

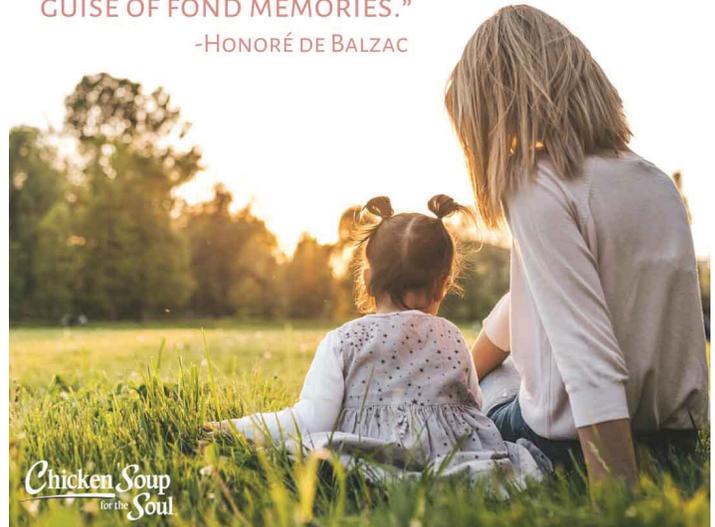
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"A MOTHER'S HAPPINESS IS LIKE A BEACON, LIGHTING UP THE FUTURE BUT REFLECTED ALSO ON THE PAST IN THE GUISE OF FOND MEMORIES."

-HONORÉ DE BALZAC



**Drive By Gift/Card
Bridal Shower Honoring
Taylor Hanson
(Bride to be of
Brandon Stanley)
Wednesday, May 27th from 5 - 7 PM
at the home of Randy & Sue Stanley
403 E 6th Ave, Groton
Social distancing will be preserved.**

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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American Legion Baseball 2020 season canceled What happens to state tournament scheduled for Groton?

The American Legion national leadership has canceled all American Legion Baseball for the 2020 season. Initially, all regional tournaments and the American Legion World Series had been canceled, but the decision to have a local program was left up to individual states. Twenty-five states had decided to cancel their programs; the other 25 had either chose to play the season or had not yet decided.

On Saturday, May 9th, after lengthy discussion, the South Dakota American Legion Athletic Commission recommended playing the 2020 season as long as local, state, and national guidance concerning COVID 19 was followed. The South Dakota American Legion Executive Committee approved their recommendation. However, based on continued concerns regarding COVID 19, The American Legion National Organization has shut down all sponsorship and all involvement in baseball for the 2020 season. The primary concern being the protection of the players, coaches, baseball officials, and the spectators across the country. This shutdown of all sponsorship means that those baseball teams that wish to continue playing 2020 season baseball shall be participating in a sporting event not sponsored, nor endorsed in any manner, by The American Legion National Organization. Those teams that decide to conduct a 2020 baseball season program will need to determine their rules, guidelines, schedules, insurance coverage, etc., for their programs as The American Legion National Organization will not provide this assistance. Since receiving the national organization's guidance, the South Dakota American Legion Executive Committee has rescinded its approval for the 2020 season.

Meanwhile Groton was suppose to host the State B American Legion Baseball Tournament this year. According to Kevin Kempel, Dept. Adjutant for the South Dakota American Legion, "It's not an easy question because next year's venues have already been identified, so the discussion becomes to push everything back a year, or have the folks schedule next year hold next year and then those schedule this year the year after. Lots of balls to balance, so it may take some investigating by the Commission before there is an answer."

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School district to start returning to normal June 1

The Groton Area School Board met in personal session Monday in the GHS Conference room. They were adequately spaced apart and took up the whole room in a U-shaped set-up.

One of the big items talked about was the budget, which may not be really decided until September. Business Manager Mike Weber said the state will not release what the per student rate will be until that time. It is usually done in June. Weber said one of the big items that could affect the budget is the ethanol plants. He said he was concerned about the valuation of the plants and how much it could affect the district's budget.

Weber estimated that the district could have a short fall of \$79,362 with a 2 percent increase in the per student rate to \$135,243 with no increase. There is also a chance the state may go with a negative 2 percent. The district will be saving some money this year with school not being in session and the district could receive up to \$65,000 in the CARES relief act, if the district can spend that much related to COVID-19.

The district is preparing to start returning to normal operations on June 1, which includes summer athletics programming with new rules being put in place.

There was some concern about graduation being held July 12, with it possibly being hot in the arena. Superintendent Joe Schwan said they had a zoom meeting with the seniors, of which 13 attended, and they decided that they wanted graduation to be as normal as possible and would be willing to put up with the heat for a short period of time. There was discussion about having graduation at the football field, but that would do away with the slide show, so that was ruled out.

The start of the football season could be interesting if the football helmets are not returned on time. They were sent in for reconditioning in January, as required annually. The plant has been shut down for some time due to COVID-19 and will not reopen until June 1. The Riddell company is "hoping" to have the helmets shipped out to colleges and high schools by August 15th.

Both principals gave a might thank you to the both Parent Advisory Committeess. All staff members received a thank you gift for their hard work during this panademic.

Bill Duncan's resignation was accepted after his 30 years of service to the Groton Area School Distirct. Kayla Duncan was hired as a full time vocal music teacher for the 2020-21 school year. Kayla Duncan's vote was approved, 4-3, with Tigh Fliehs, Deb Gengerke and Kara Pharis voting no.

One open enrollment was approved and one was denied after an executive session.

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Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

May 11, 2020

Controlled Access. Beginning on Friday, Mrs. Sombke began arranging for a very limited and controlled situation to allow for students to work with staff members to complete coursework. Staff and students have both been screened before their sessions and required to wash their hands. We've also required hands to be washed once each hour during longer work sessions and have maintained the 6 foot rule between people. We have required all teachers to work through their principals to further control and monitor access and contact between people.

Special Education ESY. Each summer we provide special education and related services to eligible students on IEPs for the purpose of preventing academic regression. This cohort of students will largely struggle with doing this work through the distance methods we've had in place for nearly two months. They are also often more at risk for illness related complications. We met with our special education staff via zoom to discuss and coordinate our plans for delivering these required services. We have chosen to deliver services during the month of July in the hopes that our situation will allow for more face-to-face contact with these students.

End of 2019-2020 School Year. Tomorrow, we'll have our seniors turn in their school-issued equipment. This week Friday and next Monday will be the turn in days for all other students. The school lunch program will run through Friday, May 22. While it has been an interesting and challenging year, we should be proud of our district's students, staff, and families for their resilience and perseverance.

Class of 2020 Graduation. After hearing feedback about concern for a potentially hot graduation on July 12, we invited all seniors to participate in a zoom discussion about what graduation should look like for them. The students present to voice their opinions indicated they want very much to have a normal – or as close to normal as possible – and are willing to deal with short-term heat.

Summer Athletics Programming.

SDHSAA Contact Rules/Team Camps. SDHSAA still currently prohibits any kind of student/athlete contact through the end of May. This ruling is set to expire along with Governor Noem's executive order. This potentially means that team camps, weight training, etc. would be permitted at the state level beginning on June 1. I don't believe that Governor Noem will be extending this executive order or issuing another one. We will work on writing the conditions that we need to put in place before allowing access to the facility while we continue to monitor the case numbers locally. I've advised the coaches that have asked that it would be wise to work on scheduling camp activities for later than usual.

Football Helmet Reconditioning. Our helmets have been sent to Riddell for reconditioning and inspection (in January) as required annually. The plant has been shut down for some time now due to COVID19. Mr. Wanner received correspondence today that the plant is reopening on June 1st and "hopes" to ship high school helmets by August 15.

Special Legislative Session. In a somewhat surprising announcement, Governor Noem has indicated that there may not be a special legislative session held in June. Rather, it was stated that this special session might be in the month of September. This, of course, could change at any time. Previously signed laws are scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2020 including the general budget bill. The Governor is continuing to push Washington for permission to use Coronavirus relief funds to replace lost state revenue.

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Principal's Report

MS/HS Building, Mrs. Sombke

May 11, 2020

1) Groton Area School District; Guidance on Student Contact

- Students/parents/guardians were contacted to arrange work times by considering the following criteria: completion deadlines-senior's last day was May 8th and were high priority, students receiving services through an IEP (Individual Educational Plan), 504, or CLP (Continuous Learning Plan) and had demonstrated the need for additional/in person services in order to be successful
- All students and staff are screened by School Nurse, Mrs. Gustafson before being allowed to have any contact with staff or other students: please see screening form
- All students and staff wear face mask, wash hands once per hour, maintain 6 ft social distance, and all surfaces are wiped/washed/disinfected after each use/between morning and afternoon groups
- Limited areas in use: only the conference rooms, library, and office conference room are being used

2) Senior Class Materials Return and Check Out Schedule:

- Seniors/parents/guardians will return items to the GHS Gym, following all COVID19 safety and social distancing procedures

Class of 2020 Materials Return and Check Out	
Tuesday, May 12, 2020	
Time	Last Names Beginning with...
9:00 - 9:30 AM	A-D
9:30 - 10:00 AM	F-G
10:00 - 10:30 AM	H-J
10:30 - 11:00 AM	K-P
11:00 - 11:30 AM	R-S
11:30 - 12:00 PM	T-Z

3) Grades 6-11 Class Materials Return and Check Out Schedule:

Materials Return and Check Out			
Friday, May 15, 2020		Monday, May 18, 2020	
Time	Last Names	Time	Last Names
9:00 - 9:30 AM	Aalseth-Bahr	9:00 - 9:30 AM	Krause-Larson
9:30 - 10:00 AM	Barrera-Bonn	9:30 - 10:00 AM	Lehman-Loeschke
10:00 - 10:30 AM	Brooks-Cunningham	10:00 - 10:30 AM	Lord-Mitchell
10:30 - 11:00 AM	Cutler-Dunbar	10:30 - 11:00 AM	Monson-Olson
11:00 - 11:30 AM	Dunker-Feser	11:00 - 11:30 AM	Osterman-Pharis
11:30 - 12:00 PM	Fjeldheim-Frasier	11:30 - 12:00 PM	Pigors-Sandness
1:00 - 1:30 PM	Freeman-Gleason	1:00 - 1:30 PM	Say-Sippel
1:30 - 2:00 PM	Gonsoir-Heathcote	1:30 - 2:00 PM	Slaight-Thorn
2:00 - 2:30 PM	Heilman-Hubbs	2:00 - 2:30 PM	Thurston-Wambach
2:30 - 3:00 PM	Imrie-Johnson	2:30 - 3:00 PM	Warrington-Wilson
3:00 - 3:30 PM	Jones-Kramer	3:00 - 3:30 PM	Wipf-Zoellner

- Materials will not be collected on any bus routes
- Final Lunch Delivery Day: Wednesday, May 20th

4) SDCNA Action Plan: MS/HS School Success Action Plan

- May 19th: ½ day for certified teaching staff, ½ day for paraprofessional staff
- Certified Staff: Will receive training using the new Lesson Plan Template "Planbook" which will enable staff to create lesson plans which: meet state content standards, use identified learning targets, incorporate evidence-based instructional strategies, include formative assessments, and demonstrate differentiation to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, all lesson plans will be horizontally and vertically aligned throughout the curriculum spectrum for grades 6-12
- Certified Staff will have the opportunity to use Planbook in the "I do, We do, and You do" model during their training time
- Paraprofessional Staff: Will receive specific to support each staff members knowledge in the following areas: Paraprofessional ethics, teaming, effective and professional communication, teacher/para relationship, confidentiality, positive professional behaviors, and positively responding to challenging behavior
- Stephanie Wiedeman: Stephanie will be "joining/instructing" staff via zoom conference on May 19th
- Stephanie had also completed the Teacher Observation, Student Observation, School Climate, and School Culture Observation part of our SDCNA, and is very familiar with the overall SDCNA process

5) Beyond Zero Tolerance: Finding What Works in School Discipline

- Last Day of Training, May 12th @ USD Sanford School of Medicine via Zoom
- Tova Eggerstedt: Instructing Facilitator/Department of Pediatrics
- "What Kind of School Do We Want to Have: Leading Question which we continue to "refer/use as a measure" as we decide and choose practices which will guide students
- Will present more complete summary at the June meeting after all information has been collected

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Groton Area School District

Guidance on Student Contact – May 1, 2020

On April 28, 2020 Governor Kristi Noem released a plan to begin bringing South Dakota “Back to Normal.” The plan includes allowing schools to allow limited in-person instruction to “check in” before the school year ends. On a case-by-case basis, school principals in collaboration with instructional staff may allow in-person instructional sessions within the following parameters established to minimize risk for students and staff members alike.

Specific and limited locations are being selected based on proximity to bathrooms for hand-washing and practicality of cleaning/sanitizing following and between use.

Elementary Locations

Office Conference Room, Lower Pod Commons

MS/HS Locations

Library, Library Conference Room, Office Conference Room

Required Precautionary Safety Measures

1. Students and staff members will be required to wear face masks during the instructional time.
2. Students and staff will be screened prior to admission for the instructional time to include temperature checks and certification that each is asymptomatic. Temperatures of 99.6 or above will exclude any participant (student or staff) from attendance.
3. Students and staff will be required to wash their hands prior to admission and a minimum of once each hour for the duration of the work time.
4. Six foot social distancing limits are in place and need to be maintained.
5. Work stations, desks, chairs, and any other surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected following each use.

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General Fund Balance History

Budget Comments	Year End	Expenditure Budget	Actual Expenditures	Exp/Bud %	Revenue Budget	Actual Revenue	Rev/Bud %	Fund Balance	FB %	Student Enroll.	Certified Staff	Square Miles	Comp ACT
	'08	4,040,939.00	3,820,365.48	0.945	3,802,172.00	3,765,847.67	0.990	1,218,457.88	31.9	624.00	51.75	785	22.3
	'09	4,260,887.00	3,966,179.28	0.931	3,832,949.00	3,876,920.06	1.011	1,129,198.66	28.5	626.00	52.75	785	23.5
ARRA, SB91	'10	4,254,235.00	3,942,528.03	0.927	4,072,291.00	4,211,943.76	1.034	1,398,614.39	35.5	623.00	54.45	871	23.1
	'11	4,313,824.00	3,985,760.70	0.924	3,912,373.00	3,991,360.30	1.020	1,404,213.99	35.2	612.00	54.05	871	22.8
8.6% Gov cut	'12	4,028,892.00	3,666,644.45	0.910	3,743,265.00	3,866,638.53	1.033	1,604,208.07	43.8	591.00	51.91	871	24.0
	'13	4,175,803.00	3,814,595.97	0.913	3,714,180.00	3,908,841.75	1.052	1,698,453.85	44.5	588.00	49.91	871	22.6
SB91 items in GF	'14	4,578,300.00	4,156,844.84	0.908	3,995,856.00	4,081,148.87	1.021	1,622,757.88	39.0	581.00	49.77	871	22.6
	'15	4,575,714.00	4,236,962.33	0.926	4,003,067.00	4,181,748.25	1.045	1,567,543.80	37.0	596.00	48.75	871	22.6
	'16	4,719,838.00	4,308,652.85	0.913	4,167,437.00	4,283,531.74	1.028	1,542,422.69	35.8	582.00	47.75	871	22.9
Governor's Plan	'17	5,020,123.00	4,818,605.99	0.960	4,434,298.00	4,671,571.79	1.054	1,395,388.49	29.0	589.00	49.00	871	21.9
Show Choir Major	'18	5,322,308.00	5,033,221.09	0.946	4,690,523.00	4,535,461.34	0.967	897,628.74	17.8	568.00	49.00	871	22.0
w/500K transfer	'19	5,268,301.00	4,947,209.61	0.939	4,973,177.00	5,229,727.13	1.052	1,180,146.26	23.9	578.87	48.00	871	22.4
w/500K transfer	'20	5,326,192.00	5,045,000.00	0.947	4,994,844.00	5,045,000.00	1.010	1,180,146.26	23.4	585.00	46.00	871	
			3-year Average	0.948		3-year Average	1.024						

Capital Outlay Fund Balance History

Budget Comments	Year End	Expenditure Budget	Actual Expenditures	Exp/Bud %	Revenue Budget	Actual Revenue	Rev/Bud %	Fund Balance	FB %	Student Enroll.	Certified Staff	Square Miles	Comp ACT
	'08	661,000.00	579,907.80	0.877	674,586.00	664,030.43	0.984	378,741.82	65.3	624.00	51.75	785	22.3
	'09	722,450.00	570,125.90	0.789	777,000.00	765,640.24	0.985	574,256.16	100.7	626.00	52.75	785	23.5
SB91 use CO	'10	1,059,750.00	968,418.09	0.914	932,150.00	947,482.79	1.016	553,320.86	57.1	623.00	54.45	871	23.1
	'11	1,101,225.00	1,077,262.93	0.978	999,324.00	1,001,804.88	1.002	477,862.81	44.4	612.00	54.05	871	22.8
8.6% Gov cut	'12	1,026,345.00	968,201.14	0.943	1,066,950.00	1,083,298.84	1.015	592,960.51	61.2	591.00	51.91	871	24.0
	'13	1,161,645.00	1,093,583.25	0.941	1,076,750.00	1,092,798.38	1.015	592,175.64	54.2	588.00	49.91	871	22.6
SB91 items to GF	'14	1,126,385.00	1,001,948.60	0.890	1,097,639.00	1,082,447.51	0.986	672,674.55	67.1	581.00	49.77	871	22.6
	'15	1,152,652.00	1,076,249.68	0.934	1,105,296.00	1,118,139.77	1.012	714,564.64	66.4	596.00	48.75	871	22.6
	'16	1,146,493.00	985,721.02	0.860	1,059,700.00	1,073,624.60	1.013	802,468.22	81.4	582.00	47.75	871	22.9
Governor's Plan	'17	1,128,443.00	1,039,463.92	0.921	1,030,650.00	1,040,009.45	1.009	803,013.75	77.3	589.00	49.00	871	21.9
	'18	1,486,180.00	1,459,415.62	0.982	1,282,651.00	1,145,835.95	0.893	489,434.08	33.5	568.00	49.00	871	22.0
w/500K transfer	'19	1,792,950.00	1,696,324.82	0.946	2,726,718.00	2,779,826.68	1.019	1,572,935.94	92.7	578.87	48.00	871	22.4
w/500K transfer	'20	1,959,145.00	1,858,000.00	0.948	1,720,032.00	1,730,000.00	1.006	1,444,935.94	77.8	585.00	46.00	871	
			3-year Average	0.950		3-year Average	0.974						

Special Ed Fund Balance History

Budget Comments	Year End	Expenditure Budget	Actual Expenditures	Exp/Bud %	Revenue Budget	Actual Revenue	Rev/Bud %	Fund Balance	FB %	Student Enroll.	Certified Staff	Square Miles	Comp ACT
	'08	693,794.00	598,151.26	0.862	578,890.00	573,992.93	0.992	101,031.07	16.9	624.00	51.75	785	22.3
	'09	750,167.00	615,074.50	0.820	647,113.00	641,236.51	0.991	127,193.08	20.7	626.00	52.75	785	23.5
ARRA funds	'10	830,626.00	689,133.45	0.830	729,844.00	759,562.52	1.041	197,622.15	28.7	623.00	54.45	871	23.1
IDEA to coop	'11	684,787.00	585,163.82	0.855	593,832.00	595,945.37	1.004	208,403.70	35.6	612.00	54.05	871	22.8
ARRA ends	'12	639,682.00	569,547.68	0.890	539,850.00	537,564.88	0.996	176,420.90	31.0	591.00	51.91	871	24.0
	'13	654,057.00	531,223.80	0.812	564,100.00	571,330.10	1.013	216,527.20	40.8	588.00	49.91	871	22.6
Sesquestration	'14	716,621.00	611,598.17	0.853	600,950.00	626,593.92	1.043	231,522.95	37.9	581.00	49.77	871	22.6
	'15	752,362.00	663,841.19	0.882	639,026.00	642,339.72	1.005	210,021.48	31.6	596.00	48.75	871	22.6
	'16	822,231.00	764,958.42	0.930	669,700.00	678,500.72	1.013	123,563.78	16.2	582.00	47.75	871	22.9
Governor's Plan	'17	879,333.00	818,261.89	0.931	754,250.00	769,975.03	1.021	75,276.92	9.2	589.00	49.00	871	21.9
	'18	928,526.00	851,751.37	0.917	871,050.00	788,780.68	0.906	12,306.23	1.4	568.00	49.00	871	22.0
	'19	895,557.00	822,885.84	0.919	920,910.00	1,004,018.75	1.090	193,439.14	23.5	578.87	48.00	871	22.4
	'20	928,409.00	856,000.00	0.922	918,150.00	924,000.00	1.006	261,439.14	30.5	585.00	46.00	871	
			3-year Average	0.922		3-year Average	1.006						

OF-Fund Balance History.xls

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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The news is very good, indeed. Everything's down

We're at 1,354,000 cases in the US. We're staying on our downward trajectory, the fourth consecutive day of decline; and we're below 20,000 new cases for the first time, by my reckoning, since March 29. NY leads with 342,317 cases, a decrease in new cases for the fourth consecutive day and the first day below 2000 new cases since March 29. NJ has 139,945 cases, which is down for the third consecutive day. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: IL – 79,123, MA – 78,462, CA – 69,297, PA – 60,557, MI – 47,526, FL – 40,974, TX – 40,973, and CT – 33,765. These ten states account for 69% of US cases. 3 more states have over 30,000 cases, 3 more states have over 20,000 cases, 11 more have over 10,000, 9 more + DC over 5000, 9 more + PR and GU over 1000, 5 more over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

Here's the latest on movement in new case reports. Those with substantial numbers of cases which are not showing much change include WA, TX, IL, NE, CA, UT, WI, and FL. States where new case reports are increasing include AZ, AR, OR, MS, MI, ME, SD, and AL. States where new case reports are decreasing include MA, NV, NY, TN, NH, HI, NJ, and IN. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 80,542 deaths in the US. Today the number of new deaths held steady after a four-day decline. NY has 26,878, NJ has 9310, MA has 5108, MI has 4584, PA has 3846, IL has 3480, CT has 3008, CA has 2820, and LA has 2242. All of these states are below 200 new deaths reported, and most are below 100. This is a huge step. There are 6 more states over 1000 deaths, 7 more over 500, 16 more + DC and PR over 100, and 12 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

There is an issue circulating on the interwebs we really need to talk about, and today's the day: counting Covid-19 deaths. I am hearing all kinds of wild stories about how everything is being attributed to Covid-19, how doctors are being encouraged or pressured to record Covid-19 on death certificates that clearly have nothing to do with it. What I am not hearing is evidence this is actually happening beyond "I know a guy who says" Which, to be clear, is only evidence if the guy comes forward with his own story and credible evidence to support it. All these second-hand stories from people who've heard from doctors that this thing is happening are not useful unless you present evidence to go along with your hearsay. And we're not seeing that. At all. Physicians treating actual Covid-19 patients in actual hospitals with cases will tell you they don't have time to waste falsifying death certificates and that committing Medicare fraud (which is what this would be) is not on their to-do list for the day. The folks who oversee Medicare fraud are not seeing evidence doctors are doing this either—and their full-time job is looking for fraud. If you're going to allege criminal activity, you need to provide evidence. So far, there's none of that. This is not to say no one's ever gotten a death certificate attribution wrong, just that there is no evidence at all to support these allegations of a widespread, systematic effort to misrepresent the size of the crisis.

We've had this part of the talk before, but to repeat, it is very clear we are, instead, fairly seriously undercounting Covid-19 deaths. By a lot. If I ever find time away from debunking crazy conspiracy stuff, I'm planning to discuss how we can be so sure of this; but for today, be aware that we're very sure we're missing a lot of these deaths in the official counts. The problem is certainly larger than we realize at the moment, and it is undercounting, not inflated death figures.

Something interesting that's showed up is a new crowdsourcing phone app that enables tracking the spread of this disease in real time. People simply check off symptoms they are experiencing. No personal information is collected other than zip code, so privacy concerns are largely circumvented. The app was tested among 2.5 million people in the US, UK, and Sweden for about a month in late March and April,

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and it enabled researchers to predict with nearly 80% accuracy whether a person was likely to have Covid-19 based on age, sex, and symptoms. The symptoms most useful in tracking are loss of taste or smell, persistent cough, extreme fatigue, fever, muscle pain, and loss of appetite.

The symptom most associated with later positive tests was loss of taste and smell, followed by fatigue and muscle pain. Fever and cough, the symptoms most considered reliable indicators, came in fourth and fifth on the list. If health officials act on information provided by the app, they can encourage participants to self-isolate until they can be tested. Identifying people in early stages of infection who are unknowingly spreading the virus would be a significant help in limiting transmission. People who are really sick are not the ones spreading infection for the most part because they are staying home; it is those with these early, milder symptoms who are.

It is believed that this app, if more widely adopted, could provide public health authorities an inexpensive tool for detecting outbreaks before things get away from them, preparing for a spike of infections, and guide the allocation of scarce resources like ventilators and PPE for medical workers. As outbreaks subside, it can guide decisions about easing lockdowns and other restrictions.

One drawback is that users tend to be younger, so this may not be ideal for charting progression among elderly people. And of course, it is not a replacement for adequate testing in tracking spread. But until testing is available, this may be a help.

Researchers are looking for ways to use the app to gauge whether preexisting conditions or genetic factors might increase risks for infected persons. In the meanwhile, it may prove useful in tracking outbreaks as we attempt to bring this pandemic under control.

I am thinking today about losses—of opportunities for youth with things like another baseball season or another year of summer camp, of milestone celebrations like graduations and birthdays and anniversaries, of chances to come together for funerals and reunions and family gatherings, of time with loved ones. We are all suffering such losses unless we're endangering ourselves and one another by roaring on into situations which present risk. I am also thinking about economic losses, not just the obvious ones like job loss and lost business, but the money being spent on testing and hospitalization and replacing income. When we all are suffering, it helps to be kind to others who may be suffering in ways not immediately evident to the observer. Please pay attention to those around you, cut them some slack when they seem irritable, and set aside your own personal feelings of grievance to show compassion and caring for your fellow human beings. You only get one chance to get this right. Go there. Please.

