Tallahassee, Florida, office.

There were no reports of injuries or deaths.

At least one suspected tornado touched down Thursday evening north of Tallahassee near Interstate 10, according weather officials. Twitter users were posting photos of downed trees in the area, and authorities warned people to stay away from downed power lines.

Winds peeled roofing material off a church in Alabama and sent an awning crashing onto a car at a gas station. In Adel, Georgia, pieces of metal flew off a building during a possible twister.

About 70 miles (about 113 kilometers) east of Birmingham in Anniston, a firefighter and an emergency medical worker were injured when part of a tree fell atop them while they were rescuing a person who was trapped inside a home by a tree that fell during a storm, Anniston EMS said in a statement posted on its Facebook page. The workers and the resident were all taken to a hospital, but none of the injuries was life-threatening, the agency said.

Forecasters said additional damage was possible from another wave of storms.

Earlier, an apparent tornado killed three people and injured 20 to 30 more in and around the southeast Texas town of Onalaska. Suspected twisters destroyed 46 homes and damaged another 245 in the sur-

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rounding area, according to Polk County Judge Sydney Murphy. The judge told the Beaumont Enterprise on Thursday that the dead included a woman in her 20s, a man in his 50s and another man whose age they don't know.

"It took me 45 minutes to climb through the roof to get out," said Charles Stephens of Onalaska. He told the Houston Chronicle that he and his wife were holed up in their bathroom when a large pine tree fell through their roof Wednesday night, and he had to use a hatchet free his wife from the debris.

Nine suspected tornadoes touched down in southern Oklahoma, National Weather Service meteorologist Alex Zwink said. One of them caused widespread damage across the town of Madill, near the Red River, said Donny Raley, the city's emergency manager.

Just outside town, workers were leaving for the day from J&I Manufacturing, which makes trailers, when a suspected twister hit. The body of a worker was later found about a fourth of a mile (0.4 kilometers) away, Marshall County Emergency Management Director Robert Chaney said.

A second person died in Madill when the tornado blew his vehicle off a highway: The body of Chad L. Weyant, 46, of Madill was found in the median and his vehicle in a nearby field, according to an Oklahoma Highway Patrol report.

A Louisiana man was later found dead after a witness saw him try to retrieve a trash can from water near a drainage ditch; He lost his footing and was swept away by floodwaters, DeSoto Parish Sheriff Jayson Richardson told The Shreveport Times.

"There was some pretty extreme flooding here in Mansfield. Water like I've not seen in many, many years, if ever," the sheriff told the newspaper. "Basically the water rose really fast and we had to rescue some people out of homes. I think we had about 20 or so homes that people were flooded in."

News outlets reported that Becky Carter Roberts, 67, was killed during a storm in Lecompte, Louisiana, 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Alexandria, but the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office didn't immediately say how she died.

Louisiana State University System President Tom Galligan said the Alexandria campus lost power and water because of the storms. He said the approximately 40 students remaining on campus amid the coronavirus outbreak were being moved Thursday to a nearby hotel until campus services can be restored.

This story corrects the location of the death from Woodworth to Lecompte and removes the reference to death occurring on a bridge.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

The House has approved a nearly \$500 billion infusion of coronavirus spending, as unemployment in the U.S. is swelling to levels last seen during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Anchoring the bill is the Trump administration's \$250 billion funding request to replenish a fund to help small- and medium-size businesses with payroll, rent and other expenses. It also contains \$100 billion demanded by Democrats for hospitals and a nationwide testing program.

More than 4.4 million laid-off Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week. In all, roughly 26 million people — the population of the 10 biggest U.S. cities combined — have now filed for jobless aid in five weeks.

Abroad, there was mixed news about the epidemic. Some countries, including Greece, Bangladesh and Malaysia, announced extensions of their lockdowns. Vietnam, New Zealand and Croatia were among those moving to end or ease such measures. Brazil's health ministry confirmed 407 deaths due to the outbreak in the last 24 hours, a daily high for the country.

Here are some of AP's top stories Thursday 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:

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— Democratic Party chairman Tom Perez says he expects to hold an “in-person convention” in Milwaukee to nominate Joe Biden for president, though he didn’t rule out the potential that portions of the event would be conducted virtually. The convention is slated for the week of Aug. 17, but precise dates remain up in the air after Perez and party officials scrapped their original July 13-16 plans amid the coronavirus pandemic.

— These times were strange enough. And then California Gov. Gavin Newsom and President Donald Trump started getting along. The liberal Democrat — the leader in the headquarters of the Resistance — has taken to singing Trump’s praises, and he even used the Republican president’s campaign slogan Thursday: “Promise made, promise kept,” he said, thanking Trump for sending California testing swabs.

— The United Nations human rights office called on governments in Mexico and Central America to consider halting deportations during the coronavirus pandemic. The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights also expressed concern about thousands of migrants trapped in limbo after countries closed borders or local populations refused to let them in.

— Testing of an experimental COVID-19 vaccine began in healthy volunteers in Britain, the latest in a cluster of early-stage studies in search of protection against the coronavirus. University of Oxford researchers gave injections to volunteers in a study that eventually aims to include hundreds in hopes of determining not only if the vaccine is safe but if it works.

— There’s no evidence pets are spreading the new coronavirus to people. However, there have been a few cases worldwide where animals likely got the virus from humans, according to federal officials. A 4-year-old tiger tested positive at New York City’s Bronx Zoo, and officials think a zookeeper with the virus got the feline sick. Two house cats in different homes in New York have also contracted the virus, likely from their owners or someone in the neighborhood.

— More evidence is emerging that far more New Yorkers have had the coronavirus than the number confirmed by lab tests. A state survey of about 3,000 people found that nearly 14% had antibodies, suggesting they had been exposed to the virus, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. In New York City, the epicenter of the pandemic in the U.S., 21% of the people tested had antibodies. Cuomo cautioned that the data was preliminary.

