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Groton Pool should open next week

The Groton pool should be open next week. There will be no lounge chairs so you need to bring your own chair and towel. The drinking fountain is off limits so you need to bring your own water. There is no concession stand. There will be no daily passes. Every swimmer will need to have a signed waiver. The big slide will not be operational. The diving board will be available; however, each person using it will need to dip their hands in a bucket of treated water prior to getting on the board. Anyone with any questions should contact pool managers Kami Lipp, Karla Pasteur or Trista Keith.

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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Temporary Extension Extended Again For Driver License Expiration Dates

PIERRE, S.D. – A temporary extension of the expiration date for certain South Dakota driver licenses has been extended until March 30, 2021 by Gov. Kristi Noem.

The Governor this week signed an executive order that extends the state's emergency declaration through Dec. 30, 2020. That means the expiration date for driver licenses is extended through the duration of the emergency declaration plus an additional 90 days or March 30, 2021.

"This is good news for those South Dakotans whose licenses expired on or after March 13, 2020 when the Governor first issued the emergency declaration," said Department of Public Safety Cabinet Secretary Craig Price. "This means driver license holders now have even more time to renew their licenses."

The extension covers driver licenses, motorcycle operator licenses, restricted minor's permits, motorcycle restricted minor's permits, non-driver identification cards, commercial driver's licenses or commercial learner's permits.

Driver licenses can be renewed online at <https://dps.sd.gov/driver-licensing/renew-and-duplicate/renew-online>. But state Driver Licensing Director Jane Schrank asks those license holders not to schedule renewal appointments at exam stations at this time.

"We are asking people with those licenses to wait until late summer or early fall to make those appointments," she said. "We need time to process the backlog of tests that accumulated from the last couple of months."

Currently, 10 driver exam stations are open by appointment only for those applying for new driver or commercial driver licenses and ID cards. The exam stations are located in Aberdeen, Brookings, Huron, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Watertown and Yankton.

Appointments for new driver or commercial driver licenses and ID cards can be made at <https://apps.sd.gov/PS14SchedulerCovid/>. Due to heavy website traffic, please be patient.

The Driver Licensing Program is part of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Short update tonight. The numbers are overall a bit worse today.

We're at 1,729,500 cases in the US. New case numbers were steady today, slipping over 20,000 again. NY leads with 371,559 case, a small new case increase. NJ has 157,815 cases, a slight increase in new cases, back over 1000. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: IL – 116,128, CA – 103,957, MA – 94,895, PA – 74,312, TX – 60,722, MI – 55,944, FL – 53,277, and MD – 50,344. These ten states account for 66% of US cases. 3 more states have over 40,000 cases, 3 more states have over 30,000 cases, 5 more states have over 20,000 cases, 9 more have over 10,000, 8 more + DC over 5000, 7 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 MD, IN, GA, MN, VA, TN, OH, and WA. States where new case reports are increasing include CA, WI, FL, AL, LA, MS, NC, and SC. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, PA, NJ, TX, IL, MI, MA, and CT. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

We have had 101,611 Covid-19 deaths in the US to date. Today the number of new deaths decreased. NY has 29,438, NJ has 11,401, MA has 6640, MI has 5372, PA has 5397, IL has 5225, CA has 4042, and CT has 3826. 2 of these states are reporting more than 100 new deaths today; the rest are below 100. There are 5 more states over 2000 deaths, 5 more states over 1000 deaths, 8 more over 500, 14 more + DC and PR over 100, and 10 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

The CDC has put out new data indicating that more than 60,000 health care workers have been infected with the virus in the US; nearly 300 of them have died. On April 15, those numbers were 9000 infections and 27 deaths, so this represents a huge increase. This is certainly an undercount because not all such cases are identified as health care workers, and there is information still missing about how many have died. Since this group of workers continues to work without adequate protections, things are unlikely to get better very soon. Interestingly, there are no federal regulations specifically protecting health care workers from airborne pathogens; such regulations were supposed to be implemented in the spring of 2017, but implementation was stopped and never started up again.

I have focused in these updates on the US because that's where I live and where most of the people reading this live. I have quite enough trouble keeping up with news on that front, so I don't have a lot of time to read about how the rest of the world is faring. Today, however, I did run across sort of a worldwide round-up, and I thought I wouldn't hurt us to have a look at the bigger picture. Here are the high points:

Starting with the US, you are aware our outbreak's growth rate seems to have stabilized. Experts believe we are still undercounting cases and have concerns premature reopenings in some states could lead to new outbreaks; but for now, things have slowed down. We can hope that continues.

There have been more than 5.7 million cases worldwide; 357,000 have died. Overall growth is still accelerating. Before May 20, there had been just one day with a six-figure number of new cases reported; in the week since then, there have been four such days. Some of this increase is due to improved testing, but there are clearly more actual cases as well. There have been large increases in South America with Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru leading the way; doubling times are running around two weeks.

The Middle East seemed to miss the early upswing in cases except for Iran; but we are now seeing increases in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. New cases are decreasing in France, Italy, Spain, and the UK. Some Asian countries are seeing second waves of infection. Singapore, an early success story, has been seeing increases in workers' dormitories. South Korea, another success, is showing an upswing and concomitant increased restrictions. Japan, on the other hand, never had a large surge in cases and seems to be holding steady today.

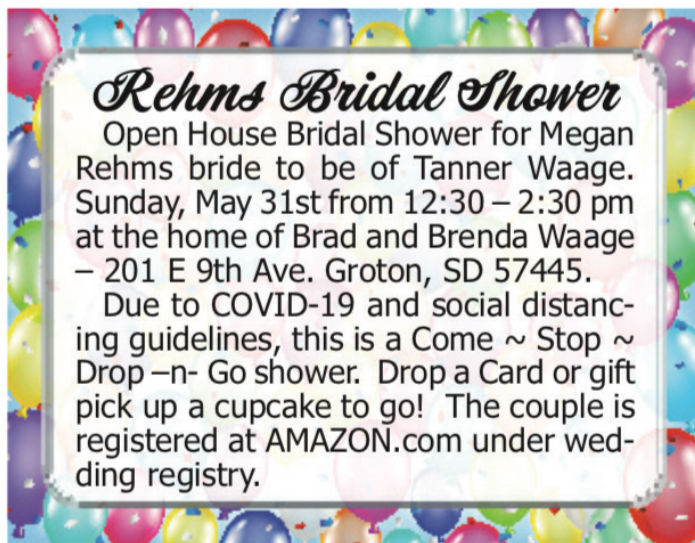
That's it for tonight. I just have one story for you, once again about nursing homes. This one features horses, a phenomenon called Horses of Hope. Eldon Jackson from Evansville, IN, has horses; his dad is an executive at a group of nursing homes. So Eldon has taken his horses and his dog, Cinch, on the road to

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80 nursing homes in the past month to "spread smiles and encouragement" by visiting residents at their windows, one by one and appropriately distanced. Some residents reached out their windows to touch the horses; I think the horses touched them too, even when the windows stayed closed. I saw photos, and there were smiles aplenty to go around. Social contact comes in many forms. Offer some yourself; there are people who need it.

Be well. We'll talk again.



Rehms Bridal Shower
Open House Bridal Shower for Megan Rehms bride to be of Tanner Waage. Sunday, May 31st from 12:30 – 2:30 pm at the home of Brad and Brenda Waage – 201 E 9th Ave. Groton, SD 57445.
Due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines, this is a Come ~ Stop ~ Drop –n- Go shower. Drop a Card or gift pick up a cupcake to go! The couple is registered at AMAZON.com under wedding registry.

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Corona virus changing summer workouts for high school athletes

By Dana Hess

S.D. Newspaper Assoc.

BROOKINGS — Summer workouts for high school athletes won't be business as usual in the age of the corona virus. Thursday the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors approved a detailed recommendation for a three-phase plan to offer guidance for summer workouts.

The five-page plan can be seen in its entirety on the board agenda at www.sdhsaa.com. The guidance for summer workouts, in effect from June 1 to July 31, lists the safety of students as its highest priority.

As an organization, SDHSAA strives for equity in activities for all schools. In the case of trying to schedule workouts during a virus outbreak, the organization acknowledges that inequities will take place due to geography.