Stay healthy. We'll talk again tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Apr. 28	Apr. 29	Apr. 30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4
Minnesota	4,181	4,644	5,136	5,730	6,228	6,663	7,234
Nebraska	3,374	3,784	4,281	4,838	5,326	5,659	6,083
Montana	451	451	453	453	455	455	457
Colorado	14,316	14,758	15,284	15,768	16,225	16,635	16,907
Wyoming	396	404	415	420	429	435	444
North Dakota	991	1,033	1,067	1,107	1,153	1,191	1,225
South Dakota	2,313	2,373	2,449	2,525	2,588	2,631	2,668
United States	1,012,583	1,040,488	1,070,032	1,104,161	1,133,069	1,157,945	1,180,634
US Deaths	58,355	60,999	63,019	65,068	66,385	67,680	68,934
Minnesota	+365	+463	+492	+594	+498	+435	+571
Nebraska	+16	+410	+497	+557	+488	+333	+424
Montana	+2	0	+2	0	+2	0	+2
Colorado	+437	+442	+526	+484	+457	+410	+272
Wyoming	+7	+8	+11	+5	+9	+6	+9
North Dakota	+49	+42	+34	+40	+46	+38	+34
South Dakota	+68	+60	+76	+76	+63	+43	+37
United States	+24,394	+27,905	+29,544	+34,129	+28,908	+24,876	+22,689
US Deaths	+2,100	+2,644	+2,020	+2,049	+1,317	+1,295	+1,254
	May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8	May 9	May 10	May 11
Minnesota	7,851	8,579	9,365	10,088	10,790	11,271	11,799
Nebraska	6,438	6,771	7,190	7,831	8,234	8,315	8,572
Montana	456	456	456	458	458	458	459
Colorado	17,364	17,830	18,371	18,827	19,375	19,375	19,879
Wyoming	452	479	483	490	495	504	510
North Dakota	1266	1,323	1,371	1,425	1,464	1,491	1,518
South Dakota	2,721	2,779	2,905	3,144	3,393	3,517	3,614
United States	1,204,475	1,228,609	1,256,972	1,286,833	1,309,541	1,329,225	1,347,388
US Deaths	71,078	73,431	75,670	77,280	78,794	79,525	80,397
Minnesota	+617	+728	+786	+723	+702	+481	+528
Nebraska	+355	+333	+419	+741	+403	+81	+257
Montana	+8	0	0	+2	0	0	+1
Colorado	+457	+466	+541	+456	+548	-----	+504
Wyoming	+8	+27	+4	+7	+5	+9	+6
North Dakota	+41	+57	+48	+54	+39	+27	+27
South Dakota	+53	+58	+126	+239	+249	+124	+97
United States	+23,841	+24,134	+28,363	+29,861	+22,708	+19,684	+18,163
US Deaths	+2,144	+2,353	+2,239	+1,610	1,514	+731	+872

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May 11th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from Dept. of Health Lab records

Deuel and Lawrence counties have transitioned to no community spread on the community impact map. Brown County has seven new positive cases while Lincoln County has three, Minnehaha 85, Meade 1, Pennington 1 and Todd 1.

Brown County has a total of 127 cases, 76 of which are DemKota employees.

North Dakota has a new death with a total of 36. South Dakota has 34 total deaths to date.

South Dakota is still anticipating a statewide peak of the second week in June.

Brown County:

Active Cases: 78 Recovered: 49 Total Positive: 127 Ever Hospitalized: 4 Deaths: 0 Negative Tests: 778

South Dakota:

Positive: +97 (3,614 total) (28 more than yesterday)

Negative: +587 (20,964 total)

Hospitalized: +2 (263 total) - 78 currently hospitalized (1 more than yesterday)

Deaths: 34 total

Recovered: +40 (2187 total)

Active Cases: 1393 (57 more than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett 18, Brule 69, Butte +1 (81), Campbell 14, Custer +2 (66), Dewey 63, Edmunds 29, Gregory +2 (37), Haakon 18, Hanson +1 (35), Harding 1, Jackson 13, Jones 6, Kingsburg +3 (90), Mellette 19, Perkins 8, Potter +1 (38), Tripp +1 (71), unassigned +9 (835).

Brookings: +1 recovered (14 of 14 recovered)

Brown: +7 positive, +1 recovered (49 of 127 recovered)

Codington: +1 recovered (15 of 15 recovered)

Lincoln: +3 positive, +2 recovered (130 of 191 recovered)

Meade: +1 positive (4 total)

Minnehaha: +85 positive, +28 recovered (1771 of 2952 recovered)

Moody: +1 recovered (5 of 14 recovered)

Pennington: +1 positive (27 total)

Roberts: +2 recovered (8 of 14 recovered)

Stanley: -1 (transferred to another county) positive (8 total)

Todd: +1 positive (10 total)

Tuner: +1 recovered (16 of 18 recovered)

Union: +2 recovered (27 of 53 recovered)

Yankton: +1 recovered (24 of 30 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases (added: Brookings and Codington): Bon Homme, Brookings, Buffalo, Codington, Corson, Deuel, Douglas, Faulk, Hamlin, Hand, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lawrence, Marshall, McPherson, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Sanborn, Sully, Walworth.

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 2,145 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 27 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,518. NDDoH reports one new death.

State & private labs have reported 47,014 total tests & 45,496 negatives.

846 ND patients are recovered.

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	2	1	48
Beadle	21	19	215
Bennett	0	0	18
Bon Homme	4	4	128
Brookings	14	14	423
Brown	127	49	778
Brule	0	0	69
Buffalo	1	1	20
Butte	0	0	81
Campbell	0	0	14
Charles Mix	5	4	122
Clark	2	1	64
Clay	9	6	190
Codington	15	15	562
Corson	1	1	25
Custer	0	0	66
Davison	7	5	358
Day	10	4	74
Deuel	1	1	92
Dewey	0	0	63
Douglas	1	1	37
Edmunds	0	0	29
Fall River	2	1	74
Faulk	1	1	24
Grant	3	0	65
Gregory	0	0	37
Haakon	0	0	18
Hamlin	2	2	82
Hand	1	1	29
Hanson	0	0	35
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	15	10	294
Hutchinson	3	3	117

Hyde	1	1	20
Jackson	0	0	13
Jerauld	6	5	42
Jones	0	0	6
Kingsbury	0	0	90
Lake	5	4	169
Lawrence	9	9	229
Lincoln	191	130	1786
Lyman	3	2	56
Marshall	1	1	61
McCook	4	3	128
McPherson	1	1	25
Meade	4	1	345
Mellette	0	0	19
Miner	1	1	23
Minnehaha	2952	1771	9872
Moody	14	5	120
Oglala Lakota	1	1	57
Pennington	27	10	1130
Perkins	0	0	8
Potter	0	0	38
Roberts	14	8	156
Sanborn	3	3	42
Spink	4	3	128
Stanley	8	7	46
Sully	1	1	16
Todd	10	4	109
Tripp	0	0	71
Turner	18	16	173
Union	53	27	283
Walworth	5	5	61
Yankton	30	24	542
Ziebach	1	0	13
Unassigned****	0	0	835

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

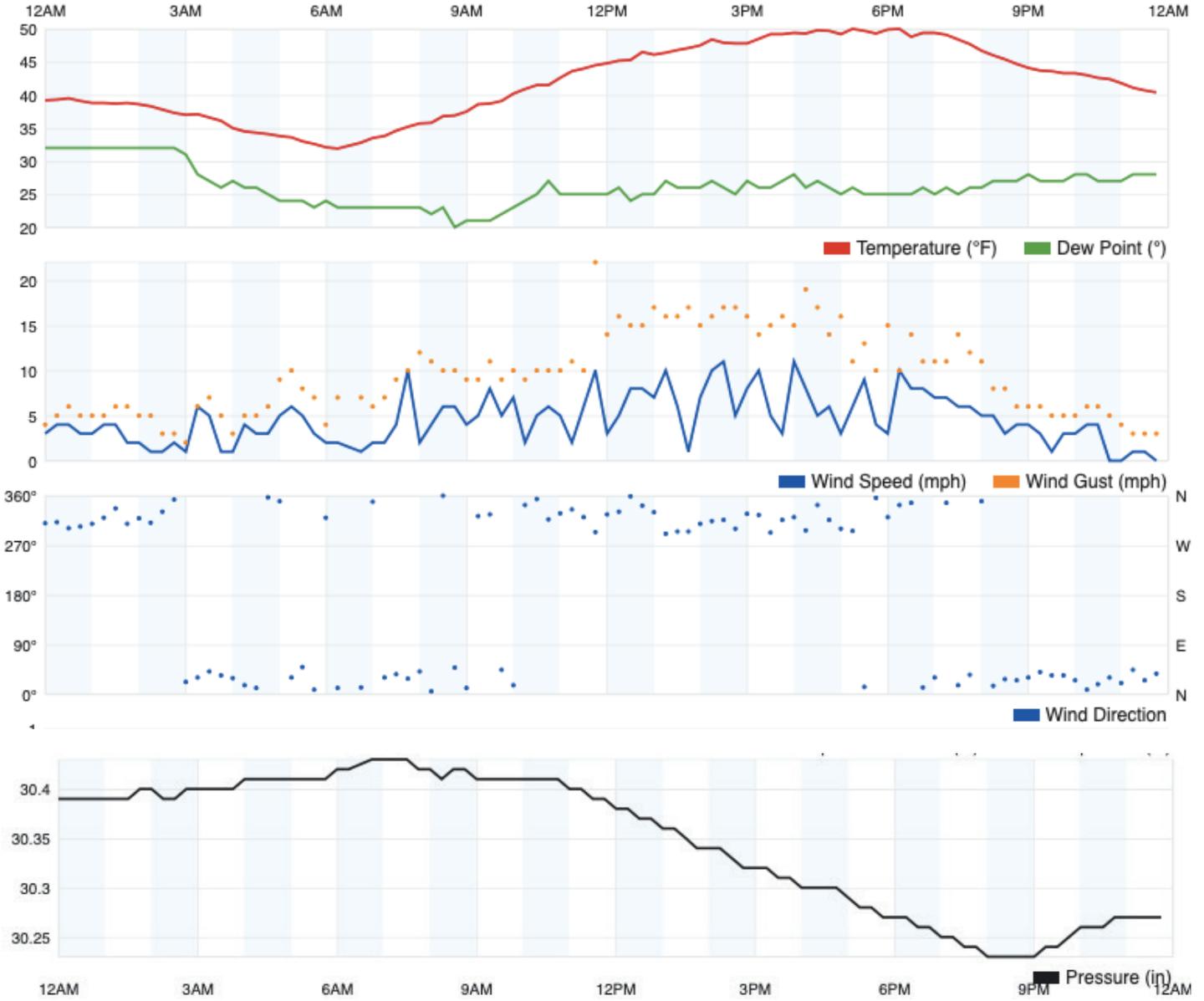
Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1632	17
Male	1982	17

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	335	0
20-29 years	636	0
30-39 years	843	0
40-49 years	680	1
50-59 years	612	4
60-69 years	329	5
70-79 years	85	5
80+ years	94	19

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Frost then
Partly Sunny

High: 54 °F

Tonight



30% → 70%

Chance
Showers then
Showers
Likely

Low: 43 °F

Wednesday



Showers
Likely and
Breezy

High: 60 °F

Wednesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 45 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 66 °F

Today

Morning frost East.
Showers
developing west,
especially by
midday.



Highs: 50s

Tonight

Rain chances
spreading
eastward.



Lows: 40s

Wednesday

Periods of
showers, ending
west to east late.



Highs: 60s

LOUDY with RAIN

Slightly Warmer Temps Returning!

A slow warm-up to near normal temperatures along with drier conditions will arrive for Thursday.

weather.gov/abr

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Graphic Created
5/12/2020 5:36 AM



Rain chances will be on the increase today, especially across western and central South Dakota. Cloudy skies with showers developing by midday across the Missouri Valley will hold temps down on the cooler side to around 50 this afternoon. Some brighter skies along with drier conditions east will lead to slightly warmer conditions. Showers will spread east tonight through Wednesday. Temps will remain cool through midweek but a warmer, drier day is expected on Thursday.

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Today in Weather History

May 12, 1984: An F3 tornado wiped out seven farms, crippled fifteen others, killed livestock and scattered several cars and machinery in its path. The tornado first touched down seven miles north and one mile east of Clark and moved southeast through the southwestern sections of Henry until it dissipated at Grover in Codrington County. The path of destruction began on a farm where two barns, a steel grain bin, and a pole barn were demolished, and machinery was damaged. As the tornado moved further southeast, it struck the southwest sections of Henry and split into two tornadoes that moved in two different directions. One went to the northeast that inflicted no damaged and dissipated while the other went southeast that continued its destruction path to Grover. Small hail, accumulation to fifteen inches deep, was experienced at Henry and tornado damage included broken windows, numerous homes, and three trailer homes were demolished. Along the path, 80 power poles and several miles of power lines were lost, affecting the power to over 1,000 people. A small plane, southwest of Garden City, was wrapped around a pole.

1760: Ben Franklin was the first person to identify nor'easters. In a letter on this date to Alexander Small of London, Franklin described an experience that happened to him in November 1743 when storm clouds in Philadelphia blocked his view of an eclipse. Franklin assumed that the storm had blown in from the northeast because the surface winds at his location were from that direction. He was puzzled to find out later that his brother had viewed the eclipse with no problems and that the storm had arrived in Boston four hours later. The information caused Franklin to surmise correctly that the storm had moved from southwest to northeast. [Click HERE](#) to read the letter to Alexander Small.

1886: An estimated F4 tornado touched down in Vermilion County near Armstrong, Illinois, and passed between Alvin and Rossville before moving into Indiana. At least five houses were destroyed, two of which were entirely swept away. Three people were killed. Five other strong tornadoes occurred across Illinois that day: two near Mt. Carroll, one near Odell, one near Jacksonville, and one in Iroquois County.

1934 - A dust storm darkened skies from Oklahoma to the Atlantic coast. (David Ludlum)

1971 - Duststorms suddenly reduced visibilities to near zero on Interstate Highway 10 near Casa Grande AZ. Chain reaction accidents involving cars and trucks resulted, killing seven persons. (The Weather Channel)

1972 - In Texas, A cloudburst dumped sixteen inches of rain north of New Braunfels sending a thirty foot wall of water down Blueders Creek into the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers washing away people, houses and automobiles. The flood claimed 18 lives and caused more than twenty million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - A late season snowstorm struck the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies. The storm produced 46 inches of snow at Coal Creek Canyon, located near Boulder. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A heat wave persisted in central California. Afternoon highs of 100 degrees at Fresno CA and 102 degrees at Sacramento CA were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the western U.S. Eight cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Pendleton OR with a high of 92 degrees and Phoenix AZ with a reading of 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms associated with a low pressure system stalled over New York State drenched Portland ME with 4.50 inches of rain in 24 hours. Rains of 5 to 7 inches soaked the state of Maine over a four day period causing 1.3 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Texas and the Central Gulf Coast States into Missouri and Illinois. Thunderstorms spawned six tornadoes, including one which injured four persons at Doloroso MS. Thunderstorms also produced hail three inches in diameter west of Vicksburg MS, and wind gusts to 83 mph in southern Illinois, north of Vevay Park and at the Coles County Airport. High winds and heavy rain caused 1.6 million dollars crop damage in Calhoun County IL, and in southeastern Louisiana, Saint Joseph was deluged with eight inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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TAKE CARE, GOD!

Little Margie was saying her prayers before getting into bed. Her mother stood at her door and listened as she honestly expressed her faith and dependence on God:

" Dear Lord, You know I really had a bad day. Thanks for getting me through everything OK. I don't know what I would have done without You. So I really want You to take care of Yourself - cause if anything happens to You, I don't know what I'd do!"

Being dependent is sometimes difficult. It is normal and natural to want to be self-reliant, believing that we can do all things in our own strength and wisdom. We take much time and go to great lengths to prepare ourselves to meet and overcome the demands of life. But, in the end, when facing the real difficulties of life, we know that sooner or later, we'll need God's help.

How fortunate for those who know they can be mighty because God is mighty. Our God who created the universe has arms that can reach us wherever we are or whatever our situation may be. Nothing is beyond Him, nothing escapes Him, nothing overwhelms Him, and nothing frightens Him. If it concerns us, it concerned Him first. And, He can do something about "it!"

God will make us equal to every challenge He brings into our life. Remember the words of the Apostle Paul: "Our sufficiency is from God!"

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know when we need to be convinced that we can't make it without You. Help us to see You at work in our lives and make us depend on You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 2 Corinthians 3:5 It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God.

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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
 - **CANCELLED** 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

US judge says new pipelines need more review

By **MATTHEW BROWN** Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A U.S. judge on Monday revised a recent court ruling that threatened to hold up thousands of utility projects crossing streams and wetlands, but left in place a requirement for new oil and gas pipelines to undergo further environmental review.

The ruling from U.S. District Judge Brian Morris means the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can again use a disputed permitting program to approve electrical lines and other utility work through streams and wetlands. Maintenance and repair work on existing pipelines also would be allowed, but not construction of new pipelines.

"We got what we asked for, so from our position this is great," said attorney Jared Margolis with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Constructing pipelines through rivers, streams and wetlands without analyzing the impacts on imperiled species is unconscionable."

The Army Corps program, known as Nationwide Permit 12, was blocked by Morris last month. In a lawsuit over the Keystone XL pipeline, the judge sided with environmentalists who argued companies were using the program to skirt water protection laws and ignore the cumulative harm from thousands of stream and wetlands crossings.

Attorneys for utility industries and the government said Morris' original ruling hampered thousands of construction projects across the U.S. They urged him to reconsider.

In response, Morris agreed to limit the scope of his ruling but stopped short of a full reversal. He said the Army Corps "committed serious error" in failing to adequately consult with wildlife agencies before reauthorizing the permitting program in 2017.

"To allow the Corps to continue to authorize new oil and gas pipeline construction could seriously injure protected species and critical habitat," Morris wrote.

A spokeswoman for the gas industry said the ruling would quickly be appealed.

"Arbitrarily singling out certain new projects only prolongs the highly disruptive nature of this order," said Amy Conway with the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America.

She said the permit program allowed projects to be reviewed efficiently "with minimal environmental impacts."

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.

Since Nationwide Permit 12 was renewed three years ago it has been used roughly 38,000 times, according to federal officials.

Army Corps spokesman Doug Garmin referred questions to the Justice Department, which declined to comment.

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.

South Dakota Gov. Noem, tribes in virus checkpoints standoff

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem appeared Monday for a legal confrontation with two Native American Indian tribes over highway checkpoints intended to keep the coronavirus away from their reservations.

The issue pits an ambitious governor who has taken a mostly hands-off approach to restrictions on daily life during the pandemic against tribes who say her actions jeopardize their members. And it's the latest

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flare-up in a relationship that has been tense since Noem took office in 2018, most notably in a longstanding conflict over construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

The Cheyenne River Sioux, in northern South Dakota, and the Oglala Lakota Sioux, in the southwest corner of the state, began their roadblocks in April. Both tribes cited the threat of the virus, combined with their vulnerable populations and poor medical facilities, as urgent reasons to control access.

On Friday, Noem gave the tribes 48 hours to dismantle the checkpoints and said the state would sue if they didn't. Both tribes said over the weekend the checkpoints would stand on their reservations, which range from 3,500 to 4,000 square miles in size — larger than some states.

"We will not apologize for being an island of safety in a sea of uncertainty and death," Cheyenne River Sioux chairman Harold Frazier said in a statement.

He described a health care system on the reservation with eight hospital beds and six ventilators, saying that the infection could "spread like wildfire" if they weren't vigilant.

The tribes say they are still allowing essential businesses onto the reservations and said the checkpoints were set up to keep out tourists or other visitors who could be carrying coronavirus infections. The reservations are collectively home to about 30,000 people.

Oglala Sioux president Julian Bear Runner called the state's approach to the coronavirus pandemic "ineffective," pointing to a spike in confirmed cases in the state after a mass testing event last week at a hot spot.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs sent a memo to tribes last month saying that they could restrict access to roads on tribal land only after they had consulted and reached an agreement with whoever owns the road. At least one other tribe, the Crow Nation of Montana, set up roadblocks to control reservation access amid coronavirus fears. Those have caused no issues with the state since they began in late March.

The South Dakota tribes said they discussed the plan with state officials last month and didn't receive objections from the governor's office until Friday. They said they are allowing essential traffic through the highways that cross the reservation.

Noem disputes that. She said the required consultation and agreements never happened, and she's been getting complaints from travelers, business, ranchers and state agencies that they are having difficulty passing the checkpoints. She said she had been talking with the tribes for weeks in hopes of resolving the issue.

"We need to continue to see those essential services move through the checkpoints," Noem said. "We need to be able to get ranchers to their cattle, people to their property, and to make sure that we're allowing people who want to travel through the area to continue to do so and not to be stopped and turned around."

The governor said she hoped she could reach a resolution with the tribes, but also said she didn't think the checkpoints on state and federal highways were a "good idea." She didn't give any update Monday on the timing of any legal action.

Nathan Sanderson, president of the South Dakota Retailers Association, said he reached out to the governor's office after several stores in and around the Cheyenne River Reservation said they were having a hard time getting deliveries because of the checkpoints.

Sanderson said he wasn't aware of any deliveries being turned around at the checkpoints, but said they had caused some companies to stop making deliveries to the stores.

Noem's uncomfortable relationship with tribes dates to her first year in office, in 2018. Noem, mindful of the tumultuous, costly and sometimes violent demonstrations in neighboring North Dakota over the Dakota Access pipeline, pushed the Legislature to pass laws that heightened penalties for violent protest against the Keystone XL pipeline.

Though portions of the laws were tossed out by a court, Noem successfully pushed through modified versions earlier this year.

Pending construction on the Keystone XL in coming months may be one reason the roadblocks are becoming an issue. The highways that the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe are monitoring connect to several potential construction sites of the proposed pipeline route, which skirts tribal lands. Noem's office didn't

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immediately respond to a question of whether the Keystone project is a factor.

Remí Bald Eagle, a spokesman for the tribe, said it has a policy of not allowing vehicles from any oil company on the reservation and with the checkpoints set up, they would stop those vehicles.

Bear Runner, the Oglala Sioux leader, asked Noem in an April 23 letter to block Keystone construction during the pandemic.

State Sen. Troy Heinert, a Democrat from Mission, said Noem's ultimatum threatens to worsen the state's relationship with tribes.

Several lawmakers who represent Native American communities wrote to Noem over the weekend criticizing her ultimatum and saying they could have set up a conversation that took into account the history, culture and protocols for working with tribal governments.

"Everybody's on edge already and this does not help," Heinert said.

Noem: Drug will be sent to SD for COVID-19 treatment

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said Monday a shipment of an antiviral drug will be sent to the state this week to help treat severe cases of the coronavirus.

Noem said the shipment of remdesivir is intended for South Dakota's "very worst cases" of COVID-19, the Rapid City Journal reported.

The Food and Drug Administration recently cleared the intravenous medication for emergency use.

South Dakota health officials on Monday reported 97 new confirmed cases of the coronavirus, raising the state's total to 3,614. South Dakota's death toll remains at 34.

Minnehaha County, home to a Smithfield Foods pork plant in Sioux Falls that was the site of a coronavirus outbreak, is nearing 3,000 cases. The southeastern South Dakota county reported 85 new cases Monday, bringing its total to 2,952, the Argus Leader reported. Lincoln County, with the second-highest total in the state, reported three more cases for a total of 191, according to the state Health Department.

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.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, May 7

'Victory In Europe'

In these uncertain days, let's reflect briefly on the anniversary of a long-ago moment of bittersweet joy. Seventy-five years ago today, half of World War II officially ended when the Allied powers formally accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. It unleashed celebrations around the globe, which would be repeated (and then some) three months later when Japan surrendered to bring this terrible conflict to a close.

The fact that V-E Day is still remembered tells you the kind of impact World War II, which ultimately killed as many as 61 million people, had and still has on us.

Germany's surrender was not unexpected — Adolf Hitler's ignominious suicide on April 30 telegraphed the inevitable. In fact, the Press & Dakotan published a massive banner headline ("WAR IN EUROPE ENDED") on May 7 when news of an offer of unconditional surrender by Berlin spread like wildfire. Word of the official acceptance of the offer arrived in Yankton at about 8 a.m. the next day, setting off a symphony of whistles and sirens to signal the start of a long-awaited holiday.

But it was generally far from boisterous.

"With business and other activities at almost a complete standstill," the P&D reported, "Yankton observed the official ending of the war in Europe ... with restrained rejoicing and in a spirit of thoughtful and solemn contemplation of the tasks remaining to be done — of defeating Japan, of reconstructing broken Europe

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and of building a lasting peace.”

It was likely more than the unfinished business in the Pacific that weighed on our minds. We still owned bitter memories of World War I and the failure of its flawed promises of peace. Most every town and family had lost too much in this second world war to forget the broken dreams of the first.

Still, this moment could not pass without some joy. Indeed, activities were in the planning stages for days as Germany’s capitulation grew increasingly likely.

“Is this V-E Day or isn’t it?” the P&D wrote on May 7. “That’s the question Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen of Yankton was asking today — withholding celebration until (receiving) the official proclamation by President Truman, which ... might come later today or possibly tomorrow.”

The paper announced that the Yankton Ministerial Association was planning a thanksgiving service at city hall depending on when the end officially came. (The event wound up being held at 4 p.m. May 8.) Many churches also planned to open their doors for prayer and contemplation.

Meanwhile, most Yankton businesses and government offices closed immediately once the news arrived. A fireworks display at the baseball stadium was also scheduled for that night, but due to a lack of promotion, it was postponed to the following weekend.

The news also brought the start of a great unshackling, which echoes somewhat in our current situation. Wartime restrictions were soon rescinded, and the P&D reported on May 10 that the midnight curfews and brownouts were being lifted: “Some business and entertainment places last night again turned on Neon and other electric signs and a few store show windows were lighted up for the first time in several weeks.”