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: Drill down and zoom in at the individual county level, and you can access numbers that will show you the situation where you are, and where loved ones or people you’re worried about live.

ONE NUMBER:

— 26 million: Unemployment in the U.S. has swelled to levels last seen during the Great Depression of the 1930s, with 1 in 6 American workers — or roughly 26 million — thrown out of a job by the coronavirus.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **JUSTIN HERBERT:** Like every other NFL draft prospect, Oregon quarterback Justin Herbert scrambled when the coronavirus outbreak forced school closures and stay-at-home restrictions across the country. He prepared for the draft using his brothers as spotters and route runners.

— **STUDENTS’ MASKS:** A private school student in the nation’s capital wanted to find a way to pitch in

during the coronavirus pandemic. Georgetown Day School senior Jonah Docter-Loeb's efforts led to Print to Protect, which has printed 3,000 face shields and hopes to complete 10,000 in April.

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

Lives Lost: Brothers journey from rural Mexico to life in US

By ADAM GELLER and PETER PRENGAMAN Associated Press

To drivers on the George Washington Bridge, Martin Morales probably looked like just another weekend warrior in his windbreaker and bicycle helmet, out for a ride in the suburbs across the river from New York City.

To his family, though, a selfie Morales snapped with the bridge towering overhead during one of the rides he loved is a reminder of just how far he had journeyed — from a remote village in southern Mexico to follow his older brother, Javier, to a new American life.

Then, the coronavirus extinguished both their lives, just a day apart.

On April 6, Javier Morales, who immigrated to the U.S. about 30 years ago and eventually became a citizen, died of complications from the infection at a New Jersey hospital. He was 48. The next day, the virus took the life of Martin Morales, who was 39.

"Javier was the first one to immigrate ... He was chasing the American dream," said Sheila Cruz Morales, whose mother is a first cousin to the two men. Martin followed nearly a decade later, joining his older brother in Teaneck, New Jersey.

"They wanted to be near each other and he really tried to adapt the same way that my uncle Javier did," she said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people around the world who have died during the coronavirus pandemic.

In New Jersey, the brothers lived in apartments one floor apart, together with others from Santa Catarina Yosonotú, a village of about 1,800 people in the Mexican state of Oaxaca.

In the village, about five hours drive over mountain roads from the state capital, hardly anyone has a phone and internet service is even more rare. Calling family from the U.S. means dialing a telephone kiosk and telling whoever answers who you're trying to reach. It works because the village, where people speak the indigenous language of Mixtec, is as close-knit as it is remote.

"We all know each other," said Rogelio Morales, 32, a cousin who followed Javier and Martin Morales to the U.S.

Javier Morales left the village around 1990 after his father was shot and killed in a business dispute, family members said. He started off picking fruit in California before eventually settling in New Jersey, where a man he knew from the village already lived.

He married, raised a daughter who is now a medical assistant, and worked as a truck driver for a company that rents furniture for special events. Over the years, he assisted more than a dozen others who immigrated from Santa Catarina, helping them find work and housing.

"He was the security, the light that we all had here," Rogelio Morales said.

Martin Morales followed his older brother to the U.S. when he was 17. Quieter than Javier and interested in politics, he worked in a warehouse. He and his wife were parents of three children. Martin bought bicycles for each, leading family rides through the neighborhood and savoring his own solo excursions.

On weekends, it was not unusual to find the brothers in the driveway, taking care of their pickup trucks and playing with the children. They celebrated nearly every birthday, holiday and other family occasion together, Cruz Morales said.

Soon, Javier Morales hoped, there would be a new reason to celebrate. He was divorced, but was plan-

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ning to marry again — to a woman he had courted during return visits to Santa Catarina.

Javier's final visit came in March when, he and Rogelio Morales traveled back to the village for a religious festival. They returned to the U.S. feeling worn out and chalked it up to jet lag and partying. But 10 or 11 days later, Javier Morales sought care at one hospital, then another. Isolated from family and on a ventilator, he died on a Monday. His brother, ill and despondent, died at home the following day.

In the time since, the family has been working to find a way to send their remains back to Santa Catarina. The men's mother still lives there and family members said the brothers' pride in its culture and identity as descendants of Oaxaca's original inhabitants remained essential to their character, even after years away.

"His hometown was very, very special to him," Cruz Morales said of Javier Morales.

And "it's in our belief that for us to rest peacefully, we have to be in our homeland and we have to rest with our ancestors."

Geller reported from New York and Prengaman reported from Phoenix.

Somber Congress delivers nearly \$500B more in virus aid

By **ANDREW TAYLOR** and **ALAN FRAM** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress delivered a nearly \$500 billion infusion of coronavirus spending Thursday, rushing new relief to employers and hospitals buckling under the strain of a pandemic that has claimed almost 50,000 American lives and one in six U.S. jobs.

The measure passed almost unanimously, but the lopsided tally belies a potentially bumpier path ahead as battle lines are being formed for much more ambitious future legislation that may prove far more difficult to maneuver through Congress.

President Donald Trump is scheduled to sign the bill during a White House ceremony Friday.

The bipartisan measure passed as lawmakers gathered in Washington as a group for the first time since March 27, adopting stricter social distancing rules while seeking to prove they can do their work despite the COVID-19 crisis.

Lawmakers' face masks and bandannas added an somber tone to their effort to aid a nation staggered by the health crisis and devastating economic costs of the pandemic.

"Millions of people out of work," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. "This is really a very, very, very sad day. We come to the floor with nearly 50,000 deaths, a huge number of people impacted, and the uncertainty of it all. We hope to soon get to a recovery phase. But right now we're still in mitigation."

Anchoring the bill is the Trump administration's \$250 billion funding request to replenish a fund to help small- and medium-size businesses with payroll, rent and other expenses. The payroll program provides forgivable loans so businesses can continue paying workers while forced to stay closed for social distancing and stay-at-home orders.