"It is unlikely that ALL students will be able to return to and sustain athletic activity in all schools/communities at the same time," according to the recommendation. "While the SDHSAA would typically have reservations about this inequity, our goal for this summer is to allow students to return to school-based athletics and activities in any and all situations where it can be done safely."

Social distancing and the use of face coverings are guiding principles for the summer workouts.

"We note on there that cloth face coverings should be acceptable in all phases of this document," said SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos.

SDHSAA recommends summer workouts be approached in three phases of 14 days each. If one phase is accomplished with a downward or flat trajectory of cases, then the school could move on to the next phase.

Athletics and activities fall into three categories: lower risk, moderate risk and higher risk. Lower risk activities, which can be done with social distancing and no sharing of equipment include golf; weight training; sideline cheer; individual running events; cross-country running, with staggered starts; throwing events like shot put, discus and javelin; debate; and oral interp.

Moderate risk sports which involve close, sustained contact with equipment that can't be cleaned as it is used by the participants include basketball, volleyball, soccer, gymnastics, tennis, high jump, long jump, pole vault, seven-on-seven football and one-act play. With the appropriate cleaning of equipment and the use of masks by participants, tennis, volleyball, gymnastics and track events could be considered in the lower risk category.

There were some questions about including basketball in the moderate risk category rather than labeling it as higher risk.

Swartos explained that the National Federation of State High School Associations and the Olympic Committee both rank basketball as a moderate risk.

"There would be nothing stopping you as a school district from considering it as high risk," Swartos said.

Higher risk events which have sustained contact between participants with a high likelihood that the respiratory particles that carry the virus could be transmitted between participants include football, wrestling and competitive cheer and dance.

The recommendation notes that the NFHS is still studying the spread of respiratory droplets during singing and the playing of wind instruments. Until that is determined, activities like chorus, orchestra and music should be considered higher risk with practice on an individual basis.

All three phases include guidance for pre-workout screenings, limitations on gatherings, facilities cleaning, physical activity and athletic equipment and hydration.

Pre-workout screenings

In the first two phases pre-workout/contact screening calls for all coaches and students to be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout including a temperature check. Screenings should be recorded for the purposes of contact tracing and those who are screened with a positive response should be referred to a doctor and receive medical clearance before returning.

In phases one and two, no individual deemed to be vulnerable to the virus should participate. Vulnerable

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individuals include people 65 and older, those with high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma or those with compromised immune systems such as receiving chemotherapy for cancer.

In phase three, vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions but should practice physical distancing.

SDHSAA Assistant Director John Krogstrand emphasized that students aren't the only ones who need to be screened, noting that coaches and anyone present for the workout also needs to be screened.

"If coach has a temperature, workouts are cancelled for that day," Krogstrand said.

Limitations on gatherings

In phase one, the limit on gatherings calls for no more than 10 people either inside or outside to include participants and coaches. Locker rooms won't be used in phase one with athletes coming to practice in the proper attire and returning home to shower after a workout. Workouts should always be conducted with the same "pod" of five to 10 people including coaches. Smaller pods can be used for weight training. Social distancing should be strictly enforced to the point of having some people leave the room if there is not enough space to provide six feet of space between individuals.

In phase two, gatherings can be up to 10 inside and up to 50 outside. A minimum of six feet must be kept between individuals if locker rooms are used. The same rules for pods and social distancing apply with the suggestion that tape or field paint be used to guide students and coaches.

In phase three, gatherings of up to 50 are allowed inside and outside. Those not taking part in a practice or workout should do their best to maintain social distancing.

Facilities cleaning

These recommendations are similar for all three phases. They include creating and implementing cleaning schedules for facilities, sanitizing hard surfaces prior to workouts, hand washing, plentiful hand sanitizer, wiping down weight equipment after each use, shirts and shoes to be worn at all times and students encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothes immediately upon returning home.

Physical activity and athletic equipment

In phase one, low risk activities may begin practices with distancing measures in place. Moderate and higher risk activities should focus on individual drills and weight training. In phase two, modified practices can begin for moderate risk activities and modified practices can begin for higher risk activities in phase three.

In all three phases there should be no sharing of athletic equipment—towels, clothing, shoes or sports-specific equipment—between students. All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned after each use. In phase three, equipment like wrestling ear guards and football helmets should be worn by only one individual and not shared.

Hydration

In phases one and two, students should bring their own water bottles and they should not be shared. Water fountains should not be used. In phase three, water fountains may be used but must be cleaned intermittently and after every practice or workout.

Activities for each phase

SDHSAA offers guidance about the kinds of activities that can take place in each of the phases. Low risk activities—running events, throwing events, golf, sideline cheer, cross-country, debate and oral interp—can conduct full practices in each phase with the proper social distancing.

Moderate risk activities—basketball, volleyball, soccer, gymnastics, tennis, pole vault, high jump, long jump, seven-on-seven football and one-act play—are allowed individual drills in phase one. They may practice with the equipment/balls but no passing or exchanging of the equipment is allowed. Team runs will have staggered starts. Phase two includes modified drills with distancing in effect, use of equipment with intermittent cleaning and non-competitive drills. Full practices are allowed in phase three.

Higher risk activities—football, wrestling, competitive dance and competitive cheer—are allowed phase one activities the same as those used by the moderate risk sports. Phase two includes more individual drills, the use of equipment with intermittent cleaning and team runs with staggered starts. In phase

three, modified drills with distancing in effect, use of equipment with intermittent cleaning and non-competitive drills.

Swartos stressed that the guidelines offered by the association are not binding and that school districts may wish to implement greater safety measures based on the level of infection in their community.

"There's no way for us as an association to be able to track and put an overall blanket guidance out for 180 different schools," Swartos said. "The schools are going to have to look at what's going on in their own communities."

Swartos told the board he will form a task force of school officials and medical professionals to offer guidance and recommendations about the start of school activities in the fall.

Committee tasked with offering football classifications

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

BROOKINGS — Forming a new classification system for high school football continues to elude the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors.

At its April meeting, the board considered going from a six-class system to one with five classes. At that meeting concerns were raised about whether all schools had had a chance to see the proposed five-class system. The football advisory committee was tasked with developing a new five-class system and presenting the plan at the board's June meeting.

At a special teleconference meeting on Thursday, the board learned that instead of creating a new five-class system, the advisory committee asked for more time. The advisory committee asked for the formation of a new subcommittee that would include three representatives from each division—AAA/AA, A/B and nine-man coaches— as well as representatives of Native American schools and officials. The advisory committee sought to meet in August and November and present a plan to the board at its January 2021 meeting.

Multiple times during the board's teleconference meeting, members suggested that it would be next to impossible for schools to agree on a classification system.

Board chairman Moe Ruesink of Sioux Valley High School said he has seen multiple six-class proposals, some with three teams each in 11-man and nine-man and some with four classifications in 11-man and two in nine-man.

"They can't agree on what six looks like," Ruesink said, noting that any subcommittee members would naturally look at what a change in the classifications would mean for their region and who their school would end up playing.

That inability to agree was highlighted when the board voted on the original five-class proposal from its April meeting.

As proposed, the five-class system would include:

- 11AA—the nine largest schools according to male-only average daily membership as well as Sioux Falls O'Gorman which always seeks to be classified with larger schools. Teams would play a nine-game season leading to an eight-team postseason.

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- 11A—the next largest 16 schools which would play a nine-game season leading to an eight-team postseason.
- 11B—all remaining schools with a male-only ADM of 56.001 and greater. They would play an eight-game schedule leading to a 16-team postseason.
- 9A—the top half of all nine-man teams as determined by male-only ADM playing an eight-game season leading to a 16-team postseason.
- 9B—the remaining nine-man teams playing an eight-game season leading to a 16-team postseason.

Currently South Dakota has a six class system with three 11-man classifications and three nine-man classifications. Since its implementation in 1999, the state has 33 fewer teams.

A vote to approve the five-class system failed on a 4-4 vote with board member Barry Mann of Wakpala High School not voting.