One group in Yankton had a very different view on things, however, as there were still German prisoners of war quartered here. The Press & Dakotan noted, “In fact, these boys ... were ‘enjoying’ business as usual this week while the U.S. and other Allied nations rejoiced over the final capitulation of Germany. ... A stoic lot to begin with, the POWs displayed little feeling over the tremendous news from Europe,” and it appeared the “internees are just waiting out their turn to go home.” (Actually, “stoic lot” may be the kindest homefront description I’ve ever encountered of German soldiers from that war.)

The bittersweet sense of the moment was not confined to the Yankton area.

Not forgotten by anyone was the fact that President Franklin Roosevelt, who had died less than a month prior, did not live to see this triumph; in fact, Americans were still flying flags at half-staff in mourning on V-E Day. For his successor, Harry S. Truman, the day (which was also his birthday) was an occasion to honor his old boss while declaring that the victory was only “half won.” British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, as ever, eloquently remarked, “We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing (as Japan) remains un-subdued.” Alas, Churchill would be voted out of power in late July just before Japan was finally defeated.

The ending that arrived 75 years ago today was a mixed moment. It was a cathartic end to a monstrous evil, and yet we well knew there was a crushing load still to lift, although most of us probably didn’t foresee the atomic fire that would be used to that end.

Even on V-E Day, it was clear that, while so many had already died, we were bracing for more death to come — but we were resolute.

“With the war in Europe officially ended, greater attention can now be given to the task of polishing off Japan,” the P&D declared. “(The) American people must gird themselves for the remaining job in the Pacific. There is plenty of evidence that they are in no mood to relax until that job has been finished, too.”

Madison Daily Leader, May 5

Local grads making the best of situation

We admire the spirit of the Class of 2020 for making the end of their senior year memorable.

While we haven’t talk to a lot of seniors, the ones we’ve spoken with are handling the pandemic with an optimistic spirit. They are sending out announcements, hanging their graduation gowns and letter jackets in front windows, putting signs in the front yard, setting up Zoom sessions to discuss celebrations that can be creatively done online.

Some have even gone so far as saying their graduation year will be unique and will be remembered

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much longer than others, due to the unique circumstances of the pandemic.

South Dakota seniors may enjoy their graduation a little more than those in states with strict lockdown rules. We expect most graduates will celebrate with their families. The traditional photo display or slide show at the reception could still be emailed to friends and relatives.

Some other graduation traditions will be modified or delayed. Most churches recognize high school graduates within their congregations, and some provide a gift such as a quilt. The public recognition may not occur, but the gifts still can be delivered.

Final concerts, recitals or athletic events have been canceled, but we've also seen videos of performances circulating among music teachers, school faculty and fellow students.

Graduates will still spend time at the dining room table writing thank-you notes. It may not be a fun activity, but the cards are important to the relative or friend receiving them.

We offer our best wishes to the Class of 2020 and express our admiration for keeping your heads up during these unique times.

The Huron Daily Plainsman, May 6

An impossible decision made

Monday night, the Huron city commissioners made a very difficult decision.

I want to open this very clearly. I do not envy their decision. I respect each man with a vote on that commission, and I know that I can have a logical discussion with each of them.

That's what made Monday's incredibly illogical decision to repeal the March 22 resolution/ordinance limiting businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic so blindsiding to me, especially with the news of COVID exposure in Mitchell last weekend ... after they'd opened up essentially in the same way being proposed.

There wasn't a tapered re-opening that allowed non-dining open for two weeks, then dining for two weeks, then on-sale liquor after that, all subject to change if an outbreak were to occur within the county (or something to that tone as many have been expecting).

This was pure, rip-off-the-Band-Aid ordinance gone.

All this to be finalized on Saturday morning, with a promised list of guidelines. It will go into effect 10 days after it's published — this is not an immediate thing.

Huron in particular, and in Beadle County as a whole, has been held up over and over again by Governor Kristi Noem for the work done by its residents.

The difficult joint decision made by the county and city commissions on March 22 was strong, yet tactful. We lost two beloved residents of our community to the virus, and whether the swift action of the joint commissions or those deaths made public by their families is what sent the city and the county to the place where there has not been a positive test since April 1 would be impossible to gauge, but it's been a blessing to see.

A blessing, because we have a turkey processing plant that is doing the right things here in town. A blessing, because we have a community significantly supporting local businesses so much that our local tax revenue is holding its own — for March of 2019 to 2020 — during a time when we cannot enter restaurants and many other businesses. A blessing, because many of our local counties saw hot spots jump up, like the Lane Cafe in Jerauld County, while Beadle was able to focus on social distancing.

Now, business owners are put in an incredibly precarious position. If I own a restaurant and have been doing good business on take out, as many in Huron have during this time, the city repealing its ordinance and opening up dining areas means I can open my restaurant again.

While that is certainly appealing to me, especially if I happen to have an on-site liquor license, I worry that my employees could take home the virus from a dining room full of customers.

Let's say my top waitress has her 71-year-old mother living with her due to a chronic heart condition. If she comes in to work, she could be exposed to the virus by any one of dozens of customers she serves that day and take it home that night, potentially endangering her mother's life. She's able to barely survive on unemployment now with the COVID-19 boost from the federal government, but if I open my restaurant,

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she is forced to come to work or she will lose her unemployment.

Well, I, as the owner, don't want to see her forced into potentially exposing her vulnerable mother, so I'll stay closed. Heck, I'm making good money on take out, right? Except that every other restaurant in town is now opening their dining room, and no one wants my take out anymore, meaning I'm quite literally going to have to decide between the potential lives of my employees and their families or the survival of my business.

What really puts the icing on the cake is that earlier in the meeting Monday night, the city commission ironically read into its record a proclamation recognizing National Nurses Week (May 4-8) and National Hospitals Week (May 10-16). It's good to recognize them both. We could be utilizing them heavily soon enough if we follow our neighbors to the south and their no-holds-barred re-opening.

Brother-in-law to serve remainder of Rep. Glanzer's term

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem has appointed Rep. Bob Glanzer's brother-in-law to fill the legislative seat left empty with his death from the coronavirus last month at age 74.

Republican Lynn Schneider, a retired banker, will represent District 22 for the remainder of Glanzer's current term, which runs through the end of the calendar year.

"I want to thank Lynn Schneider for stepping into this important role," Noem said in a statement. "Lynn's family and the Huron community suffered a great loss with Bob's passing. I appreciate that Lynn has agreed to continue Bob's legacy of service to his community and to our state in this way."

The Argus Leader reports Glanzer was also up for reelection at the time of his death and was slated to run unopposed in the June primary.

The Republican Central Committees in Beadle and Kingsbury counties will name a candidate to take Glanzer's place on the November general election ballot.

Schneider served as treasurer for Glanzer's legislative campaigns.

Where to go from here? Virus experts questioned by Senate

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, ELENA BECATOROS and ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — How to safely reopen businesses and schools but not kick off a second wave of coronavirus infections will be a key topic Tuesday as infectious disease experts testify at a Senate hearing — a setting where the agenda is not controlled by President Donald Trump.

Democratic senators are expected to ask the experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health, tough questions about the virus death toll in the U.S., the nation's testing capabilities and the perceived failures of Trump's administration in fighting the pandemic.

In an email to The New York Times, Fauci said he intends to warn against a rushed reopening of the U.S. economy, which has seen over 33 million Americans lose their jobs in the last seven weeks.

"If we skip over the checkpoints in the guidelines to 'Open America Again,' then we risk the danger of multiple outbreaks throughout the country," Fauci wrote. "This will not only result in needless suffering and death, but would actually set us back on our quest to return to normal."

This puts Fauci at odds with Trump, who has repeatedly urged governors to lift business closings and stay-at-home orders.

The U.S. has seen at least 1.3 million infections and nearly 81,000 deaths from the virus, the highest toll in the world by far, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Apart from Fauci, the others appearing by video link will be Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn, and Dr. Robert Redfield, head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All three are in self-quarantine following their exposure to a White House staffer who tested positive for COVID-19.

They will be joined by Adm. Brett Giroir, the coronavirus "testing czar" at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Separately, one expert from the World Health Organization has already warned that some countries are "driving blind" into reopening their economies without having strong systems to track new outbreaks. And

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three countries that do have robust tracing systems — South Korea, Germany and China — have already seen new outbreaks after lockdown rules were relaxed.

New clusters in Germany have been linked to three slaughterhouses while in South Korea, dozens of new cases were linked to reopened Seoul nightclubs that have been shut down once again.

WHO's emergencies chief, Dr. Michael Ryan, said Germany and South Korea have good contact tracing that hopefully can detect and stop virus clusters before they get out of control. But he said other nations — which he did not name — have not effectively employed investigators to contact people who test positive, track down their contacts and get them into quarantine before they can spread the virus.

"Shutting your eyes and trying to drive through this blind is about as silly an equation as I've seen," Ryan said. "Certain countries are setting themselves up for some seriously blind driving over the next few months."

Apple, Google, some U.S. states and European countries are developing contact-tracing apps that show whether someone has crossed paths with an infected person. But experts say the technology only supplements and does not replace labor-intensive human work.

More than 10,000 people are involved in contact tracing in Germany. Britain abandoned an initial contact-tracing effort in March when the rapid spread of the virus made it impossible but now it is recruiting 18,000 people for the job.

France's constitutional court threw out part of the country's new virus restriction law Monday night, objecting to language about tracing the contacts of infected patients. The court ordered the government to take extreme care in protecting privacy, raising questions about how France will prevent a second wave of infections.

President Emmanuel Macron has pledged that France would test 700,000 people a week as part of the loosened lockdown that began Monday, but it's unclear if authorities are even close to meeting that goal.

U.S. contact tracing remains a patchwork of approaches and readiness levels. States are hiring contact tracers but experts say tens of thousands will be needed across the country.

Spain, one of the hardest-hit countries, announced it will require visitors from abroad who arrive after May 15 to quarantine themselves for 14 days, although they will be allowed to go out for groceries or medication.

Spain, which relies heavily on tourism, has only recently started to loosen one of the world's strictest lockdowns after seven weeks of strict confinement. The Health Ministry order published Tuesday says the goal is to "limit the risks derived from international arrivals."

Spanish authorities have reported more than 26,700 deaths linked to the virus and over 228,000 confirmed infections.

In India, where a strict lockdown has helped keep confirmed infections relatively low for a population of 1.3 billion, trains that are the lifeblood of the country start rolling again Tuesday. But infections and deaths have been increasing in recent days, as the lockdown has eased and some businesses have resumed.

As the colossal rail network reopened, special trains were departing from select big cities, including New Delhi and Mumbai. Passengers were allowed to enter only if they were asymptomatic and cleared thermal screening. Rail, road and air services were suspended in late March.

Singapore was also easing restrictions Tuesday, with hairdressers and barbers, food manufacturers and outlets, and laundry shops opening. Despite an increase in infections due to an outbreak among foreign workers living in crowded dormitories, the government says transmission in the local community has dropped.

Singapore has recorded 24,680 infections but has only 21 deaths. About 90% of cases are linked to foreign workers' dorms, which have all remained locked down as testing continues.

In Moscow, industrial plants and construction sites resumed work on Tuesday, with most of service businesses remaining shut. Other Russian regions have also started reopening some businesses, including beauty parlors, shopping centers and restaurants.

Russian President Vladimir Putin declared an end to a nationwide partial economic shutdown on Monday

but noted that some restrictions will remain.

"Gradually, and very carefully, we are starting to ease the restrictions," Putin said.

Russia reported almost 11,000 more infections on Tuesday, bringing the country's total to over 232,000 confirmed cases and 2,116 deaths. That number of infections is second only to the United States, and global experts say Russia's reported data understates the true size of its coronavirus outbreak.

Kremlin critics argued it is too early to ease restrictions.

"We should take a note. Putin lifted nationwide isolation measures aimed at curbing the epidemic on the day when a record was set in number of (new) infections. W for 'wisdom'," opposition politician Alexei Navalny tweeted.

Worldwide, the virus has infected nearly 4.2 million people and killed over 286,000, including more than 150,000 in Europe, according to the Johns Hopkins tally. Experts believe those numbers are too low for a variety of reasons.

Fauci warns of 'suffering and death' if US reopens too soon

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and LAURAN NEERGAARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, is warning Congress that if the country reopens too soon during the coronavirus pandemic, it will result in "needless suffering and death."

Fauci is among the health experts testifying to a Senate panel. His testimony comes as President Donald Trump is praising states that are reopening after the prolonged lock-down aimed at controlling the virus' spread.

Fauci, a member of the coronavirus task force charged with shaping the response to COVID-19, which has killed tens of thousands of people in the U.S., is testifying via video conference after self-quarantining as a White House staffer tested positive for the virus.

With the U.S. economy in free-fall and more than 30 million people unemployed, Trump has been pressuring states to reopen.

Fauci, in a statement to The New York Times, warned that officials should adhere to federal guidelines for a phased reopening, including a "downward trajectory" of positive tests or documented cases of coronavirus over two weeks, robust contact tracing and "sentinel surveillance" testing of asymptomatic people in vulnerable populations, such as nursing homes.

"If we skip over the checkpoints in the guidelines...then we risk the danger of multiple outbreaks throughout the country," Fauci wrote. "This will not only result in needless suffering and death, but would actually set us back on our quest to return to normal."

Other senior health officials scheduled to testify before the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee will also appear via video link after going into self-quarantine, following their exposure to a White House staffer who tested positive. The chairman of the committee, Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, also put himself in quarantine after an aide tested positive. He'll participate by video, too.

Besides Fauci, of the National Institutes of Health, the other experts include FDA Commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn and Dr. Robert Redfield, head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with Adm. Brett Giroir, the coronavirus "testing czar" at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Even before the gavel drops, the hearing offers two takeaways for the rest of the country, said John Auerbach, president of the nonprofit public health group Trust for America's Health.

"One thing it tells you is that the virus can have an impact in any workplace setting or any community setting," said Auerbach. "All businesses will find it very challenging to ensure safety when there are cases."

Another lesson is that the public officials involved are taking the virus seriously by not appearing in person. "They are following the guidelines that they are recommending to others," said Auerbach. "There is not a double standard."

The main questions for the administration experts revolve around the "Three T's," or testing, tracing and treatment. Without widespread testing, state and local officials will be basing decisions to reopen busi-

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nesses and schools on incomplete data with blind spots lurking. Without the ability to do the painstaking work of tracing the contacts of people infected, unwitting transmission will continue. Without effective treatments, hospitals in a given community could be overwhelmed in a COVID-19 rebound. Ultimately, the goal is a vaccine that would offer widespread protection.

The health committee hearing offers a very different setting from the White House coronavirus task force briefings the administration witnesses have all participated in. Senators on the panel are knowledgeable and some have working relationships that go back years with the agencies that the panelists are representing. Most significantly, President Donald Trump will not be controlling the agenda.

Eyeing the November elections, Trump has been eager to restart the economy, urging on protesters who oppose their state governors' stay-at-home orders and expressing his own confidence that the coronavirus will fade away as summer advances and Americans return to work and other pursuits.

The ranking Democrat on the health panel, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state, doesn't think the Trump administration is doing nearly enough to keep the virus under control as the economy reopens.

"President Trump is trying to ignore the facts, and ignore the experts who have been clear we are nowhere close to where we need to be to reopen safely," she said in a statement. Murray will participate via video, but some senators are expected to attend in person.

Alexander is more nuanced about the nation's readiness. He suggests there's enough testing to move to reopen the economy, but worries that there won't be enough to sustain a return to normality.

"It's enough to do what we need to do today to reopen," he said on NBC's "Meet The Press" on Sunday. "But it's not enough, for example, when 35,000 kids and faculty show up on the University of Tennessee campus in August."

With more types of tests on the market from different manufacturers and providers, testing is an area that's become particularly difficult for lay people to navigate.

Until now there has been only one kind of test to detect active infection. Called a PCR test, it detects the genetic material of the virus, and is still considered the most accurate.

Last weekend the FDA approved the first "antigen" test, which looks for protein traces of the virus instead, much like rapid tests for flu or strep throat. Antigen tests aren't as accurate as PCR tests but promise to be faster and easier to use.

A third kind of test detects past infection, by spotting antibodies in people's blood. But it's not yet clear if having those antibodies means someone is immune from another bout of COVID-19.

India resumes limited train service as it eases lockdown

By SHEIKH SAALIQ and SHONAL GANGULY Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India reopened parts of its huge rail network on Tuesday, running a limited number of trains as it looks at easing a nearly seven-week lockdown despite a continuing rise in coronavirus infections.

Special trains departed from several large cities, including New Delhi and Mumbai. Passengers were allowed to enter the stations only if they were asymptomatic and cleared thermal screening. They are required to maintain social distancing on board and are given hand sanitizers when they enter and leave.

Indian Railways also is requiring that passengers download a government-run contact tracing smartphone app before boarding the train. Critics say the Aarogya Setu app endangers civil liberties in how it uses location services and centralizes data collection.

Thousands of passengers waited in long, serpentine queues outside New Delhi's railway station, the hub of India's rail network. Police in riot gear tried to maintain social distancing and citizen volunteers offered water bottles to passengers who lugged heavy bags. Station workers sanitized the area with disinfectants.

"I don't care about what happens next. At least I will be with my family," said Ram Babu Kumar Singh, who works as an air conditioning mechanic in New Delhi but whose home is in eastern Bihar state. "If I stay here for long, I will die."

Singh was among many who expressed relief over the resumption of train travel, which was suspended in late March along with road and air services as part of the nationwide lockdown. Its strictness helped

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keep confirmed coronavirus infections relatively low. But in recent days, as the lockdown has eased and some businesses have resumed, infections and deaths have shot up.

The decision to open select train lines was made Sunday as India considers easing the strict lockdown of its 1.3 billion people that has left millions stranded in cities. The announcement led to a mad rush for online bookings on Monday as more than 45,000 people purchased train tickets within hours of the start of sales, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

India has confirmed 70,756 cases of coronavirus, including 2,293 deaths, but experts believe its outbreak is far greater. Almost a fifth of India's confirmed infections are people from the densely populated cities of Mumbai, New Delhi, Pune and Ahmedabad, which also are major centers of economic activity.

The train network, often described as India's lifeline, totals 67,000 kilometers (42,000 miles) and normally carries more than 20 million passengers daily.

The lockdown started in late March and emptied the usually teeming railway stations. It also destroyed the livelihoods of millions of Indians who rely on daily wages, left migrant workers stranded in big cities and created a hunger crisis for tens of thousands.

Caught off guard by the large-scale displacement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is increasingly looking at relaxing the lockdown. It recently ordered special trains to take migrant workers, students and others stranded by the lockdown to their home states after mounting pressure from the opposition.

On Monday, Modi told state leaders in a video call that they will get a greater say in determining the extent of restrictions and relaxations after May 17.

"We have a twofold challenge — to reduce the transmission rate of the disease, and to increase public activity gradually," Modi said.

He said the effort now should be to stop the spread of the virus in India's vast rural areas and emphasized that social distancing remains the biggest weapon until a vaccine is developed.

"Now the world will be pre-corona, post-corona just like the case of the world wars. And this would entail significant changes in how we function," Modi said.

Virus unleashes wave of fraud in US amid fear and scarcity

By BEN FOX and ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A 39-year-old former investment manager in Georgia was already facing federal charges that he robbed hundreds of retirees of their savings through a Ponzi scheme when the rapid spread of COVID-19 presented an opportunity.

Christopher A. Parris started pitching himself as a broker of surgical masks amid the nationwide scramble for protective equipment in those first desperate weeks of the outbreak, federal authorities said. Within weeks, Parris was making millions of dollars on sales orders.

Except there were no masks.

Law enforcement officials say Parris is part of what they are calling a wave of fraud tied to the outbreak.

Homeland Security Investigations, an arm of the Department of Homeland Security, is leading a nationwide crackdown. It has opened over 370 cases and so far arrested 11 people, as part of "Operation Stolen Promise," according to Matthew Albence, acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"It's incredibly rampant and it's growing by the day," Albence said. "We're just scratching the surface of this criminal activity."

Parris was on pretrial release for the alleged Ponzi scheme when he was arrested last month in what federal authorities say was an attempt to secure an order for more than \$750 million from the Department of Veterans Affairs for 125 million face masks and other equipment.

"He was trying to sell something he didn't even have," said Jere T. Miles, the special agent in charge of the New Orleans office of Homeland Security Investigations, which worked the case with the VA Office of Inspector General. "That's just outright, blatant fraud."

Parris has not yet entered a plea to fraud charges and his lawyers did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

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Nationwide, investigators have turned up more than false purveyors of PPE. They have uncovered an array of counterfeit or adulterated products, from COVID-19 tests kits and treatments to masks and cleaning products.

Steve Francis, director of the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, which is overseen by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, says authorities have tracked counterfeits flowing into the U.S. from 20 countries and for sale through thousands of websites.

"There are people popping up who have never been in the business of securing equipment on a large scale," Francis said.

Enter Parris.

From his home outside Atlanta, he claimed to represent a company, the Encore Health Group, that had 3M respiratory masks and other protective equipment. At the time, there was a mad scramble for supplies that pitted state and local governments against each other.

As outlined in court documents and interviews, his pitch reached a company in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, that had previously done business with the state and was trying to help government agencies buy PPE. In late March, it contacted the VA, which was then dealing with a critical shortage of protective equipment.

The VA was suspicious of the price, about 15 times what it was paying amid the shortage, and alerted its inspector general, which brought in Homeland Security. That resulted in a sting that led to Parris.

"He had no means of producing any PPE," Albence said. "It was just a scam."

But it had some takers. Federal authorities say a Parris-controlled bank account received more than \$7.4 million, with most appearing to come from unidentified entities trying to buy safety gear in March and April, according to court documents. He wired some of the money to accounts overseas, including more than \$1.1 million to a Swiss company's bank that authorities say may be a shell corporation.

The U.S. government seized more than \$3.2 million from his accounts.

The Ponzi scheme was unrelated to the alleged attempt to defraud the VA but "is sufficiently similar to the conduct in this case that it is relevant to his plan, intent, and modus operandi," according to a search warrant affidavit.

Miles said a person running a Ponzi scheme "is a special kind of criminal to begin with," but a person "that will run a completely fraudulent scheme in the middle of a pandemic ... that rises to a whole other level of special criminal."

In the earlier case, Parris and his business partners are accused of defrauding about 1,000 people out of at least \$115 million from January 2012 to June 2018 by persuading them to turn over their savings for what turned out to be nonexistent investments, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Another member of the partnership, Perry Santillo, pleaded guilty to fraud in November.

As part of the alleged scheme, Parris and the others bought the businesses of investment advisers who were retiring and leveraged the trust those advisers had built up over the years to pitch bogus investments, with relatively modest returns, to their newly acquired clients.

Florida attorney Scott Silver, who represented some investors who sought to get their money back after the SEC shut down the operation, said Parris and the others spent most of it and there was little left to recover.

He wasn't surprised that Parris had been arrested in the COVID fraud case. "He's already facing 20 years in prison," he said. "What's he worried about?"

Parris, who was charged in the case in January, grew up in Rochester, New York, and worked as an insurance agent, owned a dry cleaner and got involved in local politics. He ran unsuccessfully for city council and said he was vice president of a local African American Republican committee.

"So many people that know me, you know, trust me," Parris said in a 2015 hearing with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, which later suspended his broker license.

One of Parris' alleged victims in the Ponzi scheme, Jane Naylon, said she took guitar lessons from Parris' father, a reverend at a local church and lost \$150,000 in the fraud.

Naylon said she attended a hearing in federal court hearing in New York this year and was dismayed

when Parris was released on his own recognizance. When her daughter texted her the news weeks later that Parris had been charged for PPE fraud, she said she was in complete shock, but also pleased.

"I'm ecstatic," she said. "I hope he goes to jail for life."

Parris is now jailed in Atlanta and is expected to be transferred to Washington to face charges in the VA case.

Doctors and nurses suffered as Iran ignored virus concerns

By MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — They are regarded as heroes, their fallen colleagues as martyrs. But for doctors and nurses still dealing with Iran's growing number of coronavirus infections, such praise rings hollow.

While crippling sanctions imposed by the U.S. government left the country ill-equipped to deal with the fast-moving virus, some medical professionals say government and religious leaders bear the brunt of the blame for allowing the virus to spread -- and for hiding how much it had spread.

Those medical workers say they were defenseless to handle the contagion. And as a result, doctors and nurses in Iran have been hard hit by the virus. During the first 90 days of the virus outbreak alone, about one medical staffer died each day and dozens became infected.

"We are heading fast toward a disaster," said a young Isfahan doctor who has been working tirelessly, checking dozens of suspected coronavirus patients before referring them to hospitals.

It is no secret that Iran has been hit hard by the coronavirus. Official government figures show that around 100,000 people were infected by the virus and around 6,500 have died. But a report by the research arm of Iran's parliament said the number of cases could be eight to 10 times higher, making it among the hardest hit countries in the world. The report said the number of deaths could be 80% higher than officials numbers from the Health Ministry, about 11,700.

The Iranian government is currently reporting a decline in the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths in many areas, even though local authorities are expanding cemeteries in places like Tehran where the municipal council said it had to add 10,000 new graves to its largest cemetery, Behesht e-Zahra.

Interviews with more than 30 medical professionals and a review of communications by doctors on messaging apps and other documents by an Associated Press reporter in Cairo revealed many previously unreported details. The reporting paints a fuller picture of the roots and extent of the country's disjointed response as the deadly virus spread throughout the population.

In the beginning, medical staffers faced the outbreak with very limited equipment. Some washed their own gowns and masks or sterilized them in regular ovens. Others wrapped their bodies in plastic bags they bought at the supermarket.

The makeshift equipment didn't help. Further complicating the situation, the Health Ministry said millions of pieces of protective gear ordered by the agency were stolen and diverted to the black market.

The result: Dozens of medical professionals without adequate protection died along with their patients.

Iran's leaders, several medical professionals said, delayed telling the public about the virus for weeks, even as hospitals were filling up with people suffering from symptoms linked to the virus. And even as doctors and other experts were warning the Iranian president to take radical action, the government resisted, fearing the impact on elections, national anniversaries, and the economy.

"They wanted to send people to the streets," said a Mazandaran-based nurse and activist.

One doctor interviewed by The Associated Press — who, like all medical workers interviewed for this story, spoke only on the condition that they not be named for fear of persecution — said he and his colleagues were even discouraged from using protective equipment. He said government officials claimed wearing masks would cause panic.