It also contains \$100 billion demanded by Democrats for hospitals and a nationwide testing program, along with a \$60 billion set-aside for small banks and an alternative network of community development banks that focus on development in urban neighborhoods and rural areas ignored by many lenders. There's also \$60 billion for small-business loans and grants delivered through the Small Business Administration's existing disaster aid program.

Trump celebrated the bill's passage at his daily White House briefing Thursday. "At a time when many Americans are enduring significant economic challenges, this bill will help small businesses to keep millions of workers on the payroll," he said.

The 388-5 vote — with Rep. Justin Amash, I-Mich., voting "present" — came at the end of a nettlesome path to passage. Republicans sought immediate action on Trump's "clean" request for the small business money — backed by powerful, GOP-leaning business groups — but Democrats demanded equal funding for their priorities, frustrating Republicans who accused them of seeking leverage during the crisis. Republicans said delays in replenishing the paycheck subsidy program probably pushed some struggling businesses over the edge into closure.

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Signs of the pandemic were everywhere in the House chamber Thursday. As Pelosi spoke from the floor, she lowered a white scarf that had covered much of her face. House Chaplain Patrick Conroy delivered the opening prayer wearing a yellow protective mask, and most lawmakers and aides on the chamber's sparsely populated floor wore masks as well.

With the entire Capitol closed to the public, visitors' galleries were set aside for lawmakers in an effort to separate them.

Passage of more coronavirus relief is likely in the weeks ahead. Supporters are already warning that the business-backed Payroll Protection Program will exhaust the new \$250 billion almost immediately. Launched just weeks ago, the program quickly reached its lending limit after approving nearly 1.7 million loans. That left thousands of small businesses in limbo as they sought help.

Pelosi and allies like Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., said the next measure will distribute more relief to individuals, extend more generous jobless benefits into the fall, provide another round of direct payments to most people and help those who are laid off afford health insurance through COBRA.

Democrats tried to win another round of funding for state and local governments in Thursday's bill but were rebuffed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who says he's going to try pump the brakes on runaway deficit spending. McConnell says he doesn't want to bail out Democratic-governed states for fiscal problems that predated the pandemic, but there's plenty of demand for state fiscal relief among Republicans, too.

After the Senate passed the latest bill Tuesday, McConnell declared that Republicans would entertain no more coronavirus rescue legislation until the Senate returns to Washington, promising rank-and-file Republicans greater say in the future legislation, rather than leaving it in the hands of top bipartisan leaders.

Pelosi attacked McConnell for at first opposing adding any money to his original \$250 billion package and saying cash-strapped states should be allowed to declare bankruptcy, a move that they currently cannot do and that would threaten a broad range of state services. McConnell's comments provoked an outcry — including from GOP governors — and he later tempered his remarks.

"Oh, really?" Pelosi said. "What made you think that was a good idea?"

Thursday's measure brings total rescue funding over the four measures, as measured by the cumulative deficit impact of spending proposals and tax cuts, to \$2.4 trillion, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Each day brings new evidence of the economic calamity wrought by the virus. Thursday morning the government reported that 4.4 million people filed for unemployment benefits last week as layoffs sweep the economy. Over the last five weeks, roughly 26 million people have filed for jobless aid, or about one in six U.S. workers.

The state of Michigan announced this week that it is temporarily laying off almost 3,000 workers.

All told, the four coronavirus relief bills crafted by Congress would deliver at least \$2.4 trillion for business relief, testing and treatment, and direct payments to individuals and the unemployed, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The deficit is virtually certain to breach \$3 trillion this year and is likely to go well above that when CBO issues new data as early as Friday.

Among the candidates for aid in the next bill is the Postal Service, which has more than 600,000 workers but is getting clobbered by COVID-19-related revenue losses.

In related matter, the House used a party-line 212-182 vote Thursday to establish a special committee to oversee how the Trump administration spends the huge sums of money Congress is providing to battle the coronavirus. Republicans accused Democrats of playing politics with the crisis, but Democrats said Congress needs to keep an eye on the effort.

Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman contributed to this report.

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Virus pushes US unemployment toward highest since Depression

By DAVID CRARY, REGINA GARCIA CANO and ANGELA CHARLTON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Unemployment in the U.S. is swelling to levels last seen during the Great Depression of the 1930s, with 1 in 6 American workers thrown out of a job by the coronavirus, according to new data released Thursday. In response to the deepening economic crisis, the House passed a nearly \$500 billion spending package to help buckled businesses and hospitals.

More than 4.4 million laid-off Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, the government reported. In all, roughly 26 million people — the population of the 10 biggest U.S. cities combined — have now filed for jobless aid in five weeks, an epic collapse that has raised the stakes in the debate over how and when to ease the shutdowns of factories and other businesses.

In the hardest-hit corner of the U.S., evidence emerged that perhaps 2.7 million New York state residents have been infected by the virus — 10 times the number confirmed by lab tests.

A small, preliminary statewide survey of around 3,000 people found that nearly 14% had antibodies showing they had been infected, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. Just in New York City, with a population of 8.6 million, Health Commissioner Oxiris Barbot said as many as 1 million may have been infected.

In Washington, many House lawmakers wore face masks and bandannas — and some sat in the otherwise vacant visitors gallery to stay away from others — as they debated the latest spending package. A near-unanimous vote sent it to President Donald Trump in the evening.

Anchoring the bill is the administration's \$250 billion request to replenish a fund to help small- and medium-size businesses with payroll, rent and other expenses. Trump said the bill "will help small businesses to keep millions of workers on the payroll."

Abroad, there was mixed news about the epidemic. Some countries, including Greece, Bangladesh and Malaysia, announced extensions of their lockdowns. Vietnam, New Zealand and Croatia were among those moving to end or ease such measures.