The board then accepted the advisory committee's recommendation for the formation of a subcommittee with some changes. The board unanimously approved a motion that called for a committee to be geographically diverse with no more than one member from any school district. The subcommittee was tasked with presenting proposals for five- and six-classification systems to the SDHSAA staff by Nov. 1.

Board member Jerry Rassmussen of Dakota Valley said it was important to make sure that all schools have input on the football classification system.

"They want to be heard," Rassmussen said. "You're going to live with this system quite a while in the future."

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	May 20	May 21	May 22	May 23	May 24	May 25	May 26
Minnesota	17,029	17,670	18,200	19,005	19,845	20,573	21,315
Nebraska	10,846	11,122	11,425	11,662	11,989	12,134	12,355
Montana	471	478	479	479	479	479	479
Colorado	22,482	22,797	23,191	23,487	23,964	24,174	24,269
Wyoming	583	596	608	608	615	638	644
North Dakota	1,994	2095	2229	2317	2365	2418	2457
South Dakota	4,085	4177	4250	4356	4468	4563	4586
United States	1,528,661	1,551,853	1,577,758	1,602,148	1,622,670	1,643,499	1,662,768
US Deaths	91,938	93,439	94,729	96,013	97,087	97,722	98,223
Minnesota	+657	+641	+530	+805	+840	+728	+742
Nebraska	+221	+276	+303	+237	+327	+145	+221
Montana	+1	+7	+1	0	0	0	0
Colorado	+280	+315	+394	+296	+477	+210	+95
Wyoming	+6	+13	+12	0	+7	+23	+6
North Dakota	+63	+101	+134	+88	+48	+53	+39
South Dakota	+58	+92	+73	+106	+112	+95	+23
United States	+20,493	+23,192	+25,905	+24,390	+20,522	+20,829	+19,269
US Deaths	+600	+1,501	+1,290	+1,284	+1,074	+635	+501
	May 27	May 28	May 29				
Minnesota	21,960	22,464	22,947				
Nebraska	12,619	12,976	13,261				
Montana	479	481	485				
Colorado	24,565	24,767	25,121				
Wyoming	648	653	667				
North Dakota	2422	2439	2481				
South Dakota	4653	4710	4793				
United States	1,681,418	1,699,933	1,721,926				
US Deaths	98,929	100,442	101,621				
Minnesota	+652	+504	+483				
Nebraska	+264	+357	+285				
Montana	0	+2	+4				
Colorado	+296	+202	+354				
Wyoming	+4	+5	+14				
North Dakota	-----	+17	+42				
South Dakota	+67	+57	+83				
United States	+18,650	+18,515	+21,993				
US Deaths	+706	+1,513	+1,179				

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May 28th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

There is not much change from yesterday with the state having 83 positive cases and 79 have recovered. In Brown County, it was a stalemate with 5 positive and 5 recovery. Beadle County had 27 positive cases while Minnehaha had 17 and Pennington 14 for those with double digit increases. Hand County dropped out of the fully recovered list with a new positive test. 20 counties report at least 1 positive test.

In other surrounding counties, Day has 10 of 13 cases recovered and Marshall has 1 of 4 recovered. There were no new deaths in the Dakotas.

Brown County:

Active Cases: 0 (75)
Recovered: +5 (190)
Total Positive: +5 (266)
Ever Hospitalized: +2 (13)
Deaths: 1
Negative Tests: +31 (1408)
Percent Recovered: 71% (no change)

South Dakota:

Positive: +83 (4710 total) (26 more than yesterday)
Negative: +1848 (32,385 total)
Hospitalized: +15 (406 total) - 105 currently hospitalized (4 more than yesterday)
Deaths: 0 (54 total)
Recovered: +79 (3698 total)
Active Cases: 1041 (4 more than yesterday)
Percent Recovered: 77% (no change)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett +1 (23), Brule +26 (164), Butte +11 (179), Campbell 23, Custer +3 (143), Dewey +9 (331), Edmunds +4 (65), Gregory +2 (68), Haakon +1 (34), Hanson +2 (58), Harding 29, Jones +2 (11), Kingsbury +3 (133), Mellette +5 (64), Perkins 21, Potter +4 (64), unassigned -47 (1099).

Aurora: +1 positive, +6 recovered (9 of 23 recovered)
Beadle: +27 positive, +14 recovered (53 of 190 recovered)
Brown: +5 positive, +5 recovered (190 of 266 recovered)
Buffalo: +1 positive (1 of 10 recovered)
Charles Mix: +2 positive (8 of 16 recovered)
Codington: +1 positive (18 of 35 recovered)
Davison: +2 positive (9 of 13 recovered)
Grant: +1 recovered (7 of 11 recovered)
Hand: +1 positive (1 of 2 recovered)
Jackson: +1 positive (0 of 3 recovered)
Jerauld: +3 positive, +3 recovered (14 of 33 recovered)
Lake: +1 positive (5 of 7 recovered)
Lincoln: +1 positive, +3 recovered (197 of 237 recovered)
Lyman: +1 positive (5 of 14 recovered)
Meade: +1 recovered (5 of 10 recovered)
Minnehaha: +17 positive, 33 recovered (2846 of 3317 recovered)

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Moody: +1 positive (15 of 19 recovered)
Oglala Lakota: +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 of 21 recovered)
Pennington: +14 positive, +5 recovered (40 of 186 recovered)
Sanborn: +1 positive, +1 recovered (6 of 12 recovered)
Todd: +1 positive (14 of 23 recovered)
Turner: +1 recovered (20 of 24 recovered)
Union: +1 positive, +2 recovered (59 of 88 recovered)
Yankton: +3 recovered (39 of 51 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Hand): Clark 4-4, Deuel 1-1, Faulk 1-1, Hyde 1-1, Lawrence 9-9, McPherson 1-1, Miner 1-1, Spink 4-4, Sully 1-1, Tripp 6-6, Walworth 5-5, Ziebach 1-1.

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 1,978 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 42 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 2,481.

State & private labs have reported 86,728 total completed tests.

1,793 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	562	12%
Black, Non-Hispanic	900	19%
Hispanic	846	18%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	453	9%
Other	562	12%
White, Non-Hispanic	1470	31%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	2
Brown	1
Jerauld	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	45
Pennington	3
Todd	1

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	23	9	105
Beadle	190	53	360
Bennett	0	0	23
Bon Homme	8	4	270
Brookings	15	14	627
Brown	266	190	1408
Brule	0	0	164
Buffalo	10	1	159
Butte	0	0	179
Campbell	0	0	23
Charles Mix	16	8	202
Clark	4	4	113
Clay	15	13	406
Codington	35	18	1018
Corson	4	3	49
Custer	0	0	143
Davison	13	9	571
Day	13	10	137
Deuel	1	1	117
Dewey	0	0	331
Douglas	3	1	69
Edmunds	0	0	65
Fall River	4	3	154
Faulk	1	1	46
Grant	11	7	128
Gregory	0	0	68
Haakon	0	0	34
Hamlin	4	3	139
Hand	2	1	46
Hanson	0	0	58
Harding	0	0	29
Hughes	19	14	614
Hutchinson	4	3	178

Hyde	1	1	32
Jackson	3	0	30
Jerauld	33	14	71
Jones	0	0	11
Kingsbury	0	0	133
Lake	7	5	247
Lawrence	9	9	490
Lincoln	237	197	2530
Lyman	14	5	184
Marshall	4	1	97
McCook	5	4	195
McPherson	1	1	39
Meade	10	5	607
Mellette	0	0	64
Miner	1	1	84
Minnehaha	3317	2846	13160
Moody	19	15	212
Oglala Lakota	21	4	142
Pennington	186	40	2897
Perkins	0	0	21
Potter	0	0	64
Roberts	39	17	468
Sanborn	12	6	62
Spink	4	4	187
Stanley	10	8	90
Sully	1	1	31
Todd	23	14	450
Tripp	6	6	135
Turner	24	20	316
Union	88	59	549
Walworth	5	5	117
Yankton	51	39	1334
Ziebach	1	1	52
Unassigned****	0	0	1099