The country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, proclaimed on March 10 that the doctors, nurses, and medical staffers who died in the fight against the coronavirus in Iran were "martyrs." Pictures of deceased doctors have been placed alongside those of soldiers who were killed in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, which claimed the lives of a million Iranians and Iraqis.

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"They are normalizing death," a Tehran-based health consultant said.

A list compiled by a group of Iranian doctors found that a total of 126 medical staffers have died since the virus was first reported, mostly in the provinces of Gilan and Tehran, while over 2,070 contracted the virus. The AP verified 100 of the deaths by piecing together scattered news reports in local media outlets, statements from health institutions and social media messages of condolences.

Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour acknowledged the deadly toll of COVID-19 on the medical profession in Iran, telling the AP the total number of deaths is 107. Jahanpour said 470 had tested positive for the virus. But he placed the blame on the U.S. "Remember this is a country under sanctions," he said. Iran has maintained throughout the crisis that its own industries made enough protective material to fight the virus.

Iran reported its first two cases on Feb. 19 in the city of Qom — 140 kilometers (88 miles) south of Tehran and home of highly revered Shiite shrines. It would become the epicenter of the outbreak.

The announcement apparently was made under some duress. A doctor there named Mohammed Molei filmed himself next to his bedridden brother, insisting that his brother be tested for the virus. That coincided with a visit by a Health Ministry delegation to the city.

But doctors interviewed by the AP say that before the official announcement, they started to see cases with the same symptoms as the novel coronavirus and warned the national Health Ministry that it needed to take action.

Some doctors shared with the AP letters sent to the ministry. The doctors at first said they attributed the respiratory problems among patients and deaths to the H1N1 flu. Days later, they started to call for testing for H1N1 and other diseases to rule them out; the rate of infections and deaths seemed unusually high.

Through channels on the Telegram messaging service, they exchanged data. They reached out to the Health Ministry and proposed a set of recommendations and actions. At the top of the list: a quarantine and restricting travel and flights with China. But it would be another two weeks before the government took action.

"We gave a lot of information to the government through letters and communication channels," said a Mazandaran-based activist and doctor. He said he and other medical professionals were ignored by government officials.

Two days after announcing the first cases, Iran held its parliamentary elections where thousands lined up to vote. That same day, doctors in Gilan — one of the worst hit areas in Iran — appealed to the governor for help, saying their hospitals were flooded with patients amid a shortage of masks and other protection equipment.

"The health personnel of the province are exposed to a huge threat," a letter sent by the doctors read.

But government officials played down the danger of the virus, calling the physicians' plea for a quarantine "medieval" and floating unfounded conspiracy theories that the U.S. created the coronavirus to promote a fear-mongering campaign.

The feared paramilitary Revolutionary Guard kept health facilities under tight control and medical statistics were treated as top secret, the medical staffers said.

Death certificates were not recording the coronavirus as the cause of deaths — either because not all severe cases were tested or just for the sake of keeping the numbers down. Thousands of unaccounted deaths were attributed to secondary causes like "heart attack" or "respiratory distress."

And a doctor in Tehran said the Health Ministry gave orders not to refer critical cases to hospitals to be tested for the virus — to keep the numbers low, she said.

"We suppose they (want to) say they're doing good," she said.

A Tehran-based radiologist said that he had access to medical files of patients at different Tehran hospitals. The reports include CT scans and blood tests that pointed to the coronavirus. But tests were not done.

"These are 40% of the cases," he said, "It's just difficult to prove."

"The number of real patients with COVID-19 in Iran, from the beginning ... until today is much more than what has been reported," he said, echoing similar sentiments by most medical workers interviewed

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by the AP.

He estimated that the numbers are three to four times higher than the figures released by the government. "The authorities believe they are doing great and they try to keep things out of spotlight," a medical scholar said.

Clinics and hospitals became hubs of infection, even as parliamentary elections and national celebrations went on:

— In Khorasan, the head of the medical science school which oversees hospitals receiving corona patients, Ali Asghar, told a local news agency that a total of 600 people died between Feb. 19 and April 4. The government number through March 22 was 42.

— In Golestan, AbdolReza Fazel, a top health official, told local media that 230 had died though April 2, while the government recorded just 10 cases.

— In Isfahan, Tahereh Changiz, the head of the medical school, told the IMNA news agency that the total number of deaths reached 400; the official figure was just 87.

— According to one health official and two doctors, the total deaths in Gilan have surpassed 1,300 so far. The last breakdown provided by the government on March 22 said the total did not exceed 200.

"Gilan wasn't ready at all," said one physician there. "It was a catastrophe."

Said another doctor: "The first weeks, the system has collapsed," with patients sleeping in the corridors and doctors forced to make painful choices. A nurse at Shafa Hospital in the provincial capital of Rasht said ventilators were removed from dying patients to let others live.

"Death certificates were written before they died," the nurse said with a hoarse voice. On the death certificates, the doctor scribbled, "heart attack" or "respiratory distress" as a cause of death.

"It was my worst day in my life when they cut the oxygen. After work, when I went back home, I could do nothing but crying," she said.

A psychologist in Tehran told the AP that many medical staffers were traumatized. Images of the dying patients left them with a deep sense of guilt, suicide thoughts, and panic attacks, he said.

He recalled one nurse who had a recurring nightmare of burying her parents alone. Another said she dreamed she was looking into a telescope, anticipating with horror a meteor strike.

ICU doctor Gol Rezayee appeared in a March 29 video that went viral on social media as he tried, but failed to revive a dying patient's heart.

On Telegram, he wrote the last words he exchanged with the victim. "Doctor, if I die, tell my husband to take care of the kids," he recalled the woman saying. "He is careless and naughty."

Rezayee said he responded: "It's just like a cold. You will live 120 years." Hours later, the woman was dead. Medical professionals also watched as their own colleagues succumbed to the virus.

As the outbreak in Rasht unfolded during the last week of February, patients packed the clinic of the city's most popular physician, Mohammad Bakhshalizadeh, who often treated the poor for free, set up the first association for physicians in the province and volunteered during the war with Iraq.

As the virus spread, the 66-year-old doctor examined an average of 70 patients each day, largely without protective gear.

A week after Iran officially announced the first two official cases in Qom, Bakhshalizadeh developed a fever and had trouble breathing. Initial tests for coronavirus were inconclusive. Another test showed that his lungs were turning white.

He later drove himself to several hospitals until he found one with an empty bed.

Four days later, on March 7, he died.

Cubicle comeback? Pandemic will reshape office life for good

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Office jobs are never going to be the same.

When workers around the world eventually return to their desks, they'll find many changes due to the pandemic. For a start, fewer people will go back to their offices as the coronavirus crisis makes working

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from home more accepted, health concerns linger and companies weigh up rent savings and productivity benefits.

For the rest, changes will begin with the commute as workers arrive in staggered shifts to avoid rush hour crowds. Staff might take turns working alternate days in the office to reduce crowding. Floor markings or digital sensors could remind people to stand apart and cubicles might even make a comeback.

"This is going to be a catalyst for things that people were too scared to do before," said John Furneaux, CEO of Hive, a New York City-based workplace software startup. The pandemic "gives added impetus to allow us and others to make changes to century-old working practices."

Hive plans to help employees avoid packed rush hour subway commutes by starting at different hours, said Furneaux, who thinks he had the virus. In Britain, the government is considering asking employers to do the same.

At bigger companies, senior executives are rethinking cramming downtown office towers with workers. British bank Barclays is making a "long-term adjustment in how we think about our location strategy," CEO Jes Staley said. "The notion of putting 7,000 people in a building may be a thing of the past."

That is already happening in China, where lockdowns started easing in March. Beijing municipal authorities limited the number of people in each office to no more than 50% of usual staffing levels, required office workers to wear face masks and sit at least 1 meter (3.3 feet) apart.

At a minimum, the COVID-19 crisis could be the death knell for some recent polarizing office trends, such as the shared workspaces used by many tech startups to create a more casual and creative environment. Cubicles and partitions are making a return as the virus speeds the move away from open plan office spaces, architects say.

Design firm Bergmeyer is reinstalling dividers on 85 desks at its Boston office that had been removed over the years. That "will return a greater degree of privacy to the individual desks, in addition to the physical barrier which this health crisis now warrants," said Vice President Rachel Zsembery.

There's no rush to return. At Google and Facebook, employees will be able to work remotely until the end of the year. Other firms have realized they don't even need an office.

Executives at San Francisco teamwork startup Range had given notice on their office because they wanted someplace bigger. But when California's shelter in place order was issued, they instead scrapped their search and decided to go all remote indefinitely, a move that would save six figures on rent.

"We were looking at the writing on the wall," said co-founder Jennifer Dennard.

One upside of having an all-remote workforce is that the company can hire from a broader pool of candidates beyond San Francisco, where astronomical housing costs have priced out many. But Dennard said the downside is that it eliminates the "chaotic interruptions" - the chance encounters between staff members that can spark creativity, so the company is planning more online collaboration to let this happen.

Good Brothers Digital, a public relations firm in Wales, also ditched its office space in downtown Cardiff. Director Martyn John said productivity is just as high as it was before the pandemic forced them to work from home, so he decided to give up the company's office space to save on rent, one of his biggest expenses.

Why drag employees into the office if they're happier working from home, he reasons.

"People are just going to expect it now."

The work from home trend will continue accelerating even after the pandemic ends, according to consultancy Gartner.

After the pandemic, 41% of employees expect to work remotely at least some of the time, up from 30% before the outbreak, according to 220 human resources executives it surveyed.

Not all companies can go fully remote, especially big corporations with thousands of staff. Even so, they're thinking carefully about who should return to the office and who can and should continue to work from home.

At Dell, more people are going to work from home but "we're still going to need offices," because some jobs are best done there, said Chief Digital Officer Jen Felch. She cited customer support staff, who can

access more resources at the office to diagnose equipment problems.

More than 90% of Dell's 165,000 full-time global staff are working remotely during the pandemic, compared with 30% before it started. Once lockdown sends, she estimates that number will be above 50%.

The outbreak is also going to force companies to take hygiene much more seriously.

"The amount of people cleaning and sanitizing an office is going to shoot through the roof," said Brian Kropp, Gartner's chief of human resources research.

Extra attention will go to places like conference rooms, which will have to be cleaned between uses, bringing added disruption, he said.

Or companies could do away with in-person meetings altogether.

"What's the point of sanitizing everybody's desk if you're getting them all in the same room," said Hive's Furneaux, who said he's thinking carefully about how to hold events such as "all-hands meetings" for his 70 staff. "We might get the weird scenario of in-office conference calls."

High tech solutions will play a role, such as sensors to remind people to maintain social distancing, said Joanna Daly, vice president for corporate health and safety at IBM.

Existing industrial sensor technology could easily be adapted to offices, said Daly.

One possible example: "We'd want our phones to buzz if we got closer than 2 meters while we were having a conversation," she said.

5 things to know today - that aren't about the virus

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at nonvirus stories in the news:

1. SUPREME COURT TAKES UP TRUMP TAX CASE Rulings against the president could lead to the campaign season release of personal financial information that Trump has kept shielded from investigators and the public.

2. WHERE TRUMP DIFFERS WITH CAMPAIGN His reelection team is helping Republican voters cast their ballots through the mail even as the president says the process is ripe for fraud and "cheaters."

3. 3RD OUTSIDE PROSECUTOR GETS ARBERY CASE Georgia's attorney general appoints a black district attorney from the Atlanta area to take over the Ahmaud Arbery case, a slaying that prompted a national outcry over suspicions that race played a role in delaying arrests.

4. ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS IN US HIT RECORD HIGH The surge last year was marked by deadly attacks on a California synagogue, a Jewish grocery store in New Jersey and a rabbi's New York home, the Anti-Defamation League reports.

5. WHAT BASEBALL IS CONSIDERING The National League might join the American League and use the designated hitter on a full-time basis this season.

Homophobia threatens to hamper South Korea's virus campaign

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — As South Korea grapples with a new spike in coronavirus infections thought to be linked to nightspots in Seoul, including several popular with gay men, it's also seeing rising homophobia that's making it difficult for sexual minorities to come forward for diagnostic tests.

The first confirmed patient in the new coronavirus cluster was a 29-year-old man who visited five nightclubs and bars in Seoul's Itaewon entertainment neighborhood in a single night before testing positive for the virus last Wednesday. Further investigation has since found more than 100 infections that appear linked to the nightspots.

A Christian church-founded newspaper, Kookmin Ilbo, reported last week that the places the man visited in Itaewon on May 2 included a gay club. The report was followed by a flood of anti-gay slurs on social media that included blaming the man and those at the club for endangering the country's fight against the pandemic.

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Views on sexual minorities in South Korea have gradually improved in recent years, but anti-gay sentiments still run deep in the conservative country. Same-sex marriages aren't legal and there are no prominent openly gay politicians or business executives, though some have risen to stardom in the entertainment world.

Activist groups have criticized the Kookmin Ilbo report, saying that it was irrelevant that some of the nightspots the man went to were popular with gay people and the newspaper should not have disclosed it.

It's not even known how big role the man played in the new outbreak, with officials saying that local infections in Itaewon may have already begun before he contracted the illness. Authorities have been trying to track down and test thousands of people who may have come in contact with those infected, a process activist say has been made more difficult now that there is a sexual stigma attached to the new outbreak.

Lee Jong-geol, general director of the gay rights advocacy group Chingusai, said dozens of sexual minorities who had recently visited Itaewon clubs called his office and expressed worry about being outed or disadvantaged at work if they are placed under quarantine.

While there have been no reports hate crimes or physical attacks linked to the fresh surge of homophobia, Lee said "anxiety and fear have flared inside of sexual minority communities."

The new cluster threatens South Korea's hard-won gains in its virus fight, which were the result of aggressive contact tracing and mass testing. The roughly 30 new cases reported daily the past three days are higher than single-digit increases the country had been reporting recently. Still, it is far lower than the hundreds of cases recorded each day in late February and early March.

Alarmed by the sudden spike, authorities in Seoul and most other South Korean cities ordered the temporary closing of all nightlife establishments, and the education ministry delayed the opening of schools by another week.

According to Seoul's city government, as of Monday authorities were unable to reach more than 3,000 people who visited Itaewon nightspots in recent days. Health Ministry official Yoon Taeho said Tuesday that police were trying to track down club and bar patrons who officials haven't been able to contact.

Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun and several health officials expressed worry that the surge in homophobic sentiment could hurt the virus fight.

"At least under the viewpoint of quarantine, denunciation of a certain community isn't helpful," Chung said in televised remarks Sunday. "If contacts avoid diagnostic tests in fear of criticism, our society has to shoulder its entire consequences."

Kim Jyu-hye, who doesn't identify as strictly male or female and lives in a rural town, said that people there, when talking about what happened in the Itaewon clubs, often said that "gays like roaming around all night long and sleeping with many men."

"These days, I feel more isolated and I'm afraid about my relationships with other people because they are shifting their anger about new coronavirus outbreaks onto sexual minorities," Kim said.

'Foretaste' of Brexit: Virus cuts off much of UK farm labor

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's fruit and vegetable farmers have long dreaded their country's exit from the European Union, worrying that it would keep out the tens of thousands of Eastern European workers who come every year to pick produce.

Now, the coronavirus pandemic has brought that feared future to the present: Travel restrictions imposed to slow the virus' spread are blocking laborers just as the harvest season for lettuces and berries begins in earnest.

In June, 1 million heads of lettuce will need to be picked in Britain every day, then trimmed and transported to supermarkets — all without bruising and before they wilt. It takes experience and a lot of hands.

Without the necessary workforce, crops could be left to rot and growers may eventually decide to move some of their operations overseas, farmers warn.

"It may be a foretaste of what next year will look like," said Jack Ward, chief executive of the British

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Growers Association. "Except that if the economy picks up again, we'll get to the situation where there isn't even the unemployment to make good the shortfall of people coming from Eastern Europe. We'll have to move production to where the workers are."

Britain — which grows over 50% of its vegetables and just under 20% of the fruit — is heavily reliant on seasonal farm workers from abroad. An estimated 70,000 to 90,000 people are needed between April and October each year to plant, pick and pack the produce. The overwhelming majority come from Eastern Europe, most just for the season before returning home. Britons make up just 1% of the workers.

Many of the migrants from EU states Romania, Bulgaria and Poland return year after year, and are highly valued by farmers for their skill and speed.

But with most flights grounded, only about a third of the migrant workers who would normally be in Britain are here, according to Environment Secretary George Eustice.

"Normally we would have 12 to 16 Polish workers here in the spring. Only four of our team made it, and they arrived before lockdown," said Ali Capper, who grows apples and hops — a key ingredient for beer — with her husband at their family farm in Worcestershire, western England. "For the harvest in September we will need about 70 people. I don't know where they're going to come from at the moment."

The problem is most urgent for asparagus and lettuce farmers, whose crops are ready for harvest about now. One large salad producer, G's Growers, resorted to booking a 40,000-pound (\$49,000) charter flight to fly in 150 Romanian workers in April to pick the vegetables and help train less experienced recruits.

The company that operated that flight said it's fielded many similar calls from other British farms desperate for labor. Since mid-April, Air Charter Service has flown in 1,200 passengers from Romania to meet the needs of farms, said Matt Purton, director of commercial jets for the company.

Britain's government says it is acutely aware of the problem, and has expanded a temporary workers program to allow 10,000 migrants from outside the EU — mainly from Ukraine, Russia and Moldova — to work on British farms.

But air travel remains difficult and often expensive, and it's unclear how many have arrived under that program. Even if it reached its goal, that would still leave farms tens of thousands of workers short, so the government also headed a "Pick for Britain" hiring campaign in a bid to attract Britons to farms. Officials have urged millions of people who have been furloughed or unemployed during the pandemic to help with the harvest.

Recruiters say the response from Britons has been enthusiastic, but nowhere near solving the problem.

Concordia, a leading recruiter of seasonal farm workers, says up to late April, 55,000 people applied for farm positions, but just 150 took up job offers. Many who explicitly rejected the roles cited the difficulty of traveling to the farms or the length of contracts as factors that put them off.

Capper, who is also the National Farmers' Union spokeswoman for horticulture, stressed that while she supports hiring British workers, "anyone who suggests that as a solution long term is just not being realistic."

"It's hard physical work, it's temporary, and it's seasonal," she said. "You have to be prepared to follow that work around the country to different crops and that really doesn't suit people who need to pay the rent or mortgage."

What farmers really need, she said, is clarity from the British government about its immigration plans after Dec. 31, when the current Brexit transition period ends and, with it, freedom of movement for EU citizens to Britain. Until that date, EU citizens are allowed to travel to and work in Britain without any restrictions, just as they did when the U.K. belonged to the union. But from 2021, people from the bloc seeking to work in Britain will likely need to meet the same requirements as any other immigrants.

But the rules have not yet been finalized, and that uncertainty is weighing on farmers.

Ward, of the British Growers Association, said the June lettuce harvest — when pickers need to meet high standards for a very high volume of crop — illustrates why farmers need a reliable workforce.

"You've got to get them trimmed, chilled, transported. When you pick one up at the retailer it's got to be perfect," he said. "Trying to do that with an enthusiastic but relatively inexperienced workforce is, shall we say, difficult."

With Brexit on the horizon, these changes were always coming, but the pandemic has made growers

confront them sooner — while also trying to plan for the long term.

"It's a total double whammy," said Capper.

Lives Lost: Victims of the virus, remembered for tomorrow

By PETER PRENGAMAN Associated Press

Across the world, the devastation caused by the coronavirus is told in the voices of those left behind.

In England, the brother of Amged El-Hawrani, a Sudanese immigrant who became a successful doctor, says a rock of the family has been lost. "We would all lean on him very heavily."

In the United States, the son of Isaiah Kuperstein says although his dad studied one of humanity's darkest chapters, the Holocaust, he was a light to those around him. "Every picture that I see now makes me sad, but I see this twinkle in his eyes."

In Brazil, family worry about the future of baby Alice, whose mother, 28-year-old Rafaela de Jesus Silva, died a week after giving birth. "My heart is broken," said Rafaela's aunt. "Her child will never even sit on her lap."

Many countries have stories like these. They are about lives well lived or cut short, of love, of perseverance, of heartache, of dancing, of laughing and being silly, of sacrifice and bucket lists, and for loved ones left behind, being forced to contemplate a starkly different future after life was upended by an enemy the eye can't see.

These are some of the stories that Associated Press journalists around the world are working to capture in an ongoing series called "Lives Lost." Each story is told individually, often with audio remembrances and photos from family members, and presented as a collection in this website.

They are the stories of ordinary people who have sometimes done extraordinary things, such as Joanne Mellady, who after a double lung transplant in her 50s began hang gliding, skiing, skateboarding and traveling the world. Or Arie Even, a native of Hungary who survived the Holocaust after his father was sent to a concentration camp, eventually building a successful life and family in Israel.

Regardless of professional accomplishments, which are always fleeting, they are people who left a permanent mark.

They are people like Viviane Bouculat, the owner of Paris bistro l'Annexe, a close friend to so many patrons and life of the party (as evidence by video of her dancing in the kitchen with a mop on her head). Or Mary Louise Brown Morgan, a Louisiana woman who kept one of the best gardens in her town and was so devoted to her faith that she tithed even when that money was needed to eat. Or Wu Chuanyong, a family patriarch from Wuhan, China, who taught his son the virtues of frugality after being part of a mandatory rural work program by Mao Zedong.

The focus on regular people, many of whom have lived through some of recent history's most momentous times, is to put a face on the growing number of dead, 286,000 and counting. It is also to help readers see similarities in how countries are being impacted and how different cultures and religions view death differently.

In the end, our similarities far outweigh the differences.

"In tragedies, we talk a lot about the people who died and the effect on people who knew them," says Stan Goldberg, an author of several books dealing with life's difficult questions, including death. "It's not just the death of one person, but the loss of expectations for the people around them."

Many people are dying alone, cut off from family so as not to spread the virus, and normal end-of-life rituals often give way to hasty burials and cremations without ceremonies.

"Whether we choose a fire or the open ground or the sea, the fact that we usually get a choice in the matter is a real luxury," says Thomas Lynch, a funeral director, poet and essayist.

"We are beginning to understand now how important it is for the living to get the dead where they need to go," he says.

Coronavirus is hardly the first widespread human tragedy, though it's the first in a long time to impact the entire world in similar ways at the same time. In the decades to come, many countries may consider

how to remember the victims of COVID-19, though if history is a guide, many probably won't; Memorials to soldiers who died during wars the last century are much more common than memorials to the 1918 flu, which killed millions around the world, or any other pandemic the last 100 years.

Maybe that is because it's easier, even preferable, to remember people who died doing something visibly momentous — something that somehow feels larger — instead of being overcome by respiratory distress.

"The records you are keeping will be a resource for historians," says Mark Honigsbaum, a medical historian and author of several books on pandemics. "One of the stories we are going to tell is of the tremendous suffering and sacrifice."

Sacrifice is a repeated theme of Lives Lost, particularly among health care workers who died taking risks to treat suffering coronavirus patients. They include Dr. Roberto Stella in Italy, who trained a generation of general practitioners in Lombardy, even organizing a course on COVID-19 before becoming the first Italian doctor to die after attending to patients. Or Dr. Ahmed el-Lawah, a pillar of the community in the Egyptian city of Port Said and a father figure beyond his family, who also died after getting infected by a patient.

When this pandemic is over, and life returns to normal, the biggest scar will be all the lives lost. Regardless of how societies collectively remember in the future, for families and friends losing loved ones, the pain is now.

Workplace worries mount as US tracks new COVID-19 cases

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Even as President Donald Trump urges getting people back to work and reopening the economy, thousands of new coronavirus infections are being reported daily, many of them job-related.

Recent figures show a surge of cases in meat-packing and poultry-processing plants. There's been a spike of new infections among construction workers in Austin, Texas, where that sector recently returned to work. Even the White House has proven vulnerable, with positive coronavirus tests for one of Trump's valets and for Vice President Mike Pence's press secretary.

The developments underscore the high stakes for communities nationwide as they gradually loosen restrictions on business.

"The people who are getting sick right now are generally people who are working," Dr. Mark Escott, a regional health official, told Austin's city council. "That risk is going to increase the more people are working."

Austin's concerns will likely be mirrored in communities nationwide as the reopening of stores and factories creates new opportunities for the virus to spread.

To be sure, there are plenty of new infections outside the workplace — in nursing homes, and among retired and unemployed people, particularly in densely populated places such as New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia and urban parts of New Jersey and Massachusetts.

Yet of the 15 U.S. counties with the highest per-capita infection rates between April 28 and May 5, all are homes to meatpacking and poultry-processing plants or state prisons, according to data compiled by The Associated Press.

The county with the highest per-capita rate was Tennessee's Trousdale County, where nearly 1,300 inmates and 50 staffers recently tested positive at the privately run Trousdale Turner Correctional Center.

In the federal prison system, the number of positive cases has increased steadily. As of May 5, there were 2,066 inmates who'd tested positive, up from 730 on April 25.

The No. 2 county on AP's list is Nobles County in Minnesota, which now has about 1,100 cases, compared to two in mid-April. The county seat, Worthington, is home to a JBS pork processing plant that employs hundreds of immigrants.

"One guy said to me, 'I risked my life coming here. I never thought something that I can't see could take me out,'" said the Rev. Jim Callahan of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Worthington.

Nebraska's Dakota County, home to a Tyson Foods meat plant, had recorded three cases as of April 15, and now has more than 1,000. There have been at least three COVID-19 deaths, including a Muslim

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woman from Ethiopia who was among 4,300 employees at the Tyson plant.

"These are sad and dangerous days," the imam of a regional Islamic center, Ahmad Mohammad, told the Siouxland News.

In northern Indiana's Cass County, home to a large Tyson pork-processing plant, confirmed coronavirus cases have surpassed 1,500. That's given the county — home to about 38,000 residents — one of the nation's highest per-capita infection rates.

The Tyson plant in Logansport, Indiana, was closed April 25 after nearly 900 employees tested positive; it resumed limited operations Thursday after undergoing deep cleaning and installation of Plexiglas workstation barriers. Company spokeswoman Hli Yang said none of the 2,200 workers would return to work without being tested.