In Africa, COVID-19 cases surged 43% in the past week to 26,000, according to John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The figures underscored a recent warning from the World Health Organization that the virus could kill more than 300,000 people in Africa and push 30 million into desperate poverty.

Brazil's health ministry confirmed 407 deaths due to the outbreak in the last 24 hours, a daily high for the country.

Huge lines have formed at food banks from El Paso, Texas, to the Paris suburbs, and food shortages are hitting Africa especially hard.

At a virtual summit, European Union leaders agreed to set up a massive recovery fund to help rebuild the 27-nation bloc's ravaged economies. While no figure was put on the plan, officials said 1-1.5 trillion euros (\$1.1-1.6 trillion) would be needed.

The coronavirus has killed over 190,000 people worldwide, including more than 100,000 in Europe and nearly 50,000 in the United States, according to a tally compiled by John Hopkins University from official government figures. The true numbers are almost certainly far higher.

In the U.S., the economic consequences of the shutdowns have sparked angry rallies in state capitals by protesters demanding that businesses reopen, and Trump has expressed impatience over the restrictions.

Some governors have begun easing up despite warnings from health authorities that it may be too soon to do so without sparking a second wave of infections. In Georgia, gyms, hair salons and bowling alleys can reopen Friday. Texas has reopened its state parks.

Few Americans count on Trump as a reliable source of information on the outbreak, according to a survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. About 23% said they have high levels of trust in what he tells the public, while 21% said they trust him a moderate amount.

On the economic front, few experts foresee a downturn as severe as the Depression, when unemployment remained above 14% from 1931 to 1940, peaking at 25%. But unemployment is considered likely to remain elevated well into next year and probably beyond, and will surely top the 10% peak of the 2008-09 recession.

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Janet Simon, laid off as a waitress at a Miami IHOP restaurant, said she has just \$200 and is getting panic attacks because of uncertainty over how she will care for her three children. Simon, 33, filed for unemployment a month ago, and her application is still listed as "pending."

"I'm doing everything to keep my family safe, my children safe, but everything else around me is falling apart," Simon said. "But they see it, no matter how much I try to hide my despair."

Corey Williams, 31, lost his warehouse job in Michigan a month ago and saw his rent, insurance and other bills pile up while he anxiously awaited his unemployment benefits. That finally happened on Wednesday, and he quickly paid \$1,700 in bills.

"It was getting pretty tight, pretty tight," he said. "It was definitely stressful for the last few days."

In northern Colorado, a major meatpacking plant that closed because of an outbreak that claimed the lives of four workers was set to reopen Friday after a two-week disinfection, even as some questioned how employees can maintain social distancing inside the facility.

While the health crisis has eased in places like Italy, Spain and France, experts say it is far from over, and the threat of new outbreaks looms large.

"The question is not whether there will be a second wave," said Dr. Hans Kluge, the head of the WHO's Europe office. "The question is whether we will take into account the biggest lessons so far."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel criticized some German states for moving too briskly in trying to reopen their economies. Germany has been praised for its approach to the pandemic and has a much lower reported death toll than other large European countries.

"We're not living in the final phase of the pandemic, but still at the beginning," Merkel warned. "It would be a shame if premature hope ultimately punishes us all."

Governments are bearing that risk in mind with the onset of Ramadan, the holy month of daytime fasting, overnight festivities and communal prayer that begins for the world's 1.8 billion Muslims with this week's new moon. Many Muslim leaders have closed mosques or banned collective evening prayer to ward off infections.

The virus has already disrupted Christianity's Holy Week, Passover, the Muslim hajj pilgrimage and other major religious events.

Authorities in the capital of Indonesia, the most populous Muslim-majority nation, extended restrictions to cover all of Ramadan. Turkey banned communal eating during the holiday.

Garcia Cano reported from Washington, and Charlton from Paris. Associated Press reporters from around the world contributed.

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

Official: Canada shooting erupted after domestic dispute

By **ROB GILLIES Associated Press**

TORONTO (AP) — Canada's worst mass shooting started as a domestic dispute between the gunman and his girlfriend, who survived the attack, a police official said late Thursday.

The official confirmed to The Associated Press that the weekend rampage in Nova Scotia erupted after an argument between the pair. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said more details would be provided at a news conference Friday.

Police have said 51-year-old Gabriel Wortman acted alone in waging a shooting spree that killed at least 22 people across northern and central Nova Scotia. There are 16 crime scenes in five different rural communities throughout northern and central Nova Scotia.

The suspect was shot to death Sunday morning, about 13 hours after the attacks began.

Several bodies were found inside and outside one house in the rural town of Portapique, police have said. Bodies were also found in four other communities, and authorities believe the shooter targeted his

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first victims but then began attacking randomly as he drove around.

Police have said Wortman carried out much of the attack disguised as a police officer in a vehicle marked to seem like a patrol car. They say he shot people in and around their homes and set fires to homes in Portapique.

Wortman, who owned a denture practice in the city of Dartmouth, near Halifax, lived part time in Portapique, according to residents. Atlantic Denture Clinic, his practice, had been closed the past month because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Authorities said Wortman did not have a police record, but information later emerged of at least one run-in with the law. Nova Scotia court records confirm he was ordered to receive counselling for anger management after pleading guilty to assaulting a man in the Halifax area on Oct. 29, 2001.

The guilty plea came on Oct. 7, 2002, as his trial was about to begin. He was placed on probation for nine months, fined \$50 and told to stay away from the man, and also prohibited from owning or possessing a weapon, ammunition or explosive substances.

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

Two years ago Thursday, a man drove a van along a busy Toronto sidewalk and killed 10 people and injured 16. The suspect, who is awaiting trial, said he carried out the attack in retribution for years of sexual rejection and ridicule by women.