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

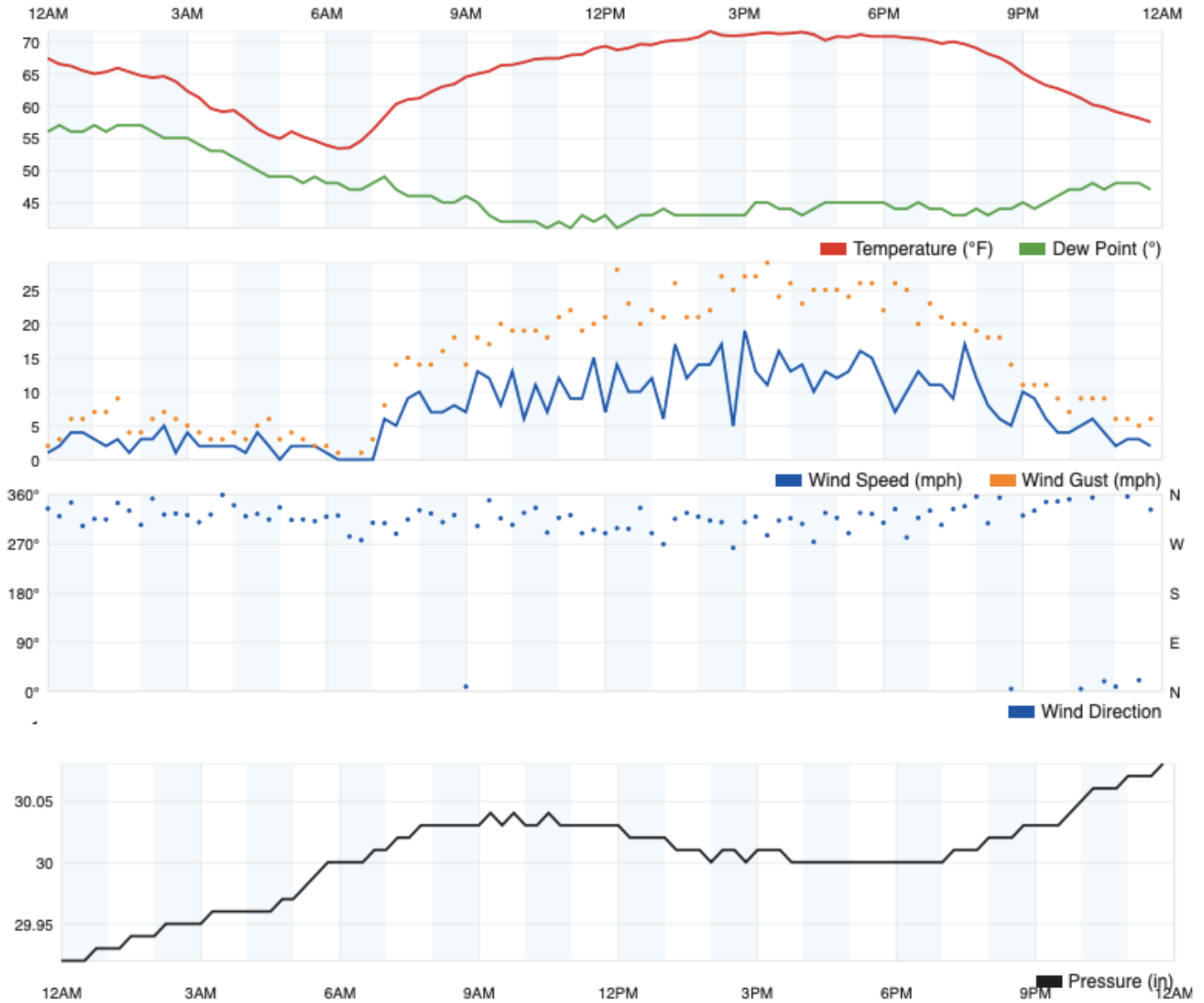
Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	2250	29
Male	2543	25

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	453	0
20-29 years	913	0
30-39 years	1081	3
40-49 years	835	1
50-59 years	802	8
60-69 years	449	9
70-79 years	129	5
80+ years	131	28

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 68 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 48 °F

Saturday



Mostly Sunny

High: 67 °F

Saturday Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 48 °F

Sunday



Partly Sunny

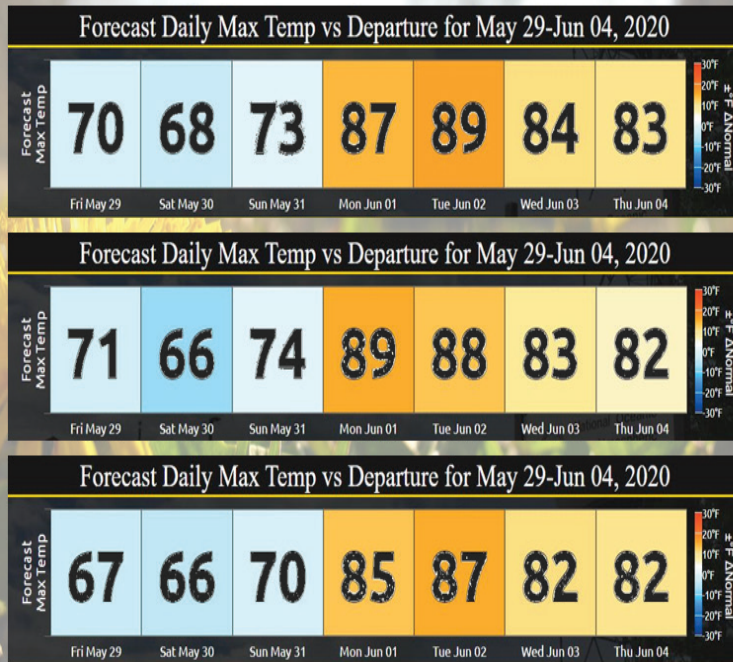
High: 73 °F

Seasonable to Cool Temps Through the Weekend, Warmer Next Week

Aberdeen

Pierre

Watertown



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 5/29/2020 5:03 AM Central

We'll see a shift in temperatures from seasonable/cool through the weekend to summer-like next week. Precipitation-wise, the area will stay dry with possible exceptions being light rain tonight into Saturday morning across south central South Dakota and showers/storms here and there Sunday night and Tuesday through Thursday.

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Today in Weather History

May 29, 1953: An auditorium was almost entirely unroofed, and barns, along with outbuildings were destroyed in McLaughlin by a tornado. Seven businesses and two homes were also damaged. Estimate of property damage at \$100,000. This tornado was estimated to have F2 strength.

May 29, 2004: Hail, with the largest a quarter sizes, fell in many parts of north-central South Dakota. Lightning struck a house in Veblen and caused some damage. Glass from a broken window hit a man, and some debris from the ceiling hit a woman. They were taken to the hospital and treated for minor injuries. The torrential rains of 3 to 6 inches fell between Westport and Columbia with cropland and many roads flooded. Also, some basements were flooded. Four, weak F0 tornadoes, also were reported. The first two touched down near Bath causing no damage. The other two occurred near Ipswich, also causing no damage.

1947: An unprecedented late-spring snowstorm blasts portions of the Midwest from eastern Wyoming to eastern Upper Michigan. The heavy snow caused severe damage to power and telephone lines and the already-leafed-out vegetation.

1951 - A massive hailstorm, from Wallace to Kearney County in Kansas, caused six million dollars damage to crops. (David Ludlum)

1953 - A tornado, 600 yards wide at times, killed two persons on its 20 mile path from southwest of Fort Rice ND into Emmons County. Nearly every building in Fort Rice was damaged. The Catholic church was leveled, with some pews jammed four feet into the ground. (The Weather Channel)

1982: Two significant tornadoes ripped through southern Illinois. The most severe was an F4 that touched down northeast of Carbondale, Illinois then moved to Marion. The twister had multiple vortices within the main funnel. Extensive damage occurred at the Marion Airport. A total of 10 people were killed, and 181 were injured. 648 homes and 200 cars were damaged or destroyed, with total damages around \$100 million.

1986: Hailstones over 3 inches in diameter pounded South Shore in Montreal, Quebec Canada causing over \$65 million in damage.