Also hard hit by recent infections are counties in Virginia, Delaware and Georgia where poultry-processing plants are located.

In New York, the hardest-hit state during most of the pandemic, a new survey suggests that factors other than the workplace were involved in many recent cases.

The survey of 1,269 patients admitted to 113 hospitals over three recent days confounded expectations that new cases would be dominated by essential workers, especially those traveling on subways and buses. Instead, retirees accounted for 37% of the people hospitalized; 46% were unemployed.

"We were thinking that maybe we were going to find a higher percentage of essential employees who were getting sick because they were going to work, that these may be nurses, doctors, transit workers. That's not the case," said Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

In Pennsylvania, of 2,578 new cases between May 4 and May 6, more than 40% were people living in long-term care facilities. Health officials in Pittsburgh's Allegheny County said of the 352 new cases between April 20 and May 5, 35% were residents in long-term care facilities and 14% were health care workers.

Though the elderly continue to account for a disproportionate share of COVID-19 cases, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the age ratio is changing. In January-February, 76% of cases involved people 50 or older. Since March, only about half the cases are of that age range,

Many health workers were among the earliest Americans to test positive. They continue to be infected in large numbers.

Gerard Brogan, director of nursing practice for the California Nurses Association, says as many as 200 nurses a day tested positive in California recently. Nationwide, he says the National Nurses United had tallied more than 28,000 positive tests and more than 230 deaths among health workers.

Among those recently testing positive was Dr. Pramila Kolisetty of Scarsdale, New York, who has a rehab and pain management practice in the Bronx and is married to a urologist.

Even after New York imposed an extensive lockdown, she went to her office two to three times a week while trying to transition to telemedicine.

"It took time for us to get ourselves organized," she said. "We can't just close the office and say, that's it."

Some of her staff fell sick with COVID-19, and she started feeling symptoms a few weeks ago. After testing positive, she isolated at home and is now practicing telemedicine.

Cuomo, the New York governor, said individual decisions could help slow the pace of new infections.

"Much of this comes down to what you do to protect yourself," Cuomo said at a recent briefing. "Everything is closed down, the government has done everything it could. ... Now it's up to you. Are you wearing a mask, are you doing the hand sanitizer?"

Report: Anti-Semitic incidents in US hit record high in 2019

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP) — American Jews were targets of more anti-Semitic incidents in 2019 than any other year over the past four decades, a surge marked by deadly attacks on a California synagogue, a Jewish grocery store in New Jersey and a rabbi's New York home, the Anti-Defamation League reported Tuesday.

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The Jewish civil rights group counted 2,107 anti-Semitic incidents in 2019, finding 61 physical assault cases, 1,127 instances of harassment and 919 acts of vandalism. That's the highest annual tally since the New York City-based group began tracking anti-Semitic incidents in 1979. It also marked a 12% increase over the 1,879 incidents it counted in 2018.

Jonathan Greenblatt, the group's CEO, attributes last year's record high to a "normalization of anti-Semitic tropes," the "charged politics of the day" and social media. This year, he said, the COVID-19 pandemic is fueling anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

"Anti-Semitism is a virus. It is like a disease, and it persists," Greenblatt said. "It's sometimes known as the oldest hatred. It never seems to go away. There truly is no single antidote or cure."

The ADL's count of anti-Semitic assaults involved 95 victims. More than half of the assaults occurred in New York City, including 25 in Brooklyn. Eight of those Brooklyn assaults happened during a span of eight days in December, primarily in neighborhoods where many Orthodox Jews live.

"Objects were thrown at victims, antisemitic slurs were shouted, and at least three victims were hit or punched in their heads or faces," says the report first given exclusively to The Associated Press.

The ADL defines an anti-Semitic assault as "an attempt to inflict physical harm on one or more people who are Jewish or perceived to be Jewish, accompanied by evidence of antisemitic animus." Three of those 2019 assaults were deadly.

A 20-year-old former nursing student, John T. Earnest, awaits trial on charges he killed a woman and wounded three other people during an attack on Chabad of Poway synagogue near San Diego in April 2019. The gunman told a 911 dispatcher that he shot up the synagogue on the last day of Passover because Jews were trying to "destroy all white people," according to prosecutors.

Attacks in Jersey City, New Jersey, killed a police detective in a cemetery and three people at a kosher market in December. Authorities said the attackers, David Anderson and Francine Graham, were motivated by a hatred of Jewish people and law enforcement.

A 37-year-old man, Grafton Thomas, was charged with stabbing five people with a machete at a Hanukkah celebration at a rabbi's home in Monsey, an Orthodox Jewish community north of New York City. One of the five victims died three months after the Dec. 28 attack. Federal prosecutors said Thomas had handwritten journals containing anti-Semitic comments and a swastika.

The ADL's report attributed 270 anti-Semitic incidents to extremist groups or individuals. A separate ADL report, released in February, found that 2019 was the sixth deadliest year for violence by all domestic extremists since 1970.

The ADL counted 919 vandalism incidents in 2019, a 19% increase from 774 incidents in 2018.

Two men described by authorities as members of a white supremacist group called The Base were charged with conspiring last year to vandalize synagogues, including Beth Israel Sinai Congregation in Racine, Wisconsin. Even before his synagogue was defaced with swastikas, Rabbi Martyn Adelberg sensed that anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. have been increasing as extremist rhetoric migrates from the internet's fringes to mainstream platforms.

"It provokes something else, too: an undying outpouring of love," he said, noting that a crowd of 150 people — at least five times the normal size and consisting mostly of gentiles — attended the first service at the temple after the vandalism. "The support was overwhelming."

The ADL says it helped authorities identify a suspect accused of plastering white supremacist and anti-Semitic stickers on a display case at Chabad Jewish Center in Ocean City, Maryland. Rabbi Noam Cohen, the center's director, said anti-Semitism has ebbed and flowed for centuries. He views the vandalism of his center as an isolated incident, not a sign of growing anti-Semitism.

"Maybe I'm naive, but I hope not," he said.

The ADL tallied 1,127 harassment incidents last year, a 6% increase over 2018. The group defined these incidents as cases in which at least one Jewish person reported feeling harassed by the perceived anti-Semitic words or actions of another person or group.

The ADL report doesn't try to fully assess online anti-Semitism, but it does include incidents in which individuals or groups received anti-Semitic content in direct messages, on listservs or in social media set-

tings "where they would have the reasonable expectation to not be subjected to anti-Semitism."

The ADL counted 171 anti-Semitic incidents last year referencing Israel or Zionism, including five instances in which members of a white supremacist group, Patriot Front, protested outside Israel-aligned organizations to oppose "Zionist influence" over the U.S. government.

"Although it is not antisemitic to protest Israeli policies, these protests must be considered within the context of this group's well-documented antisemitic agenda," the report says.

The ADL says it tries to avoid conflating general criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. "However, Israel-related harassment of groups or individuals may be included when the harassment incorporates established anti-Jewish references, accusations and/or conspiracy theories, or when they demonize American Jews for their support of Israel," the report says.

Skipping a mask, Trump says he's 'met the moment' on testing

By ZEKE MILLER and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump insisted his administration has "met the moment" and "prevailed" on coronavirus testing, even as the White House itself became a potent symbol of the risk facing Americans everywhere by belatedly ordering everyone who enters the West Wing to wear a mask.

Trump on Monday addressed a Rose Garden audience filled with mask-wearing administration officials, some appearing publicly with face coverings for the first time during the outbreak, after two aides tested positive for COVID-19 late last week. The startling sight served only to further highlight the challenge the president faces in instilling confidence in a nation still reeling from the pandemic.

Trump himself, not wearing a mask, sought to emphasize to the American people the steps being taken to ensure their safety — in hopes that will coax them to resume normal activities.

Shortage of coronavirus testing has long been a sore spot for the president, but he insisted anew that everyone who wants a test can get one. The pledge, first issued by Trump more than two months ago, comes as governors across the country continue to call on the federal government to do more to boost supply to meet the requirements needed to begin "reopening" the nation.

The upbeat message was undercut by the new protective measures implemented to keep Trump safe, evidenced by the absence of Vice President Mike Pence and three of the nation's top medical experts, who were in various states of isolation after two cases of COVID-19 were confirmed among staffers in one of the most-protected complexes in America.

A memo to staff Monday directed "everyone who enters the West Wing to wear a mask or facial covering." Staff will be allowed to remove their face coverings if they sit at least six feet apart from their colleagues. The directive apparently doesn't apply to the president.

Monday's briefing was meant to highlight the availability of COVID-19 testing as the White House seeks to convince Americans the country is safely reopening.

"They should all be able to get a test right now," Trump said, even though experts say there is no capacity for testing on that scale. Officials later clarified that "everybody who needs a test can get a test."

Only on Monday did the administration believe it had enough tests to mount a nationwide testing campaign to address significant death rates in nursing homes and other senior care facilities. On a call with governors, Pence and Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coordinator for the virus response, recommended that every nursing home occupant and staffer be tested for COVID-19 in the next two weeks, with vigilant monitoring going forward, especially of staff.

Pence led the weekly call with governors from an isolated room, after his press secretary tested positive Friday. Birx and other staffers participated as usual from a conference room in the Situation Room, Pence said, explaining the "slightly different circumstance."

"We are taking the appropriate countermeasures to protect the president's health," Pence added, according to a recording obtained by The Associated Press. The White House was moving to daily testing of some staff members to detect the disease.

The stepped-up protective measures come as Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute

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of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the CDC, and the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, Dr. Stephen Hahn, were all quarantining after exposure to the White House staffer.

The three experts are scheduled to testify before a Senate panel Tuesday on "Safely Getting Back to Work and Back to School." However, they, along with committee chairman Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., will all participate remotely. Alexander is quarantining after a staff member of his own tested positive for COVID-19.

The images of top administration officials taking such precautions come as states seek to loosen economic restrictions put in place to mitigate the virus' spread.

Trump on Monday complained that Democratic governors were too slow in lifting restrictions in their states. "The great people of Pennsylvania want their freedom now, and they are fully aware of what that entails," he tweeted. "The Democrats are moving slowly, all over the USA, for political purposes. They would wait until November 3rd if it were up to them. Don't play politics. Be safe, move quickly!"

Trump was scheduled to travel to the state on Thursday, according to advisories from the Federal Aviation Administration.

'Express burials' cast doubt on Nicaragua's virus figures

By GABRIELA SELSER Associated Press

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — Roger Ordoñez was hospitalized with breathing problems last week.

When his son Enrique came to visit the next morning, the 69-year-old retiree was already being buried by government workers in protective white full-body suits in a cemetery on the outskirts of Chinandega, a city of 133,000 people in northwest Nicaragua.

The hospital warned the Ordoñez family to self-quarantine for two weeks but said their patriarch did not have the novel coronavirus, even though they were shown no test results.

President Daniel Ortega's government has stood out for its refusal to impose measures to halt the coronavirus for more than two months since the disease was first diagnosed in Nicaragua. Now, doctors and family members of apparent victims say, the government has gone from denying the disease's presence in the country to actively trying to conceal its spread.

"I begged the doctor to tell me what happened to him," Enrique Ordoñez said. "I needed to know if he was infected. I have an 18-month-old girl, my mother has a variety of ailments and we need to know if it was COVID."

The government says this country of 6.5 million people has seen 16 coronavirus cases and five deaths since its first case was diagnosed. Businesses and government offices remain open and the government has actively promoted sporting events and other mass gatherings.

The nongovernmental organization Citizen Observatory made up of health workers and activists, said it had identified 1,033 suspected COVID-19 infections in the country through Saturday.

Nicaraguan epidemiologist Alvaro Ramírez, currently living in Ireland, said the number is already far higher and coming days "will be decisive" for Nicaragua.

He calculates that in two weeks Nicaragua could have some 18,000 infections, of which 890 would be serious.

Plainclothes police and government supporters have detained journalists outside a hospital in Managua and in a cemetery in Chinandega in the past week.

But in Chinandega the pandemic is becoming difficult to hide. White-suited men in pick-up trucks with coffins in the bed have become a more common sight in recent days, residents say. And it seems everyone knows someone who got sick.

A Chinandega doctor, who requested anonymity to avoid retaliation, said she knew four people who had died, including one of her patients, who was buried within two hours of dying.

"Everyone they consider a suspected patient who has died of atypical pneumonia they send for immediate burial," she said.

Diagnoses are made based on symptoms and X-rays of patients' lungs, because tests for the virus are

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tightly controlled by the Health Ministry and difficult to obtain.

An informal network of medical colleagues in the city had tallied 25 suspected COVID-19 deaths through Sunday, she said.

Ordoñez, an appliance sales executive, said his father suffered from chronic ailments, including hypertension and respiratory problems, but that last week from one day to the next he suddenly struggled to breathe. He took him to the hospital Thursday evening and he died that night.

"The hospital organized everything," Ordoñez said. He had shown up early Friday morning to ask about his father's condition, but they told him he was already being buried.

"I tried to identify the grave the best I could, because there are other bodies there," he said. "But we can't raise our voices much. Fear is pervasive in our country."

If something else killed him, then why did the hospital bury him without letting his family be present and why did doctors tell Ordoñez to self-quarantine for two weeks, he wondered.

Neighboring Honduras and El Salvador have taken strict measures to try to slow the virus' spread. Honduras has about 2,000 confirmed infections and El Salvador has about 1,000. Costa Rica has more than 800.

A request for comment from Vice President Rosario Murillo, the government's spokeswoman and Ortega's wife, was not answered.

But it appears the government is beginning to recognize what is coming.

At the end of April, the Health Ministry called a meeting of all the hospital directors and top-level health officials at ministry offices.

"They told them this is getting serious, that every hospital needs to prepare," said Róger Pasquier, president of the Nicaraguan Anesthesiology Association. "This call is very late. They didn't take isolation measures, they haven't protected health workers, there aren't sufficient beds in any Managua hospital, nor any regional hospital."

"Contrary to what is shared officially, I know through my medical colleagues that we have a great number of people sick in Managua, Masaya, Matagalpa and Chinandega, where there is an outbreak that could be very dangerous," Pasquier said.

Many doctors fear speaking publicly, because of government retaliation. Pasquier said he was speaking freely "because I'm not being political; we just want to save lives in a dramatic moment for the world."

A doctor at another hospital for the National Police in Managua said there were 18 patients there with suspected COVID-19 infections. None had been tested, but were diagnosed based on symptoms and lung x-rays, said the doctor who requested anonymity because she was not authorized to speak.

José Antonio Vásquez, president of the Nicaraguan Medical Unit, an organization of doctors that formed after the protests of April 2018, said the group had identified 42 doctors, nurses and technicians who have suspected infections.

In Chinandega, fear has deepened in recent days, a combination of more frequent sightings of the white-suited men in pickups and recent deaths of a couple of well-known local figures. The area has sea connections to El Salvador and a corridor for truck cargo with Honduras. Local officials have said nothing.

The local doctor said it appeared as though from Friday to Monday more than half of the city's formal businesses had closed. Doctors, nurses and technicians at the public hospital have been infected due to a lack of protective equipment and early recognition.

"If we manage to survive this, it's because God is great," the doctor said. "There's no other explanation."

"There's a lot of nervousness here," said university student Pablo Antonio Alvarado, mentioning a couple acquaintances in Chinandega he heard were infected. "They say we're the epicenter of the pandemic, like Wuhan in China."

He described the white-suited men riding with coffins in pickups as looking like "astronauts." The Chinandega doctor said they were hospital orderlies given the task of quickly disposing of the dead.

Ordoñez was left with more questions than answers about his father's death. "The doctor told me (the virus) was dangerous," while also insisting the elder Ordoñez didn't have it, he said.

"I didn't bury him, they buried him," Ordoñez said. "And before, they had buried others, at dawn, because beside him there were seven or eight more graves."

'The grief is so unbearable': Virus takes toll on Navajo

By FELICIA FONSECA and TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

TUBA CITY, Arizona (AP) — The virus arrived on the reservation in early March, when late winter winds were still blowing off the mesas and temperatures at dawn were often barely above freezing.

It was carried in from Tucson, doctors say, by a man who had been to a basketball tournament and then made the long drive back to a small town in the Navajo highlands. There, believers were preparing to gather in a small, metal-walled church with a battered white bell and crosses on the window.

On a dirt road at the edge of the town, a hand-painted sign with red letters points the way: "Chilchinbeto Church of the Nazarene."

From that church, COVID-19 took hold on the Navajo Nation, hopscotching across families and clans and churches and towns, and leaving the reservation with some of the highest infection rates in the U.S.

Crowding, tradition and medical disparities have tangled together on the tribe's land — an area nearly three times the size of Massachusetts — creating a virological catastrophe.

And the most basic measures to fight the virus' spread — handwashing and isolation — can be difficult.

One-third of the homes across the vast, dry reservation don't have running water, forcing families to haul it in. Many in close-knit Navajo communities live in crowded houses where self-quarantine is impossible, and many must drive hours to the nearest grocery store. To most Navajo, isolating an infected person from their family is deeply alien.

The Chilchinbeto meeting, which brought people together from across the region, included everything from discussions of church finances to a joyful meal of roast beef. They prayed for strength in the face of the new virus, which seemed like a distant worry.

Instead, it was already in their midst.

"We're such a small town. We're so remote," said Evelyn Cleveland-Gray, a Chilchinbeto official who struggled to keep residents from panicking as the virus ripped through the town of about 500, eventually killing more than a dozen people. "We never thought it would hit us."

By now, the loss is felt across the Navajo Nation.

With roughly 175,000 people on the reservation, which straddles Arizona, New Mexico and a small corner of Utah, the Navajo Nation has seen 3,122 cases — a rate of nearly 18 cases per 1,000 people. At least 100 people have died.

This story was produced with the support of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

If Navajo Nation were its own state, it would have the highest per-capita rate of confirmed positive coronavirus cases in the country, behind only New York. In the states it spans, the number of cases and deaths among people who are Native American, on and off the reservations, is disproportionately high.

There was the beloved 42-year-old high school basketball coach who left behind five children. There was the carpenter who lived with his brother and died on Easter morning at age 34. There was the 28-year-old mother who competed in Native American pageants.

And on the far western side of the reservation, there's the extended Dinehdeal family who live in a cluster of prefabricated houses and mobile homes in Tuba City. A dog on a long chain lies in the driveway, sleeping in the soft red dirt that sweeps across the landscape. Another runs in circles waiting for someone, anyone, to throw a ball. Pickup trucks, some in various states of dismemberment, are scattered across the property.

This is where generations of Dinehdeal children have ridden their bikes and played basketball against a weathered plywood backboard. It's where the men have tinkered with those pickups and where the entire family — the tight-knit web of parents, aunties, uncles and cousins raised like siblings — have gathered for potluck meals, birthday parties and holiday celebrations. It's where relatives from out of town have always been welcomed.

Now, it's where the family mourns.

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It began in late March with Maryann Welch, who at age 82 was still riding horses and running a small sheep ranch on Navajo Mountain, the dome-shaped expanse that looms over this part of the reservation. When she started to feel sick, her nephew and her 71-year-old sister, Eva Dinehdeal, drove the 90 miles from Tuba City to take her to the hospital. Soon Eva was sick, too, with low oxygen levels and a fever. Then it was Maryann's son, Larry, a veteran of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, who divided his time between the ranch and the Tuba City houses.

Larry and Maryann died a day apart. Larry was buried on what would have been his 60th birthday.

Dinehdeal's daughter, Gloria Uriarte, had moved back to Tuba City from outside Phoenix with her 6-year-old son, Curly, thinking they'd be safer there as the virus spread. But almost immediately she was caring for nearly everyone around her, often using the traditional practices that are deeply ingrained among Navajos. She kept sage boiling on the stove, for example, and encouraged everyone to drink it.

Gloria, 45, didn't escape sickness. She and her mother died April 11 within hours of each other, in different hospitals.

In a small bedroom in one of the prefabricated houses, just down the hall from a wooden table displaying the three women's urns, Curly was tucked under a blanket. He is immobile and nonverbal after a brain injury and doesn't know what happened to his mother. His family keeps Gloria alive for him by playing recordings of her voice on a cell phone. Set on a pillow next to Curly's head of thick, black hair, Gloria gently calls out "Good morning, good morning."

Curly coos softly.

Gloria's sister and her partner are now caring for him.

The losses stripped the family of their matriarchs. They regret not learning how to make Eva's famous yeast bread, which she sold at the local flea market every Friday. They wonder what to do with her clothes, which fill every closet in the house and its storage sheds.

Angelina Dinehdeal, one of Eva's daughters-in-law, is trying to hold the family together. Grief and exhaustion weigh heavily on her.

"It just seems like every time I take someone in (to the hospital) they never come out," she said.

In Navajo tradition, communities gather for four days of mourning before a burial. Sacred stories are told. Elders talk to the young about coping with death. Donations are collected to cover funeral costs. In a culture where dying is rarely spoken about, it is a chance to openly grieve.

But with families hunkered down to avoid the spread of the virus, burials have become rushed graveside services. With funeral homes overwhelmed by the dead, some families have sidestepped tradition and had their relatives cremated.

Mourning is done over text messages, video conferences and three-way phone calls.

"You can't even go see your mom and dad. You can't see your relatives to find that comfort," said Cheryl Blie, a Navajo who lost a cousin to the virus. "And the grief - the grief is so unbearable."

The virus hit like a tsunami in mid-March, and smaller medical centers quickly were overwhelmed. Health problems that make COVID-19 more deadly, such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease, are all much more common among Native Americans than the general U.S. population.

A cobbled-together coalition of caregivers—doctors from the federal Indian Health Service and local hospitals, Navajo Nation officials, the National Guard, community health nurses, volunteer doctors, nurses and EMTs from across the country—has rallied as the number of cases grow.

The doctors are exhausted, the hospitals don't have enough staff and the protective gear is carefully rationed. Three isolation centers were set up in basketball gyms—normally packed with fans for a sport that's hugely popular among Navajos—to keep those recovering from COVID-19 away from their families. The sickest patients are flown to larger hospitals off the reservation.

Medical workers on the reservation work relentlessly.

When an oxygen valve failed on a ventilator at the Kayenta Health Center, a volunteer hand-pumped oxygen into a patient's lungs for three hours.

"You literally cannot move. You have to breathe for them," said Cindy Robison, an Air Force veteran

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who was among the volunteers. "You are paralyzed by the overwhelming 'I know I can't abandon this position even for a second.'"

The Navajo Nation or Diné Bikéyah includes some of the most rugged, beautiful and isolated land in the United States. The reservation stretches across 27,000 square miles (70,000 square kilometers) with just over 6 people per square mile.

But that statistic hides how most Navajos actually live: in small towns or isolated outposts. A trip to the grocery store or the post office is a chance to socialize, shake hands, hug and catch up — all the things people are asked to avoid doing now.

Navajo Nation officials are trying to get people to isolate, putting out statements about coronavirus in English and Navajo, and imposing nightly curfews and weekend lockdowns. They've closed non-essential businesses and popular tourist sites like Canyon de Chelly and Monument Valley. They also must balance the restrictions with the realities of reservation life.

"I hear a lot of people saying, 'Close the borders, shut down, shut down,'" said Jonathan Nez, the Navajo Nation president. "Our folks are supposed to be helping get water for the livestock, water for the household. You shut all that down, how can our elders wash their hands with soap and water if there's no water available for them?"

If Navajos are susceptible to the virus' spread in part because they are so closely knit, that's also how many believe they will beat it.

They're leaving boxes of food and supplies on the steps of elders' homes or in grocery bags hanging from fence posts. They're driving for hours to take relatives to hospitals. They're delivering water to friends and family.

Outside a tribal office in Tuba City, a steady stream of pickup trucks waited to fill large plastic containers.

Raynelle Hoskie was pulling a small trailer behind her black Ford pickup, rushing so she could make it to her shift at a convenience store a half hour out of town. With her husband working in Florida, she was hauling water for her six children and her in-laws who live next door in a small traditional Navajo home, or hogan.

To her, that togetherness is a strength of the Navajo people and a sign of tradition.

Hoskie unraveled a blue hose and connected it to the spigot, then dropped the other end in the water tank.

"Stop making us look like we're weak," she said. "We're a strong nation. Our language is strong, we're tough. We've always used our traditional herbs, our traditional ceremonies. They're very powerful."

Trump faces virus at White House amid push to 'reopen' US

By ZEKE MILLER and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump insisted Monday his administration has "met the moment" and "prevailed" on coronavirus testing, even as the White House itself became a potent symbol of the risk facing Americans everywhere by belatedly ordering everyone who enters the West Wing to wear a mask.

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Shortage of coronavirus testing has long been a sore spot for the president, but he insisted anew that everyone who wants a test can get one. The pledge, first issued by Trump more than two months ago, comes as governors across the country continue to call on the federal government to do more to boost supply to meet the requirements needed to begin "reopening" the nation.

The upbeat message was undercut by the new protective measures implemented to keep Trump safe, evidenced by the absence of Vice President Mike Pence and three of the nation's top medical experts, who

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were in various states of isolation after two cases of COVID-19 were confirmed among staffers in one of the most-protected complexes in America.

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The stepped-up protective measures comes as Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the CDC, and the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, Dr. Stephen Hahn, were all quarantining after exposure to the White House staffer.

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Trump was scheduled to travel to the state on Thursday, according to advisories from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Decisions about how fast to reopen are being made with the general election less than six months away, and Trump and other incumbents facing it in the midst of a public health and economic crisis.

"If we do this carefully, working with the governors, I don't think there's a considerable risk," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on "Fox News Sunday." "Matter of fact, I think there's a considerable risk of not reopening. You're talking about what would be permanent economic damage to the American public."

Mnuchin was one of several economic advisers the White House dispatched on Sunday to place the focus on the merits of loosening restrictions on the economy. Yet attention to possible risks of infection also turned to how the virus even found its way into the White House.

Fauci's institute said he was "taking appropriate precautions" to mitigate the risk to others while still carrying out his duties, teleworking from home but willing to go to the White House if called. Officials said both Redfield and Hahn will be self-quarantining for two weeks.

Pence's press secretary, Katie Miller, tested positive for the coronavirus on Friday, making her the second

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person who works at the White House complex known to test positive for the virus in the past week. A military service member who acts as a valet to the president tested positive on Thursday, the first known instance for a person in close proximity to Trump at the White House.