History, geography scores dip on Nation's Report Card

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

The latest Nation's Report Card shows eighth-graders' scores in U.S. history and geography declining since 2014, results Education Secretary Betsy DeVos on Thursday called "stark and inexcusable."

Civics scores on the 2018 assessments were the same as in the last round of tests four years earlier, the newly released results show.

The assessments, given for the first time digitally on tablets instead of paper, were administered to 42,700 eighth-grade students in 780 public and private schools across the nation.

Also troubling, administrators said, was that lower-performing students lost more ground than middle- and higher-performing students, mirroring a pattern seen in recent reading and math scores. The problem is likely to be made worse by the loss of class time caused by the coronavirus, which is expected to have a greater impact on lower-performing students.

The pattern "should motivate us all to address the factors behind these declines for struggling students," said Lesley Muldoon, executive director of the National Assessment Governing Board.

Across all three subjects, a quarter or less of students scored at or above proficient, meaning they showed a solid understanding of challenging concepts. Another quarter or more failed to demonstrate a level of basic understanding, the results showed.

"In the real world, this means students don't know what the Lincoln-Douglas debates were about, nor can they discuss the significance of the Bill of Rights, or point out basic locations on a map," DeVos said in a written statement. "And only 15% of them have a reasonable knowledge of U.S. history. All Americans should take a moment to think about the concerning implications for the future of our country."

The score gaps between white students and their black and Hispanic peers did not significantly change from 2014 to 2018.

"Our nation is experiencing a teachable moment with the current health crisis in terms of how important it is to understand historical forces, the role of our civic institutions, and the impact of geographical conditions of our interconnected world," said Peggy Carr, associate commissioner at the National Center for Education Statistics, which runs the National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as the Nation's Report Card.

"The results provided here," Carr said, "indicate that many students are struggling to understand and

explain the importance of civic participation, how American government functions, the historical significance of events, and the need to grasp and apply core geographic concepts.”

The average U.S. history score was 263 out of 500 in 2018, four points lower than in 2014. The results categorized 15% of eighth-graders as proficient when asked, for example, to explain the significance of certain documents and ideas in American history. History scores declined across the board for white, black and Hispanic students, the results showed.

The average geography score was 258 on a 500-point scale, three points lower than in 2014, with scores for white and black students showing declines. In 2018, 25% of students scored at or above the proficient level.

The 2018 civics score measuring students’ knowledge of government was unchanged between 2014 and 2018. About 24% of students scored at or above proficient, and there was no significant change across ethnic groups.

There has been improvement over time since the assessments were first administered in the 1990s. Civics and history scores have gone up overall and the score gap between white and Hispanic students in civics has narrowed by 10 points. Score differences also have narrowed between white students and black and Hispanic students in geography, but the gaps in history scores have remained about the same.

VA medical facilities struggle to cope with the coronavirus

By MICHAEL CASEY and HOPE YEN Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — As she treated patient after patient infected with the coronavirus at a Veterans Affairs medical center in New York City, Heather Espinal saw stark warning signs.

So many nurses had called in sick, she said, that the Bronx facility was woefully understaffed. It lacked specially equipped rooms for infected patients, she said, and didn’t have enough masks, gloves and other protective gear to guard against the spread of the highly contagious disease.

Espinal, a member of the union National Nurses United, says she and her colleagues were told to do the best they could, using a single N95 face mask for an entire shift rather than getting a new one for each patient. In early April, she tested positive for COVID-19.

“I definitely believe it was related to me being at work,” said the 34-year-old Espinal, who was out sick for two weeks.

Espinal is one of 1,900 VA health care workers who have become sick with the coronavirus, according to agency documents obtained by The Associated Press. Twenty have died. Another 3,600 of the 300,000-plus VA health care employees are quarantined and unable to work because they have been exposed to the virus, according to VA figures.

As the coronavirus spreads across the U.S., VA health care facilities are struggling with shortages of workers and the equipment necessary to protect employees from contracting the virus, according to VA staff and internal documents obtained by the AP.

“We thought we were doing everything right, even with reusing these N95 respirators. But we still ended up getting sick,” Espinal said.

More than 5,700 veterans treated by the VA have been infected by the coronavirus, and nearly 380 have died.

The Labor Department is now investigating, and several Democrats in Congress sent a letter Thursday calling on President Donald Trump to invoke the Defense Production Act to get more supplies for VA health facilities.

The VA, responsible for the health care of 9 million military veterans, denied it was short of supplies and stressed that it follows federal health guidelines when rationing personal protective equipment like masks and gloves.

“VA’s PPE conservation posture is precisely why the department has not encountered any PPE shortages that have negatively impacted patient care or employee safety,” said spokeswoman Christina Mandreucci. She said the VA has moved aggressively in recent weeks to add staff, hiring 3,183 people, including 981

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nurses, from March 29 to April 11.

But interviews with VA employees at facilities around the country, internal documents, and a March report by the agency's inspector general tell another story.

The facilities were short of staff and equipment like masks, eye shields, hand sanitizer and gowns. Some workers were forced to reuse masks for days or weeks, according to interviews with VA nurses. In hard-hit states like New York, a crush of coronavirus patients led to a shortage of negative pressure rooms to limit the spread of the virus, several VA nurses told the AP.

The VA inspector general's staff visited more than 230 facilities in March. It found that nearly a third of the medical centers could improve their processing for screening visitors. More than half of the medical centers reported shortages of supplies and equipment including respirator masks, and 10 reported shortages of staffing mostly for nurses in intensive care units.

"There has been a failure of leadership at VA, and veterans, VA employees and the public are suffering as a result," said Paul Rieckhoff, founder and former head of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and now host of the podcast "Angry Americans."

Suzanne Gordon, a senior policy analyst at the nonpartisan Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute, said VA preparations were hampered by inadequate funding and staff, leaving it with nearly 50,000 job openings.