1987 - Thunderstorms in West Texas produced softball size hail at Lamesa, and hail up to twelve inches deep east of Dimmitt. Thunderstorms also spawned seven tornadoes in West Texas, including one which injured three persons at Wolfforth. Thunderstorms deluged the Texas Hill Country with up to eleven inches of rain. Severe flooding along the Medino, Hondo, Seco, Sabinal and Frio rivers caused more than fifty million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A powerful cold front brought snow and high winds to parts of the western U.S. Austin, NV, was blanketed with ten inches of snow, and winds gusted to 75 mph at the Mojave Airport in California. Strong southerly winds and unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Glasgow, MT, equalled their record for the month of May with a high of 102 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Wintry weather gripped parts of the northwestern U.S. for the second day in a row. Great Falls, MT, was blanketed with 12 inches of snow, which pushed their total for the winter season to a record 117.4 inches. Six inches of snow whitened the Cascade Mountains of Oregon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from north central Colorado to the northern half of Texas. Severe thunderstorms spawned four tornadoes, and there were seventy reports of large hail or damaging winds. Midday thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 90 mph at Hobart, OK, and produced up to three and a half inches of rain in eastern Colorado in four hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

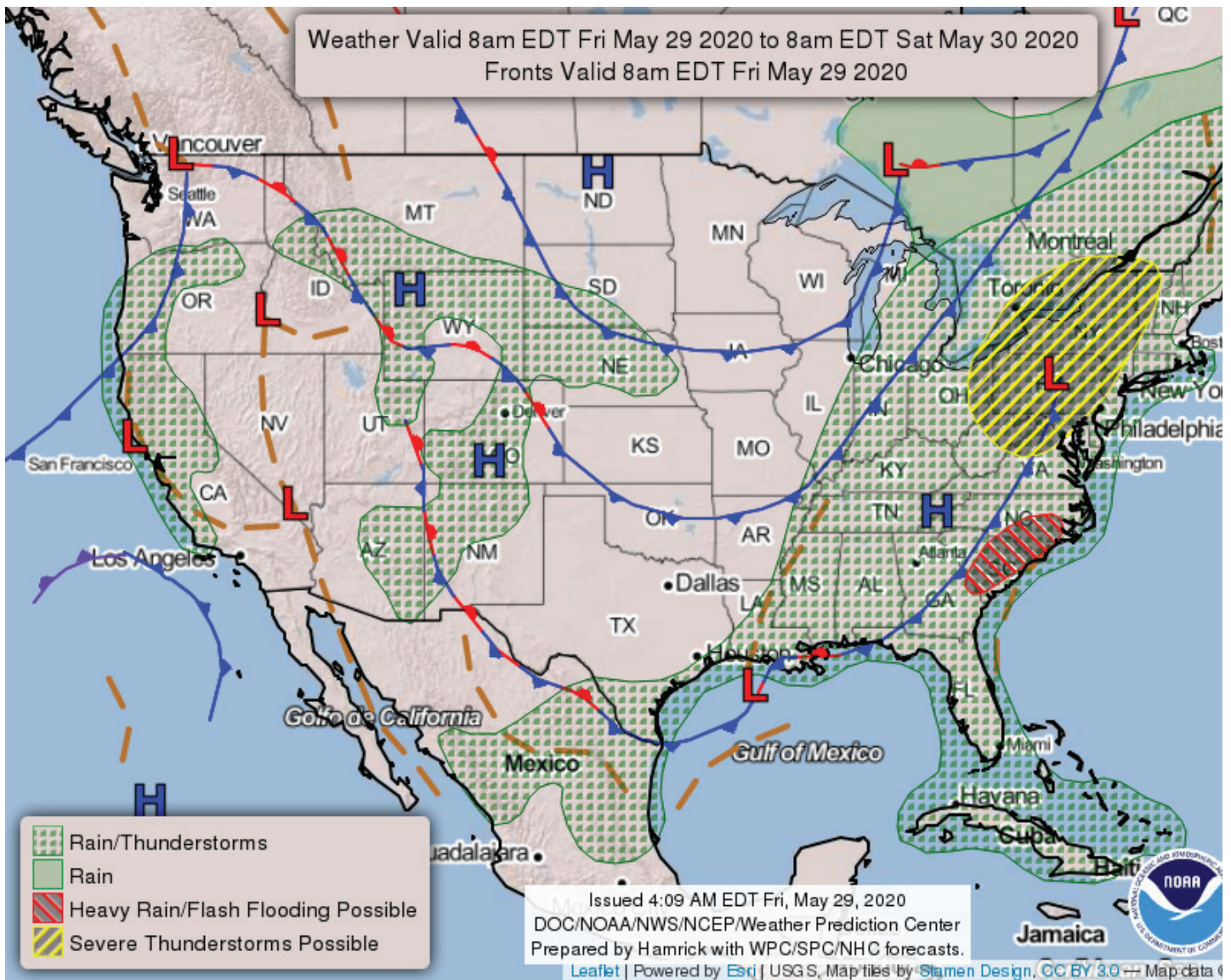
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 72 °F at 2:14 PM
Low Temp: 53 °F at 6:23 AM
Wind: 29 mph at 3:23 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 99° in 1934
Record Low: 23° in 1947
Average High: 72°F
Average Low: 49°F
Average Precip in May.: 2.81
Precip to date in May.: 2.73
Average Precip to date: 6.84
Precip Year to Date: 4.63
Sunset Tonight: 9:13 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:49 a.m.



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FINDING LIFE'S SECRETS

Charlie Brown was having a serious conversation with Lucy in one of the "Peanuts" cartoons. Said Charlie, "I've made a giant step forward in unraveling the mysteries of the Old Testament, Lucy!"

"What's that?" asked Lucy, bursting with interest.

"I started reading it," he replied.

Many people view the Bible as a collection of fables, myths, or tales and unintelligent stories about a God who hides in deep, unfathomable messages. Some claim it is a book beyond the ability of humans to understand. Although it is a book written by humans, it is not a "human book." It is the story of God making Himself known through words, deeds, and "The Word," - His beloved Son. It is not beyond the ability of humans to understand the contents. God Himself will make its message clear when people ask Him to speak to them through His Holy Spirit.

Through the Holy Spirit, God revealed His Person and plan of redemption and reconciliation - the Gospel Message. The authors of God's revelation in Scripture were inspired by His Spirit to speak on His behalf. God wanted to make Himself known because He wants us to know Him, to love Him, to accept His truth, to trust Him, and to turn to His Son for salvation.

If we want to know and understand God we need to do what Charlie Brown did, "start reading" His Word.

Prayer: You have spoken to us, Lord, through Your Word. If we seek Your truth and want to know You and please You with our lives, Your Word will show us how. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

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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

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News from the Associated Press

Sorry - ran out of time to make this all look pretty here with the headlines. Internet was too slow this morning.

Court rejects bid to revive cancelled US pipeline program

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A federal appeals court on Thursday turned down the Trump administration's request to revive a permit program for new oil and gas pipelines, an outcome that industry representatives said could delay more than 70 projects across the U.S. and cost companies up to \$2 billion.

The case originated with a challenge by environmentalists to the Keystone XL crude oil pipeline from the oil sands region of Canada to the U.S. It's now affecting oil and gas pipeline proposals across the nation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting program allows pipelines to be built across streams and wetlands with minimal review if they meet certain criteria. Environmental groups contend the program, known as Nationwide Permit 12, leaves companies unaccountable for damage done to water bodies during construction.

"This is huge," said Jared Margolis with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Hopefully this gives us a chance to put a pause on these major oil pipelines."

Army Corps spokesman Doug Garman said the agency was not commenting because the matter is still in litigation.

Government attorneys, backed by 19 states and numerous industry groups, had argued the cancellation would delay construction of pipelines used to deliver fuel to power plants and other destinations.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris in Montana said in a pair of recent rulings in the Keystone case that Army Corps officials had failed to adequately consult with wildlife agencies before reauthorizing the permitting program in 2017. Its continued use could cause serious harm to protected species and critical wildlife habitat, he said.

A two-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied an emergency request to block Morris' ruling. They said in a one-page decision that the government, states and industry groups had not demonstrated sufficient harm to justify reviving the program while the case is still pending.

The issue could take months to resolve barring further court intervention.