The announced precautions contrast with a president who has declined to wear a face covering in meetings at the White House or at his public events.

Kevin Hassett, an adviser to Trump and the former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, acknowledged Sunday it's "scary to go to work" in the White House, calling the West Wing a "small, crowded place. It's, you know, a little bit risky."

Hassett said he wears a mask when necessary and practices "aggressive social distancing." Appearing on CBS' "Face the Nation," he said any fears are tempered by frequent testing, access to an excellent medical team and his belief that this is a time "when people have to step up and serve their country."

As nations reopen, warning emerges about virus tracing voids

By JIM MUSTIAN, CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and LORI HINNANT Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A top world health official Monday warned that countries are essentially driving blind in reopening their economies without setting up strong contact tracing to beat back flare-ups of the coronavirus.

The warning came as France and Belgium emerged from lockdowns, the Netherlands sent children back to school, and many U.S. states pressed ahead by lifting business restrictions. Tesla CEO Elon Musk announced the company's 10,000-worker electric car factory near San Francisco was operating Monday in defiance of coronavirus health orders that closed nonessential businesses.

Authorities have cautioned that the scourge could come back with a vengeance without widespread testing and tracing of infected people's contacts with others.

Fears of infection spikes in countries that have loosened up came true in recent days in Germany, where new clusters were linked to three slaughterhouses; in Wuhan, the Chinese city where the crisis started; and in South Korea, where 85 new cases were linked to nightclubs that reopened after anti-virus measures were eased.

The World Health Organization's emergencies chief, Dr. Michael Ryan, said that robust contact tracing measures adopted by Germany and South Korea provide hope that those countries can detect and stop virus clusters before they get out of control.

But he said other nations exiting lockdowns have not effectively employed contact tracing investigators who contact people who test positive, track down their contacts and get them into quarantine before they can spread the virus. The coronavirus can spread before people feel sick, making it important to act quickly. Ryan declined to name specific countries.

"Shutting your eyes and trying to drive through this blind is about as silly an equation as I've seen," Ryan said. "And I'm really concerned that certain countries are setting themselves up for some seriously blind driving over the next few months."

At the White House, President Donald Trump declared: "We have met the moment, and we have prevailed." He said later that he was referring to virus testing and insisted all Americans who want tests can get them even though experts say that capacity does not exist.

Only on Monday did his administration say it believed it had enough tests for a nationwide testing campaign to address significant death rates in nursing homes and other senior care facilities.

Worldwide, the virus has infected a confirmed 4.1 million people and killed more than 285,000, including over 150,000 in Europe and 80,000 in the U.S., according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Experts believe those numbers understate the outbreak's true toll.

More than 10,000 people are involved in contact tracing in Germany, a country of 83 million, or about one-quarter the size of the United States.

Britain abandoned an initial contact-tracing effort in March when the virus's rapid spread made it impossible. Now it is recruiting 18,000 people.

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France's health minister has promised robust contact tracing and pledged the country would test 700,000 people weekly. On Monday, with progress unclear, the nation's highest court ordered the government to take extreme care in protecting privacy rights, casting doubt on how to proceed.

In the U.S., where health officials will watch closely in coming days for any resurgence of the virus two weeks after states began gradually reopening, contact tracing is a patchwork of approaches and readiness levels. States are hiring and training contact tracers, and experts say hundreds of thousands will be needed across the country.

Apple, Google, some U.S. states and European countries are developing contact-tracing apps that show whether someone crossed paths with an infected person. But the technology supplements and does not replace labor-intensive human work, experts say.

Massachusetts is training more than 1,000 contact tracers aided by software. In the hardest-hit corner of the U.S., New York, contact tracers began online training Monday. Gov. Andrew Cuomo said some upstate areas can ease restrictions after Friday.

Meantime, a new study indicates that New York City's death toll from the coronavirus may be thousands of fatalities more than the official tally.

Between mid-March and early May, about 24,000 more people died in the city than researchers would ordinarily expect that time of year, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analysis said. That's about 5,300 more deaths than previously attributed to the virus for the period.

The "excess deaths" could have been caused indirectly by the outbreak, in some cases by swamping the health care system and delaying lifesaving care for other health problems, the report said.

Another new CDC report showed how difficult and time-consuming it is to track virus cases. The analysis of California efforts in the early days of the U.S. outbreak found that contacting travelers from China and Iran consumed nearly 1,700 hours of time by local authorities and still didn't stop the virus from entering the state.

In loosening up their country's lockdown, German authorities have spelled out a specific level of infection that could lead to the reimposition of local area restrictions. Other countries — and U.S. states — have been vague about what would be enough to trigger another clampdown.

With Monday's partial reopening in France, crowds formed at some Paris Metro stations, but the city's notorious traffic jams were absent. Half the stores on the Champs-Élysées were open.

Parisian hairdressers planned to charge a fee for the disposable protective gear they must give customers. Walk-ins will be a thing of the past, said Brigitte L'Hoste, manager of the Hair de Beauté salon.

"The face of beauty will change, meaning clients won't come here to relax. Clients will come because they need to," said Aurelie Bollini, a beautician at the salon. "They will come and aim at getting the maximum done in the shortest time possible."

Hair salons in Florida contended with tight regulations and pent-up demand as they reopened across much of the state. The Fringe Salon in Naples was booked for the entire week, its capacity limited by social-distancing rules.

"It's just pure chaos. Everybody's excited about getting their haircut," said owner Trish Boettcher.

Quarantines reached into the offices of two U.S. governors. Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker joined his entire staff in working from home after a top aide tested positive for COVID-19. The state recorded nearly 800 deaths in the seven days ending Sunday, making it Illinois' deadliest week yet. Iowa's Gov. Kim Reynolds began a partial quarantine.

In South Korea, the government clamped down again, halting school reopenings planned for this week and closing nightclubs and bars in the Seoul region that had just reopened. It is trying to track down 5,500 patrons of a Seoul nightlife district through credit-card transactions, cellphone records and security footage.

Roughly half of Spain's 47 million people shifted into looser restrictions, beginning to socialize, shop in small stores and sit outdoors at restaurants. Madrid and Barcelona remained under lockdown.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a modest easing of the country's lockdown but urged citizens not to squander progress. Some were confused as the government shifted its slogan from "Stay

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at Home" to "Stay Alert." Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland stuck with the old motto.

Some of the globe's premier sports leagues were taking steps to resume competition, with men's Bundesliga soccer in Germany set to start Saturday and U.S. NASCAR racing on Sunday in South Carolina — without fans at the sites.

Major League Baseball owners approved making a proposal to the players' union that could lead to the season starting around the Fourth of July weekend in ballparks without fans.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

The White House is requiring everyone who enters the West Wing to wear a mask or face covering after coronavirus scares near President Donald Trump, spotlighting the challenge Trump faces in instilling confidence in a nation reeling from the pandemic.

The directive comes after two known cases of COVID-19 among staffers in one of the most-protected complexes in America sent three of the nation's top medical experts into quarantine and Vice President Mike Pence into "self-isolation."

The scare comes as the White House this week is emphasizing to the American people the steps being taken to assure their safety — in hopes that will coax them to resume normal activities.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— The White House is recommending that all nursing home residents and staff be tested for the new coronavirus in the next two weeks. Dr. Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force, told governors to focus over the next two weeks on testing all 1 million residents of nursing homes and other senior care facilities, with vigilant monitoring going forward. She says the White House will help states that need it.

— The head of the World Health Organization says there are about seven or eight top candidates for a vaccine to combat the coronavirus. Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus did not identify those candidates during a U.N. Economic and Social Council briefing. But Tedros says an accelerated effort is under way despite earlier predictions that it may take 12 to 18 months for a vaccine.

— Another top world health official is warning that countries are essentially driving blind in reopening their economies without setting up strong contact tracing to beat back flare-ups of the coronavirus. Dr. Michael Ryan, the World Health Organization's emergencies chief, says that robust contact tracing measures adopted by Germany and South Korea provide hope that those countries can detect and stop virus clusters before they get out of control.

— The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says New York City's death toll from the new coronavirus may be thousands of fatalities worse than the official tally kept by the city and state. A CDC analysis says that between mid-March and early May, about 24,000 more people died in the city than researchers would ordinarily expect. That's about 5,300 more deaths during that period.

— Democrats are making new moves toward a virtual presidential nominating convention this August. Party officials are preparing to grant convention organizers in Milwaukee the authority to design a convention that won't require delegates to attend in person. The party's Rules & Bylaws panel will start the process Tuesday with a resolution that grants "maximum flexibility" to the convention organizing committee to set up a gathering that "guarantees every delegate can accomplish their official business without putting their own health at risk." — By Bill Barrow and Stephen Ohlemacher.

— The Associated Press has learned that Major League Baseball owners have given the go-ahead to making a proposal to the players' union that could lead to the coronavirus-delayed season starting around the Fourth of July weekend in ballparks without fans. Spring training would start in early to mid-June, and the All-Star Game, scheduled for Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles on July 14, likely would be called off. —

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By Ronald Blum.

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:

— 4: For the first time in New York City's history, the subways stopped running for four hours a day last week. The shutdown between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. of the subways in New York's 472 stations provided time for a cleaning to disinfect trains. It's a concession that shows how the coronavirus pandemic has seized the gears of New York, one of the world's hardest-hit cities.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **COMFY IS IN:** Since people have spent weeks stuck in isolation, their bodies molded into beds and couches with little to delineate weekends from weekdays, a fashion trend is emerging: Loungewear is comfy, everyday clothing with just a bit of refinement — unfussy and minimal, but pulled together enough for a video conference call with your boss.

— **STYLE OF THE TIME:** The coronavirus has revived a hairstyle in East Africa, one with braided spikes that echo the virus's distinctive shape. The style's growing popularity is in part due to economic hardships linked to virus restrictions. It's cheap, mothers say.

White House recommends tests for all nursing home residents

KEVIN FREKING and BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With deaths mounting at the nation's nursing homes, the White House strongly recommended to governors Monday that all residents and staff at such facilities be tested for the coronavirus in the next two weeks.

Why the government is not ordering testing at the nation's more than 15,000 nursing homes was unclear. Nor was it clear why it is being recommended now, more than two months after the nation's first major outbreak at a nursing home outside of Seattle that eventually killed 45 people.

Vice President Mike Pence, who leads the White House coronavirus task force, told governors on a video conference call that it's the federal government's strong recommendation that such testing be done.

"We really believe that all 1 million nursing home residents need to be tested within next two weeks as well as the staff," added Dr. Deborah Birx, the task force coordinator, according to a recording of the call obtained by The Associated Press.

President Trump has repeatedly said there have been plenty of testing kits and has shifted blame to governors for reacting too slowly on testing, a charge he repeated in a Rose Garden news conference later Monday.

"Frankly, some of the governors were very lax with respect to nursing homes. It was obvious right from the beginning," Trump said, referring to the Washington state outbreak.

Asked why testing was recommended, not ordered, Trump said: "I would certainly consider that. I will mandate it if you'd like."

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More than 27,000 residents and staff have died from outbreaks of the virus at the nation's nursing homes and long-term care facilities, according to an AP tally based on state health departments and media reports. That is about a third of all 80,000 deaths in the U.S. that have been attributed to the virus.

Nursing home operators have said the lack of testing kits has left them nearly powerless to stop the virus from entering their facilities because they haven't been able to identify silent spreaders not showing symptoms.

The American Health Care Association, the main nursing home trade group, welcomed the new testing recommendation but said the federal government needed to do more to make that possible, including allocating billions of additional dollars to the effort.

Charlene Harrington, a professor emeritus of nursing at the University of California, San Francisco, said nursing homes should have been prioritized from the start given their vulnerable populations and questioned why the testing recommendation is only happening now.

"We're two months into it," she said. "If they had done that to begin with, we would've picked up cases early and we wouldn't have so many deaths."

Representatives for the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services did not immediately respond when asked why the agency wasn't making testing a requirement. In mid-March, it asked homes to cease group gatherings and visitations, and to screen staff with such measures as temperature checks.

A senior administration official said taking a tougher stand is still an option.

"If the states aren't able to come back with plans quickly to do it, then there's a good chance we will order them to do that, but we believe that right now there are plenty of tests out there," the official said on condition of anonymity because he lacked authorization to speak to the media.

West Virginia and Texas have already mandated testing for all nursing home residents and staff. And just Sunday, New York, the nation's leader in nursing home deaths, began requiring all staff to be tested twice a week.

Ohio Republican Gov. Mike DeWine said his state was ramping up testing but cast doubt on the feasibility of doing that for everyone in every home.

"I don't know that that's going to get done," said DeWine, whose state has reported nearly 500 deaths in long-term care facilities in three weeks. He added, "There's frankly a lot of people in the medical field who would argue that the testing of everybody in that nursing home might not be the best protocol."

Pence led the White House's weekly call with governors from an isolated room after his press secretary tested positive Friday. Three of the country's top health care officials, including infection disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci, are quarantining themselves on fears they have been exposed to the virus, too.

Organ transplants dive amid virus crisis, start to inch back

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Organ transplants plummeted as COVID-19 swept through communities, with surgeons wary of endangering living donors and unable to retrieve possibly usable organs from the dead -- and hospitals sometimes too full even when they could.

Deceased donor transplants -- the most common kind -- dropped by about half in the U.S. and 90% in France from late February into early April, researchers reported Monday in the journal *Lancet*.

Transplants from living donors had a similarly staggering dive, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, which runs the U.S. transplant system. There were 151 living donor transplants in the U.S. in the second week of March when a pandemic was declared. There were only 16 such transplants the week of April 5, according to UNOS.

It's too soon to know how many people waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant may die not from COVID-19 infection but because the pandemic blocked their chance at a new organ. Kidney transplants make up the vast majority of the drop, but heart, lung and liver transplants declined, too.

Living donations might be rescheduled, but missed organs from a deceased donor are lost opportunities, wrote *Lancet* lead author Dr. Alexandre Loupy, a kidney specialist who heads the Paris Transplant Group.

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More recent counts by UNOS show that transplants starting inching back in late April, with U.S. hospitals trying to decide how to safely ramp up.

Geographic variation could offer important lessons, said another study author, Dr. Peter Reese of the University of Pennsylvania.

"Transplant centers and patients really want to get going again, but there are all these questions," said Reese, whose team is collecting data from Canada and other parts of Europe for a closer look. "We need to be finding places that maintained their transplant rates and finding out what they did."

Hospitals worldwide have postponed all kinds of medical care as they were flooded with coronavirus patients. Transplants are among the hardest choices. They're not elective surgeries. But patients must take immune-suppressing medicines to prevent rejection of their new organ -- putting them at greater risk if they encounter the virus.

France's larger drop may be due to more centralized public health policies than in the state-by-state variations in the U.S., Reese said.

"That equation changes depending on what area of the country you're in," agreed Dr. Abhinav Humar, transplant chief at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. His transplant center, still running, has taken in patients from New York and other harder-hit areas who needed a new liver, had a willing living donor and "can't afford the luxury of waiting two or three months at least" in hopes their original hospital could take them back.

In an average month, New York does about 220 transplants statewide. In the first weeks of April, that had dropped to 23, Samantha Delair of the New York Center for Liver Transplantation told a recent UNOS video conference.

In contrast, the University of California, San Francisco, in an area that has been less affected by the pandemic, has seen small transplant drops, said interim transplant director Dr. Chris Freise.

"We're one of the few centers that kept going through all of this, but it was not without a lot of careful thought," said Freise, who needed daily updates in deciding what transplants were safe to schedule -- and remains on guard as California's social distancing restrictions are gradually lifted.

For example, Freise's team allowed living kidney transplants for people like Herb Hoeptner, who was on the brink of needing dialysis.

"When you have kidneys that have nothing left, you either go on dialysis or you die. That was much more of a concern to me than coronavirus," said Hoeptner.

The 66-year-old from Gilroy, California, realized only after his surgery on March 31 how rare a transplant during the pandemic was.

"I was extremely lucky," added Hoeptner, whose wife, Diane, was his donor and rebounded quickly from the surgery.

In places where COVID-19 is more widespread, living donors are understandably nervous. "We don't yet have a way to talk to living organ donors about what's a reasonable risk," said Penn's Reese.

Deceased donations are even more complicated. Early on, testing shortages made it hard to be sure would-be donors who died of something unrelated like a car crash were virus-free, a problem that's easing. Still, hospitals don't want out-of-town surgeons visiting to retrieve organs and can't always spare a local surgeon to do the job or find a plane to fly the organs where they need to go.

Surgeons must weigh if it makes sense to accept less-than-perfect organs that might work but could keep the recipient hospitalized for longer.

University of Iowa kidney surgeon Dr. David Axelrod said his team is "trying to be careful about it, trying to make sure that they're organs that we think people can come in and get transplanted successfully and go home quickly."

Wolf: 'Cowardly' counties 'choosing to desert' virus fight

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM, MARC LEVY and MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Gov. Tom Wolf attacked local elected officials making plans to reopen in defiance of his shutdown orders as cowards deserting the pandemic battlefield, threatening Monday to block aid to rebellious Pennsylvania counties in an escalating political fight over his administration's handling of the coronavirus.

The normally mild-mannered Democrat fired back after several GOP-controlled counties declared themselves in open rebellion against his stay-at-home orders and shutdown of businesses deemed "non-life-sustaining." The counties assert they have enough testing, equipment and hospital capacity to manage flareups of a virus that has sickened over 57,000 in Pennsylvania, of whom more than 3,700 have died.

Wolf said local officials who pronounce their communities open for business are acting selfishly and risking lives.

"The politicians who are encouraging the people they were elected to lead to quit the fight are acting in a most cowardly way," said Wolf, asserting they are "choosing to desert in the face of the enemy."

Wolf threatened to withhold COVID-19 funding to counties that act unilaterally and "put us all at risk by operating illegally." Under the federal emergency relief law signed by President Donald Trump in late March, Pennsylvania has about \$4 billion in aid that Wolf, for now, has pledged to work with the GOP-controlled Legislature on how to spend.

Republican officials responded sharply Monday to Wolf's "name-calling" and threats, saying their constituents are suffering economically and desperate to get back to work. They say Wolf has been arbitrary and illogical in deciding what areas of the state to reopen and when, refusing to explain his decisions.

"You can only govern if the people are willing to be governed, and the governor has clearly lost his crowd," said Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman, R-Centre.

Nearly all of the counties that are planning to reopen are longtime GOP strongholds that voted heavily for Trump in 2016, helping him become the first Republican to capture the key presidential battleground of Pennsylvania since 1988. Trump was planning to visit the state later this week.

Trump himself weighed in on the intensifying political fight Monday, tweeting: "The great people of Pennsylvania want their freedom now, and they are fully aware of what that entails."

While Wolf still has plenty of Democratic support, Republicans and some business owners have accused him of moving too slowly to restart Pennsylvania's battered and largely shuttered economy. They also criticize the opaque process by which his administration granted waivers to some businesses to stay open during the shutdown, while denying waivers to others.

The dispute over Wolf's reopening plan, which has simmered for weeks, finally boiled over Friday when counties began declaring their intent to go their own way and disregard lockdown orders that Wolf first issued in March using his emergency powers.

"Governor, we don't question your motives; however, given all that has unfolded over the past several weeks, we must question your methods," Lancaster County officials wrote to Wolf. "We have consistently called for a data-driven, collaborative and transparent approach to getting through this crisis. In refusing to do so, you have lost the will of many people to continue on the extremely narrow path you have outlined."

Along with Lancaster County — one of the state's most heavily populated — Dauphin, Franklin, Lebanon and Schuylkill counties also indicated they plan to lift pandemic restrictions without Wolf's blessing beginning this week. Berks is moving in that direction, and Huntingdon said it supports businesses that choose to reopen without state permission. Together, those counties represent more than 1.7 million of Pennsylvania's 12.8 million residents.

Cumberland County, after making noise about reopening over the weekend, "clarified" its position Monday, saying in an open letter to residents: "This move, we are advised, has no legal basis, and would not stand up."

New infections have been trending down in much of the state after nearly two months of social distancing, and Wolf has been easing restrictions in lightly impacted counties. But frustration among counties

that remain locked down is growing amid mounting economic devastation. Around 2 million people have lost their jobs since mid-March, including self-employed and gig workers, and there have been miles-long lines at food and milk giveaways.

York County restaurant owner Themis Sacarellos reopened his two diners Sunday and offered table service — something that is prohibited everywhere in the state right now — saying eight weeks was long enough to be shut down.

He said he is taking appropriate precautions, eliminating more than half his tables to promote social distancing, while staff are wearing masks and using special cleaners on tables and seats.

"We don't believe we're defying the governor's orders," Sacarellos said Monday. "We believe he's defying the people."

Wolf insisted that now is not the time to ease restrictions in counties that remain virus hot spots.

"This is not a time to surrender. This is the time to rededicate ourselves to the task of beating this virus," he said.

He warned businesses that choose to "follow the whims of local politicians and ignore the law" by reopening that they risk businesses licenses, certificates of occupancy and other required governmental approvals to operate.

Companies that ignore the shutdown order could also jeopardize their insurance coverage and put themselves at risk of having their claims denied, said his insurance commissioner, Jessica Altman.

She said many policies have provisions that exclude coverage stemming from "illegal acts or conduct," and could result in denied claims for property damage, protection from liability and other hazards should a business decide to reopen in violation of Wolf's order.

Atlanta-area DA, 3rd outside prosecutor, to take Arbery case

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — Georgia's attorney general appointed a black district attorney from the Atlanta area Monday to take over the case of a white father and son charged with killing a black man, making her the third outside prosecutor in a slaying that's prompted a national outcry over suspicions that race played a role in delaying arrests.

Ahmaud Arbery, 25, was fatally shot Feb. 23 by the men who told police they chased him because they believed he matched the appearance of a burglary suspect caught on surveillance video. Gregory McMichael and his son, Travis McMichael, were arrested last week, more than two months later, after video of the shooting appeared online and provoked outrage. Federal prosecutors are also considering hate crimes charges, the Justice Department said; that would allow for a separate case in federal court.

Cobb County District Attorney Joyette M. Holmes takes over the case from prosecutor Tom Durden, who the state's attorney general said asked to be replaced by a prosecutor with a large staff as "this case has grown in size and magnitude." Holmes is based in metro Atlanta, more than 300 miles (480 kilometers) from the coastal Georgia community in Glynn County where the shooting happened.

"District Attorney Holmes is a respected attorney with experience, both as a lawyer and a judge," state Attorney General Chris Carr, a Republican, said in a statement. "And the Cobb County District Attorney's office has the resources, personnel and experience to lead this prosecution and ensure justice is done."

Holmes served four years as a magistrate judge in suburban Cobb County before Gov. Brian Kemp appointed her to fill the vacant district attorney's position last July. According to the Georgia Prosecuting Attorneys Council, Holmes is one of only seven black district attorneys in the state.

An attorney for Arbery's father, Marcus Arbery, applauded the appointment of a new lead prosecutor.

"In order for justice to be carried out both effectively and appropriately in the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, it is imperative that the special prosecutor has no affiliation with the Southeast Georgia legal or law enforcement communities," attorney Benjamin Crump said in a statement. He asked that Holmes "be zealous in her search for justice."

Arbery was hit by three shotgun blasts, according to an autopsy report released Monday by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. One shot grazed his right wrist, and the other two struck him in the chest. Blood

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tests for various drugs and alcohol all came back negative.

Many have expressed frustration with the investigation, questioning whether the arrests took so long because the suspects are white and the victim black. The killing happened in a subdivision bordered by marsh just outside Brunswick, a working-class port city of about 16,000 that also serves as a gateway to beach resorts on neighboring islands.

The McMichaels weren't arrested until after the video became public and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation was asked to look into the killing. Gregory McMichael, 64, and Travis McMichael, 34, have been jailed since Thursday on charges of felony murder and aggravated assault.

With courts largely closed because of the coronavirus, getting an indictment needed to try the men on murder charges will take a while longer still. The soonest a grand jury can convene to hear the case will be mid-June.

It was not known Monday whether the McMichaels had attorneys to represent them. They had no lawyers at their first court appearance Friday.

Gregory McMichael is a former Glynn County police officer who later worked 20 years as an investigator for the local district attorney's office. He retired a year ago.

Glynn County District Attorney Jackie Johnson recused herself from the case because the elder McMichael had worked under her. The first outside prosecutor appointed, District Attorney George Barnhill of the neighboring Waycross Judicial Circuit, stepped aside about a month later because his son works for Johnson as an assistant prosecutor. Durden got the case in mid-April.

Attorneys for Arbery's parents and others, including Carr and the Southern Poverty Law Center, have asked for a federal investigation to weigh whether hate crimes charges should be brought. Georgia has no hate crime law allowing state charges.

At the White House, President Donald Trump said Monday he's following the case "very closely" and that Arbery "looks like a wonderful young guy."

"Certainly the video, it was a terrible looking video to me," Trump said. "But you have a lot of people looking at it and hopefully an answer's going to be arrived at very quickly."

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said in a statement: "We are assessing all of the evidence to determine whether federal hate crimes charges are appropriate."

She said the department is also considering Carr's request for federal authorities to investigate how local police and prosecutors handled the case. She said Carr has been asked to "forward to federal authorities any information that he has."

The father and son told police they thought Arbery matched the appearance of a burglary suspect who they said had been recorded on a surveillance camera some time before, according to the Glynn County police report filed after the shooting.

Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper Jones, has said she thinks her son, a former high school football player, was just jogging in the neighborhood before he was killed.

The leaked video shows a black man running at a jogging pace. A truck is stopped in the road ahead of him, with one white man standing in the pickup's bed and another beside the open driver's side door.

The running man attempts to pass the pickup on the passenger side, moving briefly outside the camera's view. A gunshot sounds, and the video shows the running man grappling with a man over what appears to be a shotgun or rifle. A second shot can be heard, and the running man can be seen punching the other man. A third shot is fired at point-blank range. The running man staggers a few feet and falls face down.

A man who says he recorded the cellphone video of the shooting said he's received death threats.

William R. Bryan is identified as a witness in the police report taken after Arbery's shooting. He has not been charged.

"I had nothing to do with it," Bryan told WJAX-TV in an interview that aired Monday. "I was told I was a witness and I'm not sure what I am, other than receiving a bunch of threats."