"In VA facilities all over the country, they are doing a really incredible job trying to respond to the crisis in a situation where they have been deliberately crippled by the Trump administration," Gordon said.

As the nation's largest health care system, the VA typically enjoyed preferred status in orders for medical supplies from prime vendors.

But as the outbreak escalated in the U.S., surging demand for crucial medical equipment spurred frantic competition for supplies, including from state governments and the National Stockpile. The Federal Emergency Management Agency began buying supplies directly from manufacturers, and VA began submitting its orders to FEMA alongside others.

Not long after, according to people familiar with VA's weekly briefings to Congress, the supply shortages got worse as medical workers burned through 250,000 masks a day.

On April 7, the VA issued guidelines asking workers to ration masks in response to what the department described as "shortages" and challenges in getting "adequate supplies" to protect VA staff, according to an internal memo. Citing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, the VA said employees in direct contact with COVID-19 patients should use N95 masks as protection but may need to reuse them. VA staff working with high-risk elderly or vulnerable patients, such as those in nursing homes or spinal cord facilities, would only get one face mask per work week.

After criticism from staff, and a small increase in supplies, the VA on April 16 said those employees working with high-risk elderly or vulnerable veterans could now have one face mask per day.

Individual medical centers have wide discretion if they face shortages, including allowing employees in direct contact with COVID patients to use surgical masks instead of N95 respirators and permitting staff to bring their own.

All other VA staff would be encouraged to bring in handmade masks, even if they work in a building where the disease is present.

A complaint filed by the American Federation of Government Employees alleges that VA workers who came in contact with someone suspected of contracting the virus were told on orders of VA Secretary Robert Wilkie that they still had to report to work — ignoring a 14-day quarantine period. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating.

The staff and equipment shortages are creating chaos at the VA medical center in Brooklyn, New York, according to Maria Lobifaro, an intensive care nurse.

"Usually the ratio is one nurse to two critical patients. I'm having five critical ICU patients on ventilators," said Lobifaro, who also is a member of National Nurses United, which has organized protests at VA facilities in Brooklyn and Baltimore.

"This has happened four times in the last week and a half. It's to the point where ... my hands are trem-

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bling because of what I'm going to walk into," she continued. "I've never seen anything like this."

A group of Senate Democrats blames Trump for a "broken procurement and distribution system developed by this administration."

"Those who care for veterans should not be afraid to wake up every morning, go to work and help save veterans' lives," says a letter sent to the White House on Thursday by Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, the top Democrat on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. More than a dozen senators joined him, including Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Kamala Harris of California, all former 2020 presidential contenders.

Wilkie defended his agency's response.

"We have the lowest employee infection rate in the world. It is less than half of 1 percent," he said Wednesday on MSNBC, citing higher rates in Italy and elsewhere in the U.S.

Irma Westmoreland, a nurse at the Charlie Norwood VA in Augusta, Georgia, said it's hard for nurses to be tested, so no one really knows how bad the situation is.

"We are told if you have symptoms or feel like you have been exposed and you want to be tested unless you are veteran, you can't be tested," said Westmoreland, another NNU member, adding that employees are told go to their own doctors if they want to be tested.

"It's stressful for the nurses to be in this environment," she said. "But it's even more stressful when they don't have information they need."

This story has been corrected to show the policy analyst's name is Suzanne, not Susan.

AP source: Bills pick up 5th-year option on CB White

By JOHN WAWROW AP Sports Writer

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Bills have picked up the fifth-year option on cornerback Tre'Davious White's contract, a person with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Thursday because the team has not announced the decision. ESPN.com first reported the move.

By exercising their option, the Bills retained White's rights through the 2021 season, during which his salary will bump up to about \$10 million, based on an average of the top 32 salaries at his position.

The Bills are still allowed to negotiate a long-term contract extension with the player.

White has been a starter since being selected in the first round of the 2017 draft out of LSU. He earned his first All-Pro selection last season, when he finished tied for the NFL lead with six interceptions.

Overall, White has 12 interceptions, with five coming in games decided by seven or fewer points, in 47 games. He has missed just one game, Buffalo's season finale last year, when the Bills rested a majority of their starters to prepare for the playoffs.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Elizabeth Warren's oldest brother dies of coronavirus

BOSTON (AP) — The oldest brother of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Donald Reed Herring, has died from the coronavirus, the Massachusetts senator said Thursday.

The former Democratic presidential candidate said her brother died Tuesday evening. He spent his career in the military after joining the U.S. Air Force at the age of 19 and was "charming and funny, a natural leader," Warren tweeted.

"I'm grateful to the nurses and frontline staff who took care of him, but it's hard to know that there was no family to hold his hand or to say 'I love you' one more time—and no funeral for those of us who loved him to hold each other close. I'll miss you dearly my brother," she said.

The Boston Globe reported that Reed, 86, died in Norman, Oklahoma, about three weeks after testing

positive for the virus.

Herring flew B-47 and B-52 bombers for the Air Force, and flew 288 combat missions in Vietnam, the newspaper reported. He served as a B-52 squadron pilot and a squadron aircraft commander before retiring in 1973 as a lieutenant colonel.

"What made him extra special was his smile—quick and crooked, it always seemed to generate its own light, one that lit up everyone around him," Warren said.

AP-NORC poll: Few Americans trust Trump's info on pandemic

By JULIE PACE and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has made himself the daily spokesman for the nation's coronavirus response. Yet few Americans regularly look to or trust Trump as a source of information on the pandemic, according to a new survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Just 28% of Americans say they're regularly getting information from Trump about the coronavirus and only 23% say they have high levels of trust in what the president is telling the public. Another 21% trust him a moderate amount.

Confidence in Trump is higher among his supporters, though only about half of Republicans say they have a lot of trust in Trump's information on the pandemic — and 22% say they have little or no trust in what he says about the COVID-19 outbreak.