In the absence of the nationwide permit, companies will have to apply for numerous individual construction permits on lines that sometimes cross hundreds of water bodies. That could cause delays of a year or more on more than 70 pending pipelines, increasing their combined costs by \$2 billion, said Paul Afonso, chief legal officer for the American Petroleum Institute.

"It is completely inappropriate that the district court has singled out natural gas and oil companies to cut out of a long-established regulatory process," he said.

Follow Matthew Brown on twitter: @MatthewBrownAP

South Dakota testing hydroxychloroquine to prevent COVID-19

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota is going forward with plans to test using a controversial anti-malaria drug in small doses to prevent COVID-19, Gov. Kristi Noem announced Thursday.

The drug hydroxychloroquine has attracted controversy after President Donald Trump promoted it as an antidote to COVID-19, but was shown in studies not to help, and even to be harmful, to people hospitalized by the virus. Noem enlisted Dr. Allison Suttle, Sanford Health's chief medical officer, to explain that this trial is different. Instead of administering the drug to people with serious cases of COVID-19, it will give smaller doses to people who have been exposed to the coronavirus in the hope it helps their immune

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system ward off the virus.

Trump takes the drug for the same reason as the South Dakota study — as a preventive measure. But the Food and Drug Administration has warned that the drug should only be administered in a hospital or a research setting. And the World Health Organization announced it was dropping it from its study of experimental COVID-19 treatments.

The smaller dose is safe, said Suttle, and could show if hydroxychloroquine helps people ward off COVID-19. The drug is used in a similar way to prevent malaria.

"It's so important to be able to bring answers to the table," she said.

Researchers are hoping to enlist 2,000 people in the study, although half of them will be given a placebo. Suttle said they have only enrolled a "handful" so far. The state is helping sponsor the trial.

Suttle said that Sanford is heeding the warnings on hydroxychloroquine from the studies on hospitalized patients. Sanford is no longer recommending people with serious cases of COVID-19 take the drug.

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.

Meanwhile, health officials reported 83 new cases of COVID-19 and no new deaths.

The new cases bring the state's total to 4,793, but almost 80% of those have recovered. So far, 54 people have died in the state from COVID-19. Health officials have warned that the number of infections is likely higher because many people may not display symptoms or have not sought testing for mild symptoms.

The pandemic's economic effects also continued to be seen across the state as 3,410 people made new applications for unemployment benefits last week, according to the Department of Labor and Regulation. The number was a decrease from the week before, but unemployment figures were still at a record high.

Since March 14, the state has processed 50,388 claims. That represents 12% of the total workforce of the state that is eligible for the unemployment insurance program.

Meatpacking union: 44 COVID-19 deaths among workers

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — At least 44 meatpacking workers in the U.S. have died from the new coronavirus and another 3,000 have tested positive, according to an estimate released Thursday by the largest union representing workers.

Meat processing plants have become hot spots for infections in communities across the country, but most have stayed open since President Donald Trump's executive order a month ago declaring them critical infrastructure. The United Food and Commercial Workers union said 30 meatpacking plants have closed at some point since March, resulting in an estimated 40% reduction in pork production and a 25% reduction in beef.

The actual number of employees with the coronavirus is likely higher than the estimate, said Mark Lauritsen, director of the food processing and meatpacking division for the United Food and Commercial Workers International. The union compiled the figures from local union members who either received data from the meatpacking plant or verified infections with employees.

In some places, the number of infections is hard to come by because they are not released by state officials, Lauritsen said. He pointed to Gov. Pete Rickett's decision not to report the number of infected workers at meat processing plants in Nebraska.

As plants reopen and scale up production, many have installed physical barriers between workstations and put up hand-sanitizing stations, following guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But most of the guidelines meant to keep workers safe are unenforceable.

The union called for more safety measures, saying Trump's order didn't solve the problem.

"You want to save the food supply chain, you have to make those workers safe," Lauritsen said. "Then they'll do their job."

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Body pulled from Rapid City creek is missing man

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Police say a body pulled from a Rapid City creek this week is that of a man who had been missing since last week.

The man was identified as 41-year-old Jason Rush of Rapid City. Police had been searching for Rush since he was reported missing on May 19.

An autopsy has been done, but authorities are waiting for toxicology test results before a cause of death is determined.

The Rapid City/Pennington County Water Rescue Team recovered Rush's body on Tuesday.

Police across US speak out against Minneapolis custody death

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Murder. Brutality. Reprehensible. Indefensible. Police nationwide, in unequivocal and unprecedented language, have condemned the actions of Minneapolis police in the custody death of a handcuffed black man who cried for help as an officer knelt on his neck, pinning him to the pavement for at least eight minutes.

But some civil rights advocates say their denunciations are empty words without meaningful reform behind them.

Authorities say George Floyd was detained Monday because he matched the description of someone who tried to pay with a counterfeit bill at a convenience store, and the 46-year-old resisted arrest. A bystander's disturbing video shows Officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, kneeling on Floyd's neck, even as Floyd begs for air and slowly stops talking and moving.

"There is no need to see more video," Chattanooga, Tennessee, Police Chief David Roddy tweeted Wednesday. "There no need to wait to see how 'it plays out'. There is no need to put a knee on someone's neck for NINE minutes. There IS a need to DO something. If you wear a badge and you don't have an issue with this ... turn it in."

The reaction from some law enforcement stands in stark contrast to their muted response or support for police after other in-custody fatalities. Sheriffs and police chiefs have strongly criticized the Minneapolis officer on social media and praised the city's police chief for his quick dismissal of four officers at the scene. Some even called for them to be criminally charged.

"I am deeply disturbed by the video of Mr. Floyd being murdered in the street with other officers there letting it go on," Polk County, Georgia, Sheriff Johnny Moats wrote on Facebook. "I can assure everyone, me or any of my deputies will never treat anyone like that as long as I'm Sheriff. This kind of brutality is terrible and it needs to stop. All Officers involved need to be arrested and charged immediately. Praying for the family."

Typically, police call for patience and calm in the wake of a use of force. They are reluctant to weigh in on episodes involving another agency, often citing ongoing investigations or due process.

"Not going hide behind 'not being there,'" tweeted San Jose Police, California, Chief Eddie Garcia. "I'd be one of the first to condemn anyone had I seen similar happen to one of my brother/ sister officers. What I saw happen to George Floyd disturbed me and is not consistent with the goal of our mission. The act of one, impacts us all."

But Gloria Browne-Marshall, a civil rights attorney and professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said she wouldn't be a "cheerleader" for a "handful" of chiefs who harshly decried the officers' behavior.

"Any minute progress is seen as miraculous because so little has been done for so long," she said. "It's nothing close to progress or what outrage would be taking place if it was a white man as the victim of this assault."

Melina Abdullah, co-founder of Black Lives Matter in Los Angeles, said she wasn't "particularly moved" by the relatively few police who voiced outrage.

Abdullah said the three other officers who witnessed Chauvin's actions and did not intervene contributed to a long-standing system of police racism and oppression against people of color.

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"We've got to remember that it was not just Officer Chauvin who was sitting on George Floyd's neck," she said.

Abdullah and hundreds of others protested what she called Floyd's lynching on Wednesday night. Some blocked lanes of a freeway and shattered windows of California Highway Patrol cruisers.

Minneapolis is bracing for more violence after days of civil unrest, with burned buildings, looted stores and angry graffiti demanding justice. The governor on Thursday called in the National Guard. On Thursday night, protesters torched a Minneapolis police station that the department was forced to abandon.

The heads of the Los Angeles and Chicago departments — both of which have been rocked before by police brutality scandals — addressed Floyd's death and its potential effect on race relations between law enforcement and communities of color.

Even the New York Police Department weighed in. Eric Garner died in the city in 2014 after he was placed in a chokehold by police and uttered the same words Floyd did: "I can't breathe."

It took city officials five years to fire the officer, and no criminal or federal charges were brought.

"What we saw in Minnesota was deeply disturbing. It was wrong," NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea wrote Thursday. "We must take a stand and address it. We must come together, condemn these actions and reinforce who we are as members of the NYPD. This is not acceptable ANYWHERE."