AP source: Tagovailoa signs \$30.275 million, 4-year deal

By STEVEN WINE AP Sports Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Now Tua Tagovailoa can pay for that Cadillac Escalade he gave his mom. The new Miami Dolphins quarterback signed a \$30.275 million, four-year guaranteed contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Monday.

The contract includes a \$19.6 million signing bonus, according to the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the Dolphins hadn't announced the deal.

Tagovailoa posted a video on Mother's Day that showed him surprising his mother, Diane, with a black SUV.

Last month the Dolphins selected Tagovailoa with the fifth overall pick in the draft. They are optimistic he'll recover fully from a hip injury that ended his Alabama career in mid-November and hoping he'll become a franchise quarterback.

Tagovailoa says doctors have indicated he's on schedule for a return in 2020. His No. 1 jersey is among the best-selling in the NFL since it was assigned to him last week.

Twitter to label disputed COVID-19 tweets

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Twitter announced Monday it will start alerting users when a tweet makes disputed or misleading claims about the coronavirus.

The new rule is the latest in a wave of stricter policies that tech companies are rolling out to confront an outbreak of virus-related misinformation on their sites. Facebook and Google, which owns YouTube, have already put similar systems in place.

The announcement signals that Twitter is taking its role in amplifying misinformation more seriously. But how the platform enforces its new policy will be the real test, with company leaders already tamping down expectations.

Yoel Roth, Twitter's head of site integrity, acknowledged as much: "We will not be able to take enforcement action on every tweet with incomplete or disputed information about COVID-19."

Roth said Monday the platform has historically applied a "lighter touch" when enforcing similar policies on misleading tweets but said the company is working to improve the technology around the labels.

In February, Twitter said it would add warning labels to doctored or manipulated photos and videos after a recording of Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was slowed down to make it appear as though she slurred her words. But even with obviously fake videos, such as one showing Joe Biden lolling his tongue and grinning that was shared by President Donald Trump, the company has since used the label only twice, in part because of technical glitches.

And Twitter has not added any warning labels to politicians' tweets that violate its policies but are deemed in the "public interest" under a policy the company announced in June 2019.

Under the newest COVID-19 rules, Twitter will decide which tweets are labeled — only taking down posts if they are harmful.

Politicians' tweets will be subject to the notices, which will be available in roughly 40 languages.

Some of the questionable tweets will run with a label underneath that directs users to a link with additional information about COVID-19. Other tweets might be covered entirely by a warning label alerting users that "some or all of the content shared in this tweet conflict with guidance from public health experts regarding COVID-19."

Twitter won't directly fact check or call tweets false on the site, said Nick Pickles, the company's global senior strategist for public policy. The warning labels might send users to curated tweets, public health websites or news articles.

"People don't want us to play the role of deciding for them what's true and what's not true but they do want people to play a much stronger role providing context," Pickles said.

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The notices, which could start appearing as soon as today, could also apply retroactively to past tweets. The fine line is similar to one taken by tech rival Facebook, which has said it doesn't want to be an "arbiter of the truth" but has arranged for third-party fact checkers to review falsehoods on its site. The Associated Press is part of Facebook's fact-checking program.

One example of a disputed tweet that might be labeled on its site includes claims about the origin of COVID-19, which remains unknown. Conspiracy theories about how the virus started and if it is man-made have swirled around social media for months.

Twitter will continue to take down COVID-19 tweets that pose a threat to the safety of a person or group, along with attempts to incite mass violence or widespread civil unrest. The company has been removing bogus coronavirus cures and claims that social distancing or face masks do not curb the virus' spread for several weeks.

IRS sets deadline for relief payment by direct deposit

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL AP Personal Finance Writer

The Treasury Department and the IRS are urging taxpayers who want to get their economic impact payments directly deposited to their bank accounts to enter their information online by Wednesday.

The government has sent out about 130 million payments in the first four weeks of the program by both direct deposit and by mail.

The IRS said Monday that people should use the "Get My Payment" tool on the IRS website by noon on Wednesday to provide their direct deposit information.

After that time, the agency will begin preparing millions of files to send to Bureau of Financial Services for paper checks that will begin arriving through late May and into June. The government cannot provide direct deposit once the process of sending a paper check has commenced.

The Get My Payment tool can be used to check on the status of a payment or provide direct deposit information. It has not always operated smoothly, but the IRS said many of its early glitches have been resolved.

Any U.S. citizen with a valid Social Security number who makes up to \$75,000 will get a payment of \$1,200; married couples who file jointly and earn less than \$150,000 will get \$2,400. The payment steadily declines for those who make more, and phases out for those who earn more than \$99,000; or \$198,000 for married couples. The thresholds are different for those who file as head of household. Parents will get \$500 for each eligible child as well.

The government will automatically send payments based on the information provided in 2019 or 2018 tax returns. Automatic payments will also be sent to those receiving Social Security retirement, disability benefits, Railroad Retirement benefits, Veterans Affairs benefits or Supplemental Security Income soon, according to the IRS.

People who do not traditionally file tax returns, such as low income or homeless, are eligible but must provide basic information through the Non-Filer tool on the site to get payment.

The payments are part of a massive economic relief package Congress passed to lessen the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

New coronavirus test is imperfect step toward mass screening

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new type of coronavirus test offers a cheaper, quicker way to screen for infections, moving the U.S. toward the kind of mass screening that experts say is essential to returning millions of Americans to school and work.

But the first so-called antigen test — announced Saturday by the Food and Drug Administration — is not quite the kind sought by top government health officials. It is less accurate than the current gold standard for testing and can only be run on specialized equipment.

"It is too early to tell," said lab researcher Patricia Simner of Johns Hopkins University, assessing the

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test's impact. "It certainly has the potential to aid in more widespread testing."

Some questions and answers about the new test:

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS TEST?

The test from Quidel Corp. screens for new infections but in a different way. It looks for protein traces of the virus — known as antigens. The same approach is used in rapid tests for flu, strep throat and other infections that are run at the hospital or doctor's office. They represent a trade-off, sacrificing some of the accuracy of more rigorous tests for quicker results at a lower cost.

"They allow you to dramatically expand testing and they're very cheap," said Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former FDA commissioner, in an interview Sunday with CBS. But he acknowledged antigen testing's reduced accuracy: "They're going to miss some patients who have COVID."

Previously, the only way to diagnose active infections was a test that detects the genetic material of the virus. While highly accurate, most of those tests take hours to develop on machines mainly found at commercial labs, hospitals or universities. Abbott Laboratories makes a 15-minute version of the genetic test that runs on its portable machine, but it only does one sample at a time.

WHY IS ANTIGEN TESTING IMPORTANT?

The U.S. is still struggling to increase testing to the levels that most public health experts say are essential. Harvard researchers have projected that the nation needs to be able to do 900,000 daily tests to be able to track new cases and contain new outbreaks as the country reopens. That's more than three times the country's current daily testing rate of about 275,000.

White House adviser Dr. Deborah Birx and other federal officials have said a "breakthrough" in antigen testing could open the way to daily testing before going back to work or school.

The National Institutes of Health is pouring \$1.5 billion into efforts to develop highly accurate, easy-to-use tests that could be performed without professional oversight or special equipment. While an important stepping stone, the Quidel test isn't there yet.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The new test uses a nasal swab like other screening tests, and delivers results in about 15 minutes.

The sample is put in a tube with testing chemicals and then into a cassette that goes into the company's electronic reading device. There, it's exposed to a testing strip embedded with laboratory-made antibodies, the specific blood proteins made by the body's immune system when it detects an infection. If the antigens and antibodies interact, the test is positive.

HOW ACCURATE IS THE TEST?

The new test is expected to detect about 80% of active COVID-19 infections, according to the FDA. That accuracy rate is similar to other rapid antigen tests for seasonal flu.

"They are going to pick up fewer people that are infected," said Simner of Johns Hopkins. "So that's where you see a lot of skepticism around using antigen tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19."

For now, Simner and other experts say negative test results for people showing symptoms should be confirmed with the more accurate genetic test.

"But as you might imagine, that's not a perfect scenario because you have to do twice as many tests when the result isn't positive," said Dr. Robin Patel of the Mayo Clinic.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Many companies are working on versions that would be more accurate, easier to use and more suitable for mass screenings.

OraSure Technologies has a \$700 million federal contract to develop a saliva-based antigen test that could be performed at home. The company has antigen tests for other viruses — including HIV and Ebola — and those have accuracy rates of over 95%. Along with accuracy, the company is focused on speed, aiming to deliver results in 20 to 30 minutes.

"If you are going to test people coming into work you can't make them line up at 3 a.m.," OraSure CEO Stephen Tang said. "You need to be able to get their results quickly."

Massachusetts deaths top 5,000 as governor weighs reopening

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

With states across the country beginning to reopen businesses, Massachusetts' governor is facing mounting pressure to follow suit even as coronavirus deaths reached another grim milestone.

The state reported 129 new deaths Monday, bringing the total to 5,108.

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker recently allowed golf courses to open after an outcry and gun shops began selling again after owners sued. Now, with virus deaths topping 5,000, state leaders and health experts are urging restraint amid growing angst among businesses owners and residents over when and how the economic restrictions will be lifted.

Many business owners are increasingly worried about their livelihoods.

"I've worked my entire life since I was like 13 and it's part of who I am," said Dawn Desrosiers, who owns a hair salon, Hair 4 You, in the small central Massachusetts town of Hubbardston. "For someone to say I can't, it's just been a big blow."

Desrosiers, who started an online petition calling for salons to be able serve one customer at a time, said she has had to pick up landscaping and housing cleaning work just to get by. She said she believes she can operate safely and fears her shop won't last too much longer if she can't get customers or government aid soon, she said.

"It's awful, stressful, thinking am I going to survive?" she said.

There are signs that the virus' spread is slowing in the hard-hit state. But Baker has cautioned that those sprigs of hope could be lost if residents don't remain vigilant.

"We still have a lot of work to do when it comes to getting to the point where we feel like we have our hands and our arms around this virus," Baker recently told reporters.

The governor has said the goal is to allow some businesses to reopen in a "limited fashion" starting May 18, assuming the situation continues to improve. On Monday, he unveiled a four-phase plan for reopening businesses — called Start, Cautious, Vigilant and the New Normal — but did not say which industries would reopen in which phase.

Massachusetts has seen a downward trend in the number of people hospitalized for COVID-19, and the percentage of those testing positive for the virus is lower than in April even as the state has increased the number of tests it's conducting.

Yet, the number of deaths doubled in just over two weeks.

More than half of the deaths in Massachusetts have occurred in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, and more than 98% of people had underlying conditions. In one of the deadliest known outbreaks at a long-term care facility in the country, more than 70 residents sickened with the coronavirus have died at a home for aging veterans in the western Massachusetts city of Holyoke.

The state's death toll is most likely higher because the count does not include people who have died but were never tested.

Dr. Jeremy Faust, an emergency medicine physician in Boston, said it's dangerous to reopen until the total number of deaths from any cause returns to levels seen in a typical year.

"That's how you know that the effect this virus is having on our society is no longer on the historic scale that it was the past few weeks," said Faust, with Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty said he was concerned about opening too quickly after dozens of employees at a Walmart in the city tested positive.

"A lot of people are hurting. I get that, but you can't open up and really expect to close again," he said. "I think you really have to open up methodically with a plan and see with it ... with the scientists and the doctors, the public health experts tell you what to do."

With more than 78,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases, Massachusetts has the third highest number among U.S. states behind New York and New Jersey. The state's hardest hit communities include Chelsea, a densely populated suburb of Boston with a large immigrant population. Worcester has also seen a number of cases.

There have been more than 80,000 deaths across the U.S., according to Johns Hopkins University. The

number of infections is thought to be far higher because many people have not been tested, and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

Criticism of Baker reached a new intensity last week when hundreds of protesters with flags bearing President Donald Trump's name and signs with messages such as "Tyranny is not Leadership" gathered outside the statehouse calling on the governor to reopen the economy. And a federal judge rebuked Baker for closing gun shops, saying he infringed on residents' Second Amendment rights.

After one golf course owner vowed to defy the shutdown order and begin booking tee times again anyway, Baker allowed golf courses to reopen, with some restrictions. That has angered other businesses who also want to reopen.

"To hear that was just like a slap in the face," Cheryl Purcell of Pooch Paws, a Hanover pet grooming salon, told WBZ-TV. "It's a joke now, to me."

Ice cream shop owner Judith Herrell said she's eager to have her business back to normal again. But she believes the risks are still too great.

"I know I'm probably shooting myself in the foot but I want my employees to be safe, I want to be safe, I want the people that I know in the community to be safe," said the owner of Herrell's Ice Cream & Bakery in the western Massachusetts city of Northampton.

"We've had enough deaths already," she said. "Enough is enough."

Gorsuch, likely key vote, seems to favor Oklahoma tribe

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Justice Neil Gorsuch appeared Monday to be a pivotal vote for the proposition that a large chunk of eastern Oklahoma remains an American Indian reservation, a question the Supreme Court failed to resolve a year ago.

The justices heard arguments by phone in an appeal by a Native American man who claims state courts have no authority to try him for a crime committed on reservation land that belongs to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

The reservation once encompassed 3 million acres (12,100 square kilometers), including most of Tulsa, the state's second-largest city. In a separate case, a federal appeals court threw out a state murder conviction because the crime occurred on land assigned to the tribe before Oklahoma became a state and Congress never clearly eliminated the Creek Nation reservation it created in 1866.

Gorsuch didn't participate in the earlier case because he took part in it when he served on the appeals court in Denver before becoming a justice in 2017. The other eight justices were apparently evenly divided, and they took up a different case so the full complement of nine justices could rule.

Monday's case involved 71-year-old Jimcy McGirt, who is serving a 500-year prison sentence for molesting a child. Oklahoma state courts rejected his argument that his case does not belong in Oklahoma courts and that federal prosecutors should instead handle his case.

Several justices voiced concerns that a ruling for the tribe could have big consequences for criminal cases, but also tax and other regulatory issues.

But Gorsuch suggested that those consequences might be overstated, based on what has occurred since the appeals court ruling in the murder case. "I would have thought that ... we might have seen a tsunami of cases, if there were a real problem here, that we haven't seen," the justice said.

Mithun Mansinghani, the Oklahoma solicitor general, said 178 inmates have sought to reopen their cases, calling those "just the initial cracks in the dam."

But Ian Gershengorn, representing McGirt, said inmates who face equally stiff penalties in federal court and those who already have served a significant portion of their prison terms might do nothing.

If he wins at the Supreme Court, McGirt could potentially be retried in federal court.

Jerry Stiller, comedian and 'Seinfeld' actor, dies at 92

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — Jerry Stiller, who for decades teamed with wife Anne Meara in a beloved comedy duo and then reached new heights in his senior years as the high-strung Frank Costanza on the classic sitcom "Seinfeld" and the basement-dwelling father-in-law on "The King of Queens," died at 92, his son Ben Stiller announced Monday.

"I'm sad to say that my father, Jerry Stiller, passed away from natural causes," his son said in a tweet. "He was a great dad and grandfather and the most dedicated husband to Anne for about 62 years. He will be greatly missed. Love you Dad," wrote Ben, who followed in his father's comedic footsteps and became an A-list box office star with movies like "Tropic Thunder," "Dodgeball" and "There's Something About Mary."

Jerry Stiller was a multi-talented performer who appeared in an assortment of movies, playing Walter Matthau's police sidekick in the thriller "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three" and Divine's husband Wilbur Turnblad in John Waters' twisted comedy "Hairspray."

He also wrote an autobiography, "Married to Laughter," about his 50-plus year marriage to soul mate and comedic cohort Meara, who died in 2015. And his myriad television spots included everything from "Murder She Wrote" to "Law & Order" — along with 36 appearances alongside Meara on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Stiller, although a supporting player on "Seinfeld," created some of the Emmy-winning show's most enduring moments: co-creator and model for the "bro," a brassiere for men; a Korean War cook who inflicted food poisoning on his entire unit; an ever-simmering salesman controlling his explosive temper with the shouted mantra, "Serenity now!"

Jason Alexander, his former TV son on "Seinfeld," said Stiller "was perhaps the kindest man I ever had the honor to work beside. He made me laugh when I was a child and every day I was with him." Added Billy Eichner "Seeing Jerry Stiller on screen instantly made you happy."

Stiller earned a 1997 Emmy nomination for his indelible "Seinfeld" performance. In a 2005 Esquire interview, Stiller recalled that he was out of work and not the first choice for the role of Frank Costanza, father to Jason Alexander's neurotic George.

"My manager had retired," he said. "I was close to 70 years old, and had nowhere to go."

He was initially told to play the role as a milquetoast husband with an overbearing wife, Estelle, played by Estelle Harris. But the character wasn't working — until Stiller suggested his reincarnation as an over-the-top crank who matched his wife scream for scream.

It jump-started the septuagenarian's career, landing him a spot playing Vince Lombardi in a Nike commercial and the role of another over-the-top dad on the long-running sitcom "King of Queens."

While he was known as a nut-job father on the small screen, Stiller and wife Meara raised two children in their longtime home on Manhattan's Upper West Side: daughter Amy, who became an actress, and son Ben, who would become perhaps the most famous Stiller as a writer, director and actor.

He and Ben performed together in "Shoeshine," which was nominated for a 1988 Academy Award in the short subject category.

Stiller was considerably quieter and reflective in person than in character — although just as funny. The son of a bus driver and a housewife, Stiller grew up in Depression-era Brooklyn. His inspiration to enter show business came at age 8, when his father took him to see the Marx Brothers in the comedy classic "A Night at the Opera."

Years later, Stiller met Groucho Marx and thanked him.

Stiller earned a drama degree at Syracuse University after serving in World War II, and then headed to New York City to launch his career. There was a brief involvement in Shakespearean theater, including a \$55 a week job with Jack Klugman in "Coriolanus."

But his life and career took off after he met Meara in spring 1953. They were married that fall.

The seemingly mismatched pair — he a short, stocky Jewish guy from Brooklyn, she a tall, Irish Catholic from the Long Island suburbs — shared an immediate onstage chemistry, too. They were soon appearing

on "The Ed Sullivan Show" and working nightclubs nationwide.

The pair also wrote and performed radio commercials, most memorably a series of bits for a little-known wine called Blue Nun. The duo's ads boosted sales by 500%. Ben Stiller recalled trips with his sister to California when his parents would head west to do television appearances.

The couple went on to appear as a team in dozens of film, stage and television productions. One of them was "After-Play," a 1995 off-Broadway show written by Meara.

Actor Michael McKean honored Stiller on Twitter as "a great comic actor and a splendid man. He and his wife, Anne, were royalty but they would've laughed in your face if you said so. And then hugged the hell out of you."

Jerry Seinfeld also shared a tribute, posting a photo of himself holding "The Last Two People in the World," a 1967 comedy album from Stiller and Meara. Seth Rogen tweeted: "He made me laugh till I cried on many occasions."

Stiller joined "Seinfeld" in 1993, and moved on to "King of Queens" when the other Jerry & company went off the air in 1998. He also appeared in Ben Stiller's spoof on modeling, "Zoolander," released in 2001.

Funeral delayed: tiaras, white outfits, turquoise face masks

By JACQUELYN MARTIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When the time finally came, they laid Joanne Paylor to rest the finest way they could during a pandemic. A church service was out. The viewing had to be socially distanced. Golden chairs for the outdoor memorial service were carefully spaced apart.

Still, the spirit of "Mama Joe" — who, at the age of 62, had plans to return to college in the fall to get a master's degree -- infused it all.

Many women wore tiaras, and men sported crisp white suits. There were turquoise face masks reading "Joanne." And the voice of Joanne herself echoed over the loudspeakers: "I love y'all," a remnant of a voicemail she once left her son.

The coronavirus pandemic is delaying funerals and forcing changes to families' plans for memorializing their loved ones. For the Paylor family this has hit close to home.

Iran "Bang" Paylor and his mother were closer than close. Of her four children, he was the only son, and they shared a special bond.

"My mother was a very giving, generous person. She believed in great strides for the African American community — single mothers in particular," Iran said.

The first person in her family to attend college, "she believed in education, that it could break down barriers and help you achieve all your dreams," he said. She wanted to start a fund for single mothers over 30 to return to college, just as she had done.

When his mother died at home in southwest Washington on March 8 of what appears to have been a heart attack, her family planned a funeral for March 21. And then, Iran said, "the coronavirus came in like a storm."

"I had heard about it being in China, and China is so far I paid that no attention," he said. "But the first time I heard about it affecting daily life is when they called me and canceled the funeral."

A March 20 district prohibition on mass gatherings had made the large church service impossible, one day before it was planned. Iran thought the family could just wait it out, but then the district issued a stay-at-home order, effective April 1.

"My mother was active in community outreach for 20 years. We wanted a big funeral. I would have expected 300 people," he said.

Preachers said they were unable to deliver the sermon. Singers and praise dancers canceled. All event spaces closed. People were scared to attend, despite promises of social distancing and an outdoor ceremony.

Then the stay-at-home order was extended — and extended again, through May 15.

Through it all, Joanne's body remained at a funeral home, her family hoping against hope that they

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could go back to the original plan — a large ceremony, in her community church, grieving together with family and hundreds of friends.

With Mother's Day approaching, the funeral home indicated it was time to lay her to rest. Iran wanted the family to be able to visit his mother at her grave, a mausoleum he had built especially for her, the start of a new family plot.

He wanted to be able to sit on a granite bench at his mother's graveside and pay his respects — a bench that can't even be ordered now because the factory in China is shuttered.

On Sunday May 3, they finally said goodbye to Joanne, who leaves behind 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A horse-drawn hearse brought her to the cemetery for her interment.

Condolence letters were sent by D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and the president of Joanne's alma mater, Trinity Washington University. For the indoor viewing, people cycled in, 10 people at a time, careful to stay six feet apart.

At the door of the chapel at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Suitland-Silver Hill, Maryland, stood Iran and his three sisters. Women from Models Inc., the community organization founded by Iran and supported by his mother, wore glittering tiaras.

Golden chairs were set up outside for the memorial service, spaced apart. Some people stood, six feet from one another across the lawn of the cemetery, dressed to the nines -- all in white, to symbolize an angel.

His mother would have loved it, Iran said. Joanne always was very fashion-forward.

In her honor, the family has founded the Joanne Paylor Women of Excellence Scholarship Award at Trinity Washington University.

Guaidó advisers quit following bungled Venezuela raid

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó said Monday that two U.S.-based political advisers have resigned in the fallout from a failed incursion into the Caribbean nation led by a former-Green Beret aimed at capturing President Nicolás Maduro.

Guaido said he accepted the resignations of Juan José Rendon and Sergio Vergara, who had signed an agreement for a mission to arrest Maduro with U.S. military veteran Jordan Goudreau. While that deal fell apart, Goudreau has taken responsibility for going ahead with a failed attack launched May 3 on a beach outside the capital, Caracas.

Rendon said he gave Goudreau \$50,000 to cover some initial expenses, but both say the contract was never fulfilled and he received no more funds.

The would-be invasion quickly became a publicity coup for Maduro, whose security forces intercepted most of the attackers.

Guaidó's team said in a statement that he "accepted the resignation of the officials and thanked them for their dedication and commitment to Venezuela."

Maduro says the objective of the raid was to kill him, but instead officials say they killed at least six of the accused "mercenaries" and arrested dozens of others, including two former U.S. soldiers associated with Goudreau's Florida-based firm Silvercorp USA.

Guaidó, who is backed by the Trump administration among nearly 60 other nations as Venezuela's rightful leader, has denied having anything to do with the alleged attack, but has come under pressure from at least one opposition party in Venezuela to explain what happened.

Goudreau has presented what he said is a secret recording of Guaidó himself attended, by speakerphone, the meeting at which the deal was signed. Goudreau said he was never fully paid, but went forward with the mission to help liberate Venezuela from Maduro, working with a former Venezuelan Army Gen., Cliver Alcalá, who was recently extradited from Colombia to the U.S. to face drug charges.

Venezuelan Attorney General Tarek William Saab recently said Venezuela will seek the capture of Goudreau and the two former Guaido advisers. Goudreau said about 60 people were involved in the incursion and Venezuelan officials say they have arrested at least 40, including 14 in the last two days.

Putin lifts Russia's shutdown, but keeps many restrictions

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

President Vladimir Putin on Monday declared an end to a partial economic shutdown across Russia due to the coronavirus pandemic, but he said that many restrictions will remain in place.

In a televised address to the nation, Putin said it will be up to regional governors in the far-flung country to determine what industrial plants could reopen starting Tuesday. He emphasized that it's essential to preserve jobs and keep the economy running, provided that workers strictly observe sanitary norms.

"The nationwide nonworking regime is coming to an end," a somber-looking Putin said. "Gradually, and very carefully, we are starting to ease the restrictions."

Putin also said regional authorities should consider allowing people to take walks and exercise wherever and whenever possible. He emphasized that all mass gatherings will remain prohibited and noted that it's essential for all Russians who are older than 65 or have chronic illnesses to continue staying home.

Since the outbreak began, Putin has given Russia's regions broad authority to determine their own coronavirus strategies, arguing that the situation in various localities differs widely. Kremlin critics have described that policy as an attempt to shift responsibility for the high number of infections and bruising economic damage from the outbreak.

Putin had ordered the economic shutdown in late March, although key industrial plants and some other sectors were allowed to continue operating. Most Russians have been ordered to stay home, except for shopping in nearby stores and pharmacies and visits to doctors.

Putin's decision to ease the restrictions comes as Russia registered a daily record of over 11,600 new infections in the last 24 hours, more than half of them in Moscow. That has brought the national total to more than 221,000 cases — the world's fourth-highest after the United States, Spain and Britain — including about 2,000 deaths.

Some observers say official statistics reflect just a fraction of the real numbers and pointed out that the actual death toll could be significantly higher. Unlike the United States, Italy and some other countries, the Russian totals don't include some of the deaths of those who tested positive for the coronavirus. Those with chronic illnesses who died are counted separately, even if they had the virus.

Doctors across Russia also have decried shortages of protective equipment and questionable infection control procedures at hospitals, and hundreds of medical workers have gotten infected.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said last week that up to 2.5% of the capital's 12.7 million residents, or about 300,000 people, could have been infected.