But even as many Republicans question Trump's credibility during the pandemic, the overwhelming majority — 82% — say they still approve of how he's doing. That's helped keep the president's overall approval rating steady at 42%, about where it's been for the past few months.

Lynn Sanchez of Jacksonville, Texas, is among those who backs Trump despite reservations about his credibility. Sanchez, who identifies as a political independent, said she trusts "only a little" of what the president says about the crisis, but believes he's "doing the best he can."

"He's contradicted his own health experts a couple of times. I believe he gets carried away and doesn't sit down and think things through," said Sanchez, a 66-year-old retired truck stop manager.

The survey's findings underscore Trump's rock-solid backing from Republicans, who have been unwavering in their overall support throughout his presidency, despite reservations about his credibility and temperament. If that support holds through the November election, Trump would still have a narrow — but feasible — path to victory.

The findings also raise questions about the value of Trump's daily briefings from the White House during the pandemic — televised events that often paint a sunny picture of the nation's pandemic response that runs counter to the experiences of many Americans in cities and states hard-hit by the fast-moving virus. While the briefings are the White House's main vehicle for getting information to the public, they frequently devolve into forums for the president to berate journalists and critics of the administration.

Trump has personally led the briefings for weeks, with a regular cast of public health officials, Cabinet secretaries and Vice President Mike Pence also taking turns updating Americans on the administration's response to the health and economic crisis.

Many Americans say they wish Trump were listening to some of those experts more as he navigates the crisis. Specifically, 60% think Trump is not listening to health experts enough.

The leading public health officials advising Trump, Drs. Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx, have advocated for maintaining strict social distancing measures even as the president and some of his supporters agitate to begin reopening the economy. The survey found the vast majority of Americans — 80% — continue to back requiring Americans to stay in their homes, and a majority doubt that it will be safe to ease restrictions soon.

There is no indication that Trump is ready to step away from the daily briefings. He regularly touts their television ratings, one of his favorite metrics for success. And indeed, the briefings continue to be aired at length on major cable news channels each evening.

Still, this moment of national crisis, with more than 45,000 reported coronavirus deaths in the U.S. and

millions of Americans losing their jobs, has done nothing to broaden the president's appeal.

Just 11% of Democrat say they approve of Trump's job as president. And 84% of Democrats have little to no trust in information the president is providing about the pandemic.

"I don't believe a thing the man says," said Goble Floyd, a 70-year-old retiree from Bonita Springs, Florida. "And that's sad when so many lives are at stake."

The pandemic has reshaped the landscape for Trump's reelection prospects in November, when he will face Democrat Joe Biden. The virus's swift spread across the country has upended the strong economy the president hoped to run on, leading 26 million Americans to file for unemployment.

It could also overhaul what qualities Americans are seeking from their commander in chief.

There are few metrics in which Trump rates well with the majority of Americans. Just 17% of Americans say Trump is highly disciplined. And when it comes to empathy — often an important intangible in presidential elections — 24% say Trump cares about people like them.

Trump's highest-rated attribute is leadership. According to the survey, 32% of Americans say strong leader is a very good description of the president, along with 18% who say that describes him moderately well.

When it comes to the nation's response to the virus, Americans are more inclined to trust and seek guidance from their state and local leaders than the president.

About half of those surveyed said they regularly get information from state and local officials and about the same amount say they have a significant trust in that information. And thus far, a majority of Americans — 63% — say they approve of how states are handling the outbreak, up slightly from three weeks ago.

___ AP writer Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

___ The AP-NORC poll of 1,057 adults was conducted April 16-20 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points. Respondents were first selected randomly using address-based sampling methods and later were interviewed online or by phone.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

DC's high school 'makers' fire up 3D printers to create PPE

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It started in late March with a self-professed high school "news junkie" and a lone 3D printer.

Georgetown Day School senior Jonah Docter-Loeb was transfixed by television footage of the "suffering on such a large scale" caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

After learning that supplies of protective medical gear were being depleted, Docter-Loeb sought a way to help. He tapped into the online community of "makers" — 3D printer enthusiasts — and found an open-source design for a welder's mask-style face shield he could print at home.

Things moved quickly from there.

In less than a month, that idea has mushroomed into Print to Protect, a network of around 100 3D printers, most in individual homes, producing face shields for distribution to Washington area hospitals. The group says it has printed 3,000 shields so far with a goal of completing 10,000 in April.

"For a lot of us, it can be overwhelming what's happening," said Emily Scarrow, a junior at the private school and part of a collective of students running the project. She said working on the campaign helped her deal with the feelings of "helplessness and isolation" of the ongoing stay-at-home orders.

The supplies are much needed as Washington and the larger capital region of southern Maryland and northern Virginia braces for a looming surge.

Twice a week, volunteer drivers such as William Olsen gather up the printed materials from people's homes. To maintain social distancing and reduce personal interactions, residents leave the newly printed

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parts in a sealed bag or box on their porches.

"I have a car and I have a bunch of free time. I'm privileged and this is the least I can do," said Olsen, a Georgetown Day junior who is thinking of studying medicine.

The parts are delivered to Eaton DC, a communal workspace downtown that's serving as a distribution hub. There, more volunteers assemble the two basic components — a plastic headband and a clear sheet of flexible plastic that hangs in front of the face.

The Print to Protect campaign is just part of a larger effort working in independent pockets among the area's "maker" community.

When Rob Ryan-Silva's employer, U.S. Agency for International Development contractor DAI, sent everyone home, he carried out a pair of 3D printers.

"A little to my wife's chagrin, they're in our guest bedroom and I'm running a little factory out of there," he said.

One of them is the standard home-style printer "about the size of a microwave on its side" that he uses to print face shields. The other is a larger and most sophisticated machine that he's used to fill a specific request from Washington's fire department: a special nozzle that would enable ambulance crews to swap filters on the breathing-aid machine in their ambulances.