Before he was commissioner, Shea spearheaded the NYPD's shift to community policing that moved away from a more confrontational style favored by other commissioners after Garner's death.

Harris County, Texas, Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, who also spoke out online, told The Associated Press that law enforcement agencies keep promising reforms in the wake of fatalities, but they are "not delivering it on a consistent basis."

"When bad things happen in our profession, we need to be able to call it like it is," he said. "We keep thinking that the last one will be the last one, and then another one surfaces."

Masks on Leatherneck Square: Virus changes Marine training

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

PARRIS ISLAND, S.C. (AP) — The booming shouts of the rain-soaked Marine recruits echo across Leatherneck Square training field, barely muffled by their masks. And as they jog by, belting out responses to drill instructors in a rhythmic cadence, the white fabric across their faces is the only telltale sign of the coronavirus' effects on their quest to become Marines.

But in ways big and small, the virus is impacting training at the Marine Corps' Parris Island Recruit Depot and across the military. And defense leaders say some of the adjustments are proving beneficial and could become permanent.

Maj. Gen. James Glynn, commander of Parris Island, said requiring recruits to spend two weeks in quarantine before their training has had unexpected benefits.

"They are singularly focused on two weeks of mental and emotional prep for what you guys are seeing today," he said during a visit Wednesday by Defense Secretary Mark Esper. "I think it's pretty evident it's making a difference. They're mentally focused and have reconciled why they're here."

Until this week, recruits spent the two-week quarantine in a complex of large white tents and bathroom and shower trailers that was quickly built on the base to allow health monitoring and keep them isolated. But now recruits are spending the two weeks in dorms at the Citadel, the Marine college in Charleston, about a two-hour drive north.

Esper, who toured the tent area with Glynn, said the new precautions — including masks, social distancing and the quarantine — have greatly lowered the amount of other respiratory illnesses recruits traditionally get.

"They've seen a much lower sick call right across the board when it comes to infection, so they're going to keep that. And we're going to keep some other practices," said Esper, adding that by breaking the recruits into smaller groups, "they've seen a higher level of unity and esprit. And they bonded much more quickly."

As Esper walked around the soggy field, recruits were going through what Marines call the "confidence

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course." They were clambering over large log obstacles, climbing towers, shimmying across rope lines strung over a net, and swinging over streams of water. In other sections, recruits were paired off to battle with pugil sticks, which replicates rifle and bayonet combat.

Staff Sgt. Katheryn Hunter, a drill instructor for three years at Parris Island, said the main difference she sees due to the virus is that the number of female recruits she has in 4th Battalion, Oscar Company, has dropped to 70. And she has 35 recruits in squad bays that usually hold up to 64.

During the initial portion of training, women, who have their own battalion, are largely separated from men. Marine Corps leaders staunchly defend the segregation, saying it helps build confidence, but some members of Congress have demanded change.

On the confidence course, female recruits were together on the various obstacles, while the male recruits were doing other tests.

The course, Hunter said, is critical.

"We have a lot of recruits that are scared of heights, recruits that are scared of water or are scared of different obstacles," she said, adding that the course "actually tests recruits' fears, also builds their confidence that they can accomplish stuff as long as they set their minds to it."

In the larger formations, the recruits wore masks, but during some physical tests — even those where teamwork was required and social distancing impossible — the masks came off. Most of the drill instructors wore theirs at all times, as did Esper and his entourage.

Commanders noted that the recruits had finished their two-week quarantine and were on day 14 of their actual training — so they had been largely isolated for about a month. Marine recruits go to either Parris Island or to Camp Pendleton in southern California, for 13 weeks of training.

Another change, Esper said, is that military recruits often get to go home for two weeks after graduation. That leave has been suspended because of the virus. Instead, the Marines are getting three or four days of little or no duty before reporting to their next schooling or station.

"They're showing up at the next phase of training in much better shape," said Esper, noting that they haven't been able to go out drinking and partying. He said Marine leaders are "seeing a better product entering the next phase of training, so they're starting to think maybe we won't go back to the 10 days off."

Glynn said the plan to use the Citadel for quarantine was inspired by his mother-in-law, who sent him an article about how colleges and the military worked together during the Spanish flu pandemic. But while the college, with its two-person rooms, is working out well, Glynn said he'll need another solution when classes resume. He said they are reviewing several options, including some nearer Parris Island, but have not made a decision.

The Army has made similar changes in its recruit training, which is a longer, 22-week course for infantry and armor soldiers. But instead of separating the incoming recruits at a distant location for the two-week quarantine, Army leaders changed the course schedule.

The new plan shifted classroom learning to the first two weeks, with many classes done virtually or outside, with little physical interaction, spaced chairs and social distancing. The recruits then move into what Army officials described as a training bubble, where they begin their more traditional physical and combat instruction.

Both the Marine Corps and the Army screen recruits for the virus when they arrive at processing stations, and again when they get to the training base. Army recruits go to one of the four training centers at Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; and Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Defense leaders said they have been intrigued to see some good come from the virus precautions.

"I mean, it's funny," said Esper, as he flew home from Parris Island, "Even once coronavirus fades or we have a vaccine, you may come out with a boot camp that produces a better product because of things learned."

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Twitter adds 'glorifying violence' warning to Trump tweet

The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — Twitter has added a warning to one of President Donald Trump's tweets about protests in Minneapolis, saying it violated the platform's rules about "glorifying violence."

Trump, a prolific Twitter user, has been at war with the company since earlier this week, when it for the first time applied fact checks to two of his tweets. Those were about mail-in ballots.

The third tweet to be flagged came amid days of violent protests over the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded for air as a white police officer knelt on his neck.

"These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen," Trump tweeted about the protesters. "Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you!"

Twitter did not remove the tweet, saying it had determined it might be in the public interest to have it remain accessible. It does that only for tweets by elected and government officials. But the tweet was hidden so that a user looking at Trump's timeline would have to click on the warning to see the original tweet.

The earlier tweets that Twitter flagged were not hidden but did come with an option to "get the facts about mail-in ballots," a link that led to fact checks and news stories by media organizations. Those tweets called mail-in ballots "fraudulent" and predicted that "mail boxes will be robbed," among other things.

Twitter's decision to flag Trump's tweets came as the president continued to use the platform to push a debunked conspiracy theory accusing MSNBC host and former congressman Joe Scarborough of killing a staffer in his Florida congressional office in 2001. Medical officials determined the staffer had an undiagnosed heart condition, passed out and hit her head as she fell. Scarborough, who was in Washington, not Florida, at the time, has urged the president to stop his baseless attacks. The staffer's husband also recently demanded that Twitter remove the tweets. The company issued a statement expressing its regret to the husband but so far has taken no other action.

On Thursday, Trump targeted Twitter and other social media companies by signing an executive order challenging the laws that generally protect them from liability for material users post on their platforms.

The order directs executive branch agencies to ask independent rule-making agencies including the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission to study whether they can place new regulations on the companies, though experts express doubts much can be done without an act of Congress.

The president and fellow conservatives have claimed for years that Silicon Valley tech companies are biased against them. But there is no evidence for this, and while the executives and many employees of Twitter, Facebook and Google may lean liberal, the companies have stressed they have no business interest in favoring one political party over the other.

Europe's social welfare net shows signs of wear from virus

By ANGELA CHARLTON, COLLEEN BARRY and NICK PERRY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Europe's extensive social welfare net is showing signs of fraying under economic strain from the coronavirus, as protests erupted for a second day in Spain Friday against layoffs by French carmaker Renault, while Italy's chief central banker warned that "uncertainty is rife."

Further afield, while New Zealand had all but eradicated the coronavirus with just one person in the nation of 5 million known to be still infected, developments elsewhere were generally grim. India reported another record increase in cases and Pakistan a record number of deaths.

As cases steadily rise across Africa, too, officials who are losing the global race for equipment and drugs are scrambling for homegrown solutions.

In the first major increase since it started gradually reopening May 11, France reported more than 3,000 new daily virus infections. It was not immediately clear if the spike was due to a greater availability of testing.

In the U.S., the virus threw more than 2 million people out of work last week despite the gradual reopening of businesses, stoking fears it is doing deep and potentially long-lasting damage to the world's largest economy.