Sobyenin and other Russian officials have argued that the increased number of cases reflects wider testing and noted that nearly half of those infected have slight symptoms or none at all. They argued that the lockdown has helped avert a surge in the number of gravely ill and so far prevented hospitals from being overwhelmed.

Putin said that in recent weeks Russia has increased the capacity of hospitals treating coronavirus patients from 29,000 to 130,000 and has a sufficient reserve of ventilators.

He said the number of tests performed daily will increase from 170,000 to 300,000 by mid-May.

Regarding the lifting of restrictions, he argued that a "single pattern can't be applied, as in some regions certain actions may raise risks, while in others they may result in unwarranted restrictions."

"I repeat, lifting restrictions will not come fast," Putin added. "We mustn't allow a fallback, a new wave of epidemic and a rise in grave cases."

Moscow has taken the lead in allowing all of its industrial plants and construction sites to resume work starting Tuesday, and Putin said other regions might want to follow suit. Still closed in the capital are hairdressers, car dealers, stores other than food shops and most other service sector businesses. But in some of Russia's provinces, some of those businesses already have been allowed to reopen.

Putin emphasized that the restrictions must be lifted gradually to avoid triggering a new wave of contagion.

He said that he fully understands the public's desire to return to normal life, but he warned that caution is essential.

"I realize that patience is running out to observe the restrictions, but getting infected is much worth

than that," he said.

A large part of his speech was devoted to outlining new measures to soften the devastating economic impact of the outbreak. Putin, who has faced criticism for failing to offer tangible help to the population as well as small and medium businesses hurt in the health crisis, announced a package of new support measures.

He said unemployment has doubled to 1.4 million, and said that the government will subsidize loans to encourage businesses to keep as many of their employees as possible. He also announced tax breaks for businesses and various additional payments to families with children and for other categories of the population.

If games resume, athletes will 'need to know when to peak'

By CLIFF BRUNT AP Sports Writer

Making it safe for America's professional sports teams to start playing games is one thing.

Making sure athletes are in game shape is another.

The coronavirus pandemic brought sports to a halt, but stay-at-home orders are starting to be eased and a handful of NBA teams are opening practice facilities.

For players, the difference between merely working out and playing games will be a significant jump, and experts say things shouldn't be rushed. With athletes unable to simulate game or even practice activity at home, they will need time before resuming competition.

"Whatever the amount of time is, just know that players will have the input and say so because we're the ones that's playing, and that comes first," said Oklahoma City Thunder guard Chris Paul, president of the National Basketball Players Association. "We don't ever want to put guys in a situation where their injury risk is high. It varies from player to player. But it's at least got to be three to four weeks."

Charlotte Hornets coach James Borrego said players could be at different points based on their access to equipment.

"There's veterans out there that may have a court in their home, in their facility and they're probably a little bit more ready to go than others," he said. "I think we're talking weeks. This isn't something where after one week these guys are ready to go."

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman has said on multiple occasions he believes a two- to three-week training camp would be needed before the season resumes. Many hockey teams have had trainers send at-home workout routines to players, but few if any have been on the ice in months.

"As much as I could mentally be in game mode, your body's not ready for it if you don't get a full off-season of training and if you don't get to play a long training camp with like seven exhibition games," Los Angeles Kings defenseman Drew Doughty said. "If you only get a week training camp with a couple exhibition games, you're going to ruin your body."

Edmonton Oilers forward Alex Chiasson said it is on the athlete to be ready.

"That's going to be on us," he said. "We're professional athletes. We've got to make sure we prepare. It's not easy, but it is what it is, and we've got to deal with the situation as best as we can."

While basketball and hockey were nearing their playoffs, baseball was in spring training when sports were shut down. It created a particular wrinkle for pitchers, who tend to train methodically toward full games.

Washington Nationals general manager Mike Rizzo said he expects another period that resembles spring training before games are played.

"The most important part of any spring training is preparation for your pitchers, especially your starting pitchers," Rizzo said. "Whenever you have to expedite a spring training, that's probably the most impactful decision that you have to make: how to ramp them up."

Baltimore Orioles GM Mike Elias agreed.

"When baseball does come back, you have to worry about guys going a very small number of innings," he said. "I don't know that we've come up with a solution to that. ... The public health guidelines makes it tough to do it without a training staff and coaches. Some of the pitchers are throwing into nets in their

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backyards and hitters are hitting off the tee.”

Tampa Bay catcher Mike Zunino said the pitchers were his biggest concern.

“The biggest worry is injuries,” he said. “It’s one of those things, I think guys are staying in shape, they’re throwing now. Hopefully a few weeks is enough. I think we’ll have to be smart as the season opens to keep guys fresh.”

Dr. Mike Reinold, senior medical adviser for the Chicago White Sox, said the challenge for pitchers has been how to at least maintain what they gained from their previous spring training progression.

“It will take around three weeks to get a starting pitcher likely ramped up to five innings, but that assumes that they have done the work to maintain themselves and are ready to even start that progression,” he said.

Reinold said preparing is complicated because there is no return date set: “They need to know when to peak.”

“That’s a big, important concept when we’re trying to get our athletes ready for a competitive season that they’re building for,” he said. “This is the first time in my career that we’ve ever not had that.”

Pittsburgh Pirates manager Derek Shelton said assessing each player’s condition after the layoff will be a key part of getting things rolling again. He said those conversations are happening even now.

“We don’t need a soft-tissue (injury) because guys were a little bit behind,” he said. “That’s why the openness of the player and the conversations we’re having now are so important so we have a baseline coming in.”

Milwaukee Brewers general manager David Stearns said a second preseason probably wouldn’t need to be too long once it’s deemed safe.

“Once it’s safe, we can turn this thing on pretty quickly,” he said.

Elias agreed: “We will be ready, and baseball will be ready for America when America is ready for us.”

Risk of reopening US economy too fast: A W-shaped recovery

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — When the coronavirus erupted in the United States, it triggered quarantines, travel curbs and business shutdowns. Many economists predicted a V-shaped journey for the economy: A sharp drop, then a quick bounce-back as the virus faded and the economy regained health.

Others envisioned a slower, U-shaped course.

Now, as President Donald Trump and many Republicans press to reopen the economy, some experts see an ominous risk: That a too-hasty relaxation of social distancing could ignite a resurgence of COVID-19 cases by fall, sending the economy back into lockdown. The result: a W-shaped disaster in which a tentative recovery would sink back into a “double-dip” recession before rebounding eventually.

“The push to reopen the economy is making a W-shaped recovery very much more likely,” said Jeffrey Frankel, professor of capital formation and growth at the Harvard Kennedy School.

In Frankel’s view, any widespread reopening should wait for a sustained drop in death rates and the broad availability of tests. No one is completely safe until an effective treatment or vaccine can be produced and widely distributed — a scenario that’s likely many months away.

Frankel said he also worries that the government might prematurely withdraw financial aid to the economy, thereby weakening the pillars of any tentative recovery.

“A W-shaped recovery is a distinct possibility,” said Yongseok Shin, an economist at Washington University in St. Louis and a research fellow at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. “Unless the reopening is carefully managed with extensive testing and voluntary social distancing, infections will rapidly rise in many localities.

“People will then hunker down for fear of infection, and local governments will re-impose lockdowns, quashing any economic recovery we will have had to that point.”

A double-dip recession would significantly heighten the risks for an already debilitated U.S. economy. Congress has provided roughly \$3 trillion in aid — by far its largest rescue ever — to help households and companies survive the next few months. That short-term aid, though, assumes any recovery will last. If a

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second downturn were to flare up, it's far from clear that Congress would be ready to offer trillions more to enable businesses to survive yet another round of months-long shutdowns.

Nor do many companies have the cash reserves to cushion against a second recession. And just as threatening, a double-tip downturn would sap the confidence of individuals and businesses that is essential to an economic bounce-back. If consumers don't trust that a recovery will last, many won't resume spending, and the economy would struggle to rebound.

On Monday, plastic spacing barriers and millions of masks appeared on the streets of Europe's newly reopened cities as France and Belgium emerged from lockdowns, the Netherlands sent children back to school and Spain allowed people to eat outdoors. All faced the delicate balance of restarting battered economies without causing a second wave of coronavirus infections.

In the United States, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has urged caution in reopening the economy. Powell has warned against taking "too much risk of second and third waves" of the virus.

For now, the economy is essentially in free-fall. It shed a record 20.5 million jobs in April. The unemployment rate surged to 14.7%, the highest since the Great Depression. The gross domestic product — the broadest measure of output — shrank at a 4.8% annual rate from January through March and is expected to post an astounding 40% annual collapse in the current quarter. That would be, by far, the worst on record dating to 1947.

Facing a catastrophe in an election year, Trump and many Republican allies are eager to ease restrictions and restart the economy. They say the use of masks and other protections should allow many businesses to safely reopen under certain guidelines. Trump has openly backed protests that are intended to compel governors to "liberate" their states from lockdowns.

But The Associated Press reported last week that many U.S. governors are disregarding White House guidelines. Seventeen states didn't meet a key benchmark set by the White House for beginning to reopen businesses: A 14-day downward trajectory in new cases or positive test rates.

Texas' Republican lieutenant governor, Dan Patrick, has gone so far as to suggest that restarting the economy might be worth the risk of some additional deaths.

"There are more important things than living," Patrick said in an interview with Fox News. "I don't want to die, nobody wants to die, but man, we got to take some risks and get back in the game and get this country back up and running."

Most Americans say they're wary of trying to return to business as normal now. A Pew Research Center survey found that 68% said they feared that state governments would lift restrictions too soon. Just 31% wanted restrictions lifted sooner.

"The idea that you just turn the spigot back on is just ridiculous," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at the consulting firm Grant Thornton. "It's still a COVID-tainted spigot. No one wants water from a poisoned well."

Many businesses are also tempering their optimism. The data firm Womply found that even in Texas and Florida, states that are being especially aggressive about reopening their economies, businesses are moving slowly. Womply found only a "small-to-negligible drop" in the share of Texas and Florida businesses that remain closed.

"This could signal that previously closed businesses may have trouble figuring out how to open with new guidelines, attracting patrons, or may be closed indefinitely," Womply concluded.

At Big Buzz, a health care marketing consultancy in Denver, CEO Wendy Phillips is expecting "more a W-shaped than a V-shaped" rebound. Phillips has reduced her staff from eight to six, two of whom kept their full-time jobs only after the government delivered a \$105,000 loan under a rescue program for small businesses.

"There's so much unknown looking forward," Phillips said. "I think it's going to be a good two or three years, at a minimum, of recession."

Frankel at the Harvard Kennedy School and others worry that state and local governments, hemorrhaging tax revenue, will be forced to make growth-stunting cuts just as a recovery might be straining to gain traction.

Another threat is the prospect of bankruptcies and cash shortfalls for companies and households. Some have been able to defer rent and other payments but will eventually have to repay their landlords and other creditors in full.

Likewise, U.S. authorities declared premature victory over the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak, only to see it return, deadlier than before. In the current pandemic, South Korea eased restrictions as cases dropped. But on Saturday, Seoul had to shut down nightclubs, bars and discos after dozens of infections were linked to club goers.

Last week, researchers at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health warned that easing stay-at-home orders and allowing people to mingle more freely would mean that "new COVID-19 cases and deaths will rebound in late May."

The Columbia researchers predict a resurgence of cases two to four weeks after states begin to reopen. "The lag between infection acquisition and case confirmation, coupled with insufficient testing and contact tracing, will mask any rebound and exponential growth of COVID-19 until it is well underway," said the lead researcher, Jeffrey Shaman.

Retirees, isolated by virus, become DJs for new radio hour

By **KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tucked away inside his room at a senior care facility, Bob Coleman knew he couldn't go out into the world with the coronavirus raging. But he could share with the world his first love — country music.

"Hello everybody, it's a bright day in Franklin, Tennessee," the 88-year-old Air Force veteran crooned into his microphone. "This is Bob Coleman, better known as the 'Karaoke Cowboy,' coming to you from Room 3325. ... Let's just jump right into it."

The hits of Hank Williams, Dwight Yoakam and Brad Paisley began to play, all carefully selected by Coleman, who lives in Somerby Franklin, an assisted living facility about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Nashville.

Coleman is one of several retirees who have turned into DJs for a new online radio hour known as "Radio Recliner."

The 60-minute show began airing last month, starting with quarantined retirees in middle Tennessee. It has since taken off, as much the production side as among listeners, with seniors in assisted-living facilities in Georgia, Alabama and others jumping at the chance to be a DJ after being secluded because of strict social distancing rules.

Older adults are the age group most at risk from the new coronavirus. This has left many senior citizens in assisted-living facilities not only prohibited from seeing outside visitors, but also banned from socializing with neighbors across the hall.

The idea of Radio Recliner was kickstarted by Atlanta and Birmingham-based marketing firm Luckie, whose clientele includes Bridge Senior Living, which operates more than 20 senior living properties in 14 states.

After the DJs were recruited, the seniors recorded their introductions and transitions on their phones — many while relaxing on a recliner or kitchen table. The audio was then sent off to productions staffers, who handled the technical side of Radio Recliner.

Listeners can send song requests dedicated to family or friends, which are included in the daily show. Fresh content airs weekdays at noon, with previous segments playing in rotation.

A typical dedication went like this: "Hey Granny, this is your favorite granddaughter Amy ... we just wanted to call in and say we love you very much."

Mitch Bennett, Luckie's chief creative officer, said the idea was to provide a sense of community to isolated seniors .

"For this generation, radio was the original social media," Bennett said. "Dedicating a song to someone you love, and having them hear it along with everyone else, is a special way of connecting. It's a great time to bring that feeling back."

In Georgia, 80-year-old Ed Rosenblatt said an hour he spent spinning tunes on Radio Recliner prompted

a flood of text messages, emails and calls from friends and family across the country — many of whom he hadn't heard from in years.

"For the past year I've been teaching myself how to play the ukulele," said Rosenblatt, who lives at Somerby Sandy Springs just outside of Atlanta. "So at the close of the show, I actually played a song on my ukulele. I sang and played the "Sloop John B," the Beach Boys classic.

"Everybody knows that song," Rosenblatt said.

Our species might have reached Europe earlier than thought

By **SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer**

Human bones from a Bulgarian cave suggest our species arrived in Europe thousands of years earlier than previously thought, sharing the continent much longer with Neanderthals.

Scientists found four bone fragments and a tooth that detailed radiocarbon and DNA tests show are from four Homo sapiens, the oldest of which is dated to about 46,000 years ago, according to two studies published Monday in the journals Nature and Nature Ecology & Evolution.

The previous oldest European human bone fragments were found in Romania. Efforts to date them ran into problems but they were likely from sometime around 40,000 years ago, give or take a few thousand years, said archaeologist Helen Fewlass of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany, a study lead author. And that bone had Neanderthal genes in it, indicating that interbreeding had occurred about 200 or so years earlier, she said.

Researchers said they think our species came from Africa about 47,000 years ago during a brief warming period.

It means that for about 7,000 years or so, humans and Neanderthals lived on the same continent, interacting a bit, but probably not often, said institute director Jean-Jacques Hublin, another study lead author. Neanderthals went extinct about 40,000 years ago.

"We know that when they (humans) arrived, there were Neanderthals," Hublin said. "The Danube Valley might have been a way for modern humans — by the way, at different periods — to move into this part of Europe."

This early batch of our species probably never made it west over the Alps, was likely only a few hundred people and may have died off, Hublin said. Modern Europeans descended from a second later wave of humans out of Africa, he said.

The fossils were found in Bulgaria's Bacho Kiro cave, which has been open to scientists and the public since 1930. The cave is on a very steep cliff and contains animal bones, including those of a rhinoceros and lions, Fewlass said.

"How would they get into that cave on the side of that cliff unless humans brought parts of the animal, the body, into the cave?" she said.

There are also a large amount of bones from cave bears. These early Europeans made pendants out of cave bear bones, not other animals, showing an affinity for that animal, Hublin said.

Hublin theorized that the discovery indicates that Neanderthals, who until this time period hadn't shown jewelry making skills, learned making pendants from our species.

The study makes "a very convincing argument and greatly strengthens the hypothesis that modern humans dispersed into Europe before 45,000 years ago from Western Asia," said Katerina Harvati, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Tuebingen, who wasn't part of the study.

Harvati agreed with Hublin that that makes it likely that Neanderthal jewelry found in Western Europe was something that species somehow learned from humans. Other experts, who lauded the dating of the bones, said that was a theoretical leap that they weren't quite convinced of.

Pandemic upends life on isolated, idyllic Galapagos Islands

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO and ADRIAN VASQUEZ Associated Press

SAN CRISTOBAL, Ecuador (AP) — Before the coronavirus, sudden life-threatening ailments among tourists, fishermen and others on the Galapagos Islands were considered so rare that hospitals didn't have a single intensive care unit bed.

Now, officials are racing to equip medical teams on the remote islands with breathing machines while also trying to stanch an economic crisis that has left many of the 30,000 residents jobless.

The island chain's famous isolation is now heightening its hardship.

For seven weeks now, not a single tourist has arrived at the UNESCO World Heritage site that inspired Charles Darwin. Studies of the archipelago's unique marine and avian wildlife have halted. And residents are making urgent changes, like growing carrots, peppers and tomatoes at home so they don't go hungry.

"Galapagos is the land of evolution," said Joseline Cardoso, whose small family-run hotel on Santa Cruz island is empty. "The animals have adapted and we humans cannot be the exception."

Ecuador is among Latin American nations hit hardest by COVID-19, and authorities on the Galapagos Islands believe their first cases probably came from Guayaquil, the coastal city where hospitals turned away patients and the dead were left in homes for days.

The storied islands have been relatively shielded by what happens 600 miles away on the mainland. A financial crisis two decades ago left many Ecuadorians penniless but steady international tourism kept the Galapagos afloat. Last year, over 275,000 people came to see the swimming iguanas, giant tortoises and birds with webbed feet the color of blue cotton candy.

Islanders rely on military aircraft to ferry the critically ill to Quito or Guayaquil. Many go to the mainland for appointments, and some hire doctors to fly in for major events like childbirth.

Locals like to joke that, "In the Galapagos, it is prohibited to get sick."

But the coronavirus has upended any sense of island immunity.

The islands' first four cases were diagnosed in late March, all believed to have come from Guayaquil before travel was cut off. Soon after, the first island-associated death was announced: a worker in his 60s who had been on the Celebrity Flora yacht and fell ill after returning to Quito.

There are now 107 cases in the Galapagos, including about 50 crew members still aboard the Celebrity Flora, a luxury ship operated by a subsidiary of Royal Caribbean Cruises. It docked in time for passengers to get flights home.

Authorities have scrambled to equip hospitals, where there are only four ICU beds – about one for every 7,500 residents – and a lab to do virus tests. The Charles Darwin Foundation donated two of the new ventilators. In addition to military transports, a police aircraft is being mobilized. The president has offered one of his two planes, said Juan Sebastián Roldán, his Cabinet secretary.

Most of the cases have been mild, with only two people hospitalized.

The bigger blow has been to tourism: At least 800 visitors usually arrive daily, and officials estimate the islands already have lost at least \$50 million, a quarter of the expected annual income.

"The base of our economy has entirely collapsed," said Norman Wray, governor of the islands. "This is completely changing the future of tourism in the Galapagos."

Ivan López, a guide and scuba teacher, was taking tourists around the islands when Ecuador ordered a lockdown. He was told to get off the boat and immediately was jobless. A 39-year-old father of two, he believes he can stretch his savings for six months but doesn't know what he will do if the crisis drags on. He's started a vegetable garden.

Already-high prices in supermarkets have skyrocketed. When López searched recently for disinfectant, he found alcohol at \$40 a gallon. The islands largely rely on cargo ships, which have been slower to arrive.

"If the ships stop coming, it will be chaos," he said. "We won't have anything to eat."

Fishermen go door-to-door selling tuna and wahoo to islanders, while farmers drive through neighborhoods yelling out "Tomatoes! Lemons! Greens!" on a megaphone.

Cardoso, who dreamed up her six-room hotel as part of a student project, said her new reality feels like

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a nightmare she's yet to wake up from. The hotel is usually 75% occupied throughout the year, but all reservations have been canceled through July.

"To be with an empty hotel breaks your heart," she said.

Scientists have also seen their work analyzing the Galapagos' wildlife abruptly interrupted.

The islands have a rich history of scientific investigation and discovery since Darwin arrived aboard the HMS Beagle in 1835, noting that species on the relatively new volcanic islands bore key differences from those in South America.

Humans have caused the islands irreparable harm, wiping out thousands of whales and tortoises, introducing invasive species like insects, wild pigs and goats, and damaging the delicate vegetation.

At the Charles Darwin Foundation, researchers had been studying a species of parasitic flies, which likely arrived over 30 years ago on a plane or boat.

The flies threaten 20 bird species, and scientists have been collecting data on them for over five years, but there will be blank spaces for 2020 that "we will not be able to recover," said María José Barragán, the foundation's CEO and science director.

She also said scientists have been unable to see how species are being affected by the absence of humans, though that will be studied once they are back in the field.

How soon the Galapagos Islands might be able to reopen is unclear. Ecuador's government is allowing for a gradual opening in three stages. But the final stage is not a full return to normal and does not call for resuming national or international flights.

For many islanders, the pandemic has left them to meditate on their relationships with nature, industry and travel. Some wonder if they should continue to remain so dependent on tourism, while others say it highlights the need for self-sufficiency.

For Cardoso, the answer lies in the story of the finches, penguins and tortoises who share the islands with them.

"We have to put in practice the lesson of our history," she said. "We have to adapt."

Today in History **By The Associated Press**

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, May 12, the 133rd day of 2020. There are 233 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On May 12, 2002, Jimmy Carter arrived in Cuba, becoming the first U.S. president in or out of office to visit since the 1959 revolution that put Fidel Castro in power.

On this date:

In 1780, during the Revolutionary War, the besieged city of Charleston, South Carolina, surrendered to British forces.

In 1922, a 20-ton meteor crashed near Blackstone, Virginia.

In 1937, Britain's King George VI was crowned at Westminster Abbey; his wife, Elizabeth, was crowned as queen consort.

In 1943, during World War II, Axis forces in North Africa surrendered. The two-week Trident Conference, headed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, opened in Washington.

In 1949, the Soviet Union lifted the Berlin Blockade, which the Western powers had succeeded in circumventing with their Berlin Airlift.

In 1955, Manhattan's last elevated rail line, the Third Avenue El, ceased operation.

In 1958, the United States and Canada signed an agreement to create the North American Air Defense Command (later the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD).

In 1970, the Senate voted unanimously to confirm Harry A. Blackmun as a Supreme Court justice.

In 1982, in Fatima, Portugal, security guards overpowered a Spanish priest armed with a bayonet who

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attacked Pope John Paul II. (In 2008, the pope's longtime private secretary revealed that the pontiff was slightly wounded in the assault.)

In 2001, singer Perry Como died in Jupiter Inlet Colony, Florida, at age 88.

In 2008, a devastating 7.9 magnitude earthquake in China's Sichuan province left more than 87,000 people dead or missing.

In 2009, five Miami men were convicted in a plot to blow up FBI buildings and Chicago's Sears Tower; one man was acquitted. Suspected Nazi death camp guard John Demjanjuk (dem-YAHN'-yuk) was deported from the United States to Germany.

Ten years ago: An Afriqiyah Airways Airbus A330 jetliner plunged into the Libyan desert less than a mile from the runway in Tripoli after a flight from Johannesburg; a 9-year-old Dutch boy was the sole survivor of the crash that killed 103 people. An attacker hacked seven children and two adults to death in a rampage at a kindergarten in northwest China before taking his own life. Republicans chose Tampa, Florida, as the site of their 2012 presidential convention. Bowler Kelly Kulick, the first woman to win a PBA Tour title when she beat the men in the Tournament of Champions, won the U.S. Women's Open for her second women's major victory in 15 days.

Five years ago: U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin with an eye on easing badly strained relations over conflicts in Ukraine and Syria. An Amtrak train traveling from Washington, D.C. to New York derailed and crashed in Philadelphia, killing eight people.

One year ago: The White House's top economic adviser acknowledged on "Fox News Sunday" that U.S. consumers and businesses pay the tariffs that the administration had imposed on billions of dollars of Chinese goods; Larry Kudlow added that China would suffer losses from reduced exports to the U.S. The United Arab Emirates said four commercial ships off its eastern coast had been "subjected to sabotage operations"; the report came as the U.S. warned that "Iran or its proxies" could be targeting maritime traffic in the region.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Burt Bacharach is 92. Actress Millie Perkins is 84. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jayotis Washington is 79. Country singer Billy Swan is 78. Actress Linda Dano is 77. Actress Lindsay Crouse is 72. Singer-musician Steve Winwood is 72. Actor Gabriel Byrne is 70. Actor Bruce Boxleitner is 70. Singer Billy Squier is 70. Blues singer-musician Guy Davis is 68. Country singer Kix Brooks is 65. Actress Kim Greist is 62. Rock musician Eric Singer (KISS) is 62. Actor Ving Rhames is 61. Rock musician Billy Duffy is 59. Actor Emilio Estevez is 58. Actress April Grace is 58. Actress Vanessa A. Williams is 57. TV personality/chef Carla Hall is 56. Country musician Eddie Kilgallon is 55. Actor Stephen Baldwin is 54. Actor Scott Schwartz is 52. Actress Kim Fields is 51. Actress Samantha Mathis is 50. Actress Jamie Luner is 49. Actor Christian Campbell is 48. Actress Rhea Seehorn is 48. Actor Mackenzie Astin is 47. Country musician Matt Mangano (The Zac Brown Band) is 44. Actress Rebecca Herbst is 43. Actress Malin (MAH'-lin) Akerman is 42. Actor Jason Biggs is 42. Actor Rami Malek (RAH'-mee MA'-lihk) is 39. Actress-singer Clare Bowen is 36. Actress Emily VanCamp is 34. Actor Malcolm David Kelley is 28. Actor Sullivan Sweeten is 25.

Thought for Today: "Mistrust the man who finds everything good; the man who finds everything evil; and still more the man who is indifferent to everything." — Johann Kaspar Lavater, Swiss theologian (1741-1801).

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