The items he produces are collected and distributed by a similar maker-collective organized by Nova Labs in Reston, Virginia. The face shields take about four hours each to print. He estimates he's made 50 face shields and 80 nozzles.

"It really does add up when you have a larger community doing this," he said.

___ 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 Associated Press continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, April 24, the 115th day of 2020. There are 251 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 24, 1877, federal troops were ordered out of New Orleans, ending the North's post-Civil War rule in the South.

On this date:

In 1800, Congress approved a bill establishing the Library of Congress.

In 1913, the 792-foot Woolworth Building, at that time the tallest skyscraper in the world, officially opened in Manhattan as President Woodrow Wilson pressed a button at the White House to signal the lighting of the towering structure.

In 1915, in what's considered the start of the Armenian genocide, the Ottoman Empire began rounding up Armenian political and cultural leaders in Constantinople.

In 1961, in the wake of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the White House issued a statement saying that President John F. Kennedy "bears sole responsibility for the events of the past few days."

In 1967, Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov was killed when his Soyuz 1 spacecraft smashed into the Earth after his parachutes failed to deploy properly during re-entry; he was the first human spaceflight fatality.

In 1980, the United States launched an unsuccessful attempt to free the American hostages in Iran, a mission that resulted in the deaths of eight U.S. servicemen.

In 1986, Wallis, Duchess of Windsor, for whom King Edward VIII had given up the British throne, died in Paris at age 89.

In 1995, the final bomb linked to the Unabomber exploded inside the Sacramento, California, offices of a lobbying group for the wood products industry, killing chief lobbyist Gilbert B. Murray. (Theodore Kaczynski was later sentenced to four lifetimes in prison for a series of bombings that killed three men and

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injured 29 others.)

In 2003, U.S. forces in Iraq took custody of Tariq Aziz (TAH'-rihk ah-ZEEZ'), the former Iraqi deputy prime minister. China shut down a Beijing hospital as the global death toll from SARS surpassed 260.

In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI formally began his stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church; the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said in his installation homily that as pontiff he would listen to the will of God in governing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

In 2009, Mexico shut down schools, museums, libraries and state-run theaters across its overcrowded capital in hopes of containing a deadly swine flu outbreak.

In 2013, in Bangladesh, a shoddily constructed eight-story commercial building housing garment factories collapsed, killing more than 1,100 people.

Ten years ago: The policy-setting panel of the International Monetary Fund, with a nervous eye on Greece, pledged during a meeting in Washington to address the risks posed to the global recovery from high government debt. A dozen people were killed by a tornado system that bumped down in Louisiana before plowing into Mississippi and then Alabama. Etiquette expert Elizabeth Post (granddaughter-in-law of Emily Post) died in Naples, Florida, at 89.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama marked the 10th anniversary of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, praising the nation's spying operations as the most capable in the world. The presidents of Russia and France joined other leaders at ceremonies in Yerevan commemorating the estimated 1.5 million Armenian victims of the 1916 massacre by Ottoman Turks. In a long-awaited interview about his gender identity, former Olympic champion Bruce Jenner told ABC's Diane Sawyer said that "for all intents and purposes, I am a woman."

One year ago: Avowed racist John William King was executed in Texas for the 1998 slaying of James Byrd Jr., who was chained to the back of a truck and dragged along a road outside Jasper, Texas; prosecutors said Byrd was targeted because he was black. North Korea's Kim Jong Un arrived in Russia aboard an armored train for a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said nearly 700 cases of measles had been reported in the United States so far in 2019; it was already the nation's worst year for measles since 1994. Hundreds of students and staff at two Los Angeles universities were placed under quarantine, after officials said they may have been exposed to measles and either had not been vaccinated or could not verify that they were immune.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director-producer Richard Donner is 90. Actress Shirley MacLaine is 86. Actress-singer-director Barbra Streisand is 78. Former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley is 78. Country singer Richard Sterban (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 77. Rock musician Doug Clifford (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 75. R-and-B singer Ann Peebles is 73. Former Irish Taoiseach (TEE'-shuk) Enda Kenny is 69. Actor-playwright Eric Bogosian is 67. Rock singer-musician Jack Blades (Night Ranger) is 66. Actor Michael O'Keefe is 65. Rock musician David J (Bauhaus) is 63. Actor Glenn Morshower is 61. Rock musician Billy Gould is 57. Actor-comedian Cedric the Entertainer is 56. Actor Djimon Hounsou (JEYE'-mihn OHN'-soo) is 56. Rock musician Patty Schemel is 53. Actress Stacy Haiduk is 52. Rock musician Aaron Comess (Spin Doctors) is 52. Actor Aidan Gillen is 52. Actress Melinda Clarke is 51. Actor Rory McCann is 51. Latin pop singer Alejandro Fernandez is 49. Country-rock musician Brad Morgan (Drive-By Truckers) is 49. Rock musician Brian Marshall (Creed; Alter Bridge) is 47. Actor Derek Luke is 46. Actor-producer Thad Luckinbill is 45. Actor Eric Balfour is 43. Actress Rebecca Mader is 43. Country singer Rebecca Lynn Howard is 41. Country singer Danny Gokey is 40. Actress Reagan Gomez is 40. Actor Austin Nichols is 40. Actress Sasha Barrese is 39. Contemporary Christian musician Jasen Rauch (Red) is 39. Singer Kelly Clarkson is 38. Rock singer-musician Tyson Ritter (The All-American Rejects) is 36. Country singer Carly Pearce is 30. Actor Joe Keery is 28. Actor Jack Quaid is 28. Actor Doc Shaw is 28. Actor Jordan Fisher is 26. Golfer Lydia Ko is 23.

Thought for Today: "I feel proud to be living in a country where people are not afraid to laugh at themselves and where political satire is tolerated by the government, if not the television network." — Pat Paulsen, American comedian (born 1927, died this date in 1997).

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