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The latest job-loss figures from the U.S. Labor Department bring to 41 million the running total of Americans who have filed for unemployment benefits since the coronavirus shutdowns took hold in mid-March.

Strong safety-net programs in many European countries are underwriting the wages of millions of workers and keeping them on the payroll instead of adding them to the ranks of the unemployed. But the limits are starting to show.

In Britain, Treasury chief Rishi Sunak is expected to tell employers that starting in August, they'll have to share the costs of a program that has effectively placed furloughed workers on the government payroll.

Sunak says the government can't pay indefinitely for a program that has cost 15 billion pounds (\$18.4 billion) to cover 80% of wages of some 8.5 million people. It is in place until October, although the final months will require employer input.

Even as it seeks a government loan from France, struggling carmaker Renault announced 15,000 job cuts worldwide as part of a 2 billion-euro cost-cutting plan over three years, as demand for cars has plunged around the globe.

Renault said nearly 4,600 jobs will be cut in France and more than 10,000 in the rest of the world.

That had a knock-on effect in Spain, where Nissan is rolling back production in a move Madrid said would mean 3,000 direct job cuts and risks as many as 20,000 additional jobs in the supply chain.

Spanish workers took to the streets for a second day to protest the closure of three Barcelona plants. Hundreds of workers have surrounded at least four of Nissan's car dealerships in or around the northeastern city, covering their windows with leaflets reading "Nissan betrays 25,000 families" and "We will keep fighting" among others.

The governor of the Bank of Italy, Ignazio Visco, in his annual address, said Europe's fourth-largest economy could contract by as much as 13% this year under a pessimistic scenario that foresees a "magnitude" drop in world trade and an intense deterioration of financial conditions.

"Today uncertainty is rife, not only about the course of the pandemic but also about the repercussions on behavioural patterns, on consumption and on investment decisions," Visco said, adding that "after the pandemic wanes, the world will be a different place."

How different will depend on how leaders manage falling employment, lower consumption and the prospect of social unrest, he said.

In New Zealand, health authorities have not found any new virus cases for a week. Of the 1,504 people who were infected, 22 have died but all but one of the rest have now recovered. The nation's borders remain closed, and staying virus-free when they eventually reopen poses a big challenge.

India registered another record daily increase of 7,466 cases just before its two-month lockdown ends Sunday. The government's new guidelines expected this weekend may extend the lockdown in the worst-hit areas while easing the rules to promote economic activity elsewhere.

Most cases in India are concentrated around its largest cities, including Mumbai and New Delhi, but cases have been increasing in some of the poorest eastern states as migrant workers who lost jobs in the cities return to their native villages.

Pakistan on Friday reported 57 deaths, its highest single-day increase since the outbreak began. That increased the overall death toll to more than 1,300 while the number of confirmed cases rose to over 64,000.

In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte decided to ease a lockdown in the capital to a more relaxed quarantine on Monday after more than two months of strictures enforced by the police and military. Infections spiked in Manila recently, and Duterte warned that the pandemic is not over.

South Africa says it has a backlog of nearly 100,000 unprocessed tests for the coronavirus, a striking example of the painful shortage of testing kits and reagents across Africa as cases steadily rise.

The widespread shortages, especially in testing materials, have jolted African authorities into facing uncomfortable truths: Richer countries are elbowing them out and they need homegrown solutions to the shortages.

"We have to have Made in Africa products," the director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, John Nkengasong, told reporters Thursday. "We cannot keep importing basic things."

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In the U.S., where the death toll is the highest in the world and has surpassed 101,000, there were some encouraging signs in the economic data.

The overall number of Americans currently drawing jobless benefits dropped for the first time since the crisis began, from 25 million to 21 million. And first-time applications for unemployment benefits have fallen for eight straight weeks as states gradually let stores, restaurants and other businesses reopen and the auto industry starts up factories again.

But the number of U.S. workers filing for unemployment benefits is still extraordinarily high by historical standards, and that suggests businesses are failing or permanently downsizing, not just laying off people until the crisis can pass, economists warn.

"That is the kind of economic destruction you cannot quickly put back in the bottle," said Adam Ozimek, chief economist at Upwork.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 14.7% in April, a level not seen since the Depression, and many economists expect it will be near 20% in May.

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 5.8 million people and killed about 360,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The true dimensions of the disaster are widely believed to be significantly greater, with experts saying many victims died without ever being tested.

Barry contributed from Soave, Italy, and Perry from Wellington, New Zealand. Associated Press reporters from around the world contributed to this report.

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

7 shot at Louisville protest over fatal police shooting

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — At least seven people were shot in Louisville as protesters turned out to demand justice for Breonna Taylor, a black woman fatally shot by police in her home in March.

Louisville Metro Police confirmed in a statement early Friday that there were at least seven shooting victims, at least one of whom is in critical condition. The statement said there were "some arrests," but police didn't provide a number.

"No officers discharged their service weapons," police spokesman Sgt. Lamont Washington wrote in an email to The Associated Press. Washington said that all seven were civilians.

Around 500 to 600 demonstrators marched through the Kentucky city's downtown streets on Thursday night, the Courier Journal reported. The protests continued for more than six hours, ending in the early hours of Friday as rain poured down.

At one point, protesters took turns hoisting the stone hand of King Louis XVI after it was broken off his statue outside City Hall. Shots were later heard, prompting some of the protesters to scramble for safety.

"Understandably, emotions are high," Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer tweeted just before midnight, sharing a Facebook post that appealed for people to remain non-violent as they demand justice and accountability from police. "As Breonna's mother says let's be peaceful as we work toward truth and justice," the mayor wrote.

Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency medical tech, was shot eight times on March 13 after Louisville narcotics detectives knocked down her front door. No drugs were found in the home.

Attention on Taylor's death has intensified after her family sued the police department this month. The case has attracted national headlines alongside the shooting of Ahmaud Arbery in a Georgia neighborhood in February.

Thursday's demonstration came as protesters across the country — from Los Angeles to Memphis, Tennessee, to New York to Minneapolis itself — have demonstrated against the death of a black man, George Floyd, in Minneapolis police custody.

Around 12:20 a.m., Fischer tweeted a video that he said was a message from Taylor's family.

"Louisville, thank you so much for saying Breonna's name tonight. We are not going to stop until we get

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justice," a woman says in the video. "But we should stop tonight before people get hurt. Please go home, be safe and be ready to keep fighting."

Meanwhile, live video from downtown Louisville around 12:30 a.m. showed some protesters behind makeshift wooden barricades, which appeared to be made out of picnic tables spray-painted with the words "You can't kill us all." A small fire inside a trash can was visible in the middle of the street.

Police in body armor and face shields held batons and lined up downtown. They appeared to fire rubber bullets and deploy tear gas canisters, fogging the air and inducing coughs among the remaining members of the crowd. Protesters recorded officers with their cellphones.

Kentuckians are still under social distancing mandates driven by the coronavirus pandemic. Many protesters wore masks.

Chants early Friday included "No justice, no peace" and "Whose streets? Our streets."

Minneapolis police station torched amid George Floyd protest

By TIM SULLIVAN and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Cheering protesters torched a Minneapolis police station that the department abandoned as three days of violent protests spread to nearby St. Paul and angry demonstrations flared across the U.S. over the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded for air as a white police officer knelt on his neck.

A police spokesman confirmed late Thursday that staff had evacuated the 3rd Precinct station, the focus of many of the protests, "in the interest of the safety of our personnel" shortly after 10 p.m. Livestream video showed the protesters entering the building, where fire alarms blared and sprinklers ran as blazes were set.

Protesters could be seen setting fire to a Minneapolis Police Department jacket.

Late Thursday, President Donald Trump blasted the "total lack of leadership" in Minneapolis. "Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts," he said on Twitter. Trump, who called protesters in Minneapolis "thugs," drew another warning from Twitter for his rhetoric, saying it violated the platform's rules about "glorifying violence."

A visibly tired and frustrated Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey made his first public appearance of the night at City Hall near 2 a.m. Friday and took responsibility for evacuating the precinct, saying it had become too dangerous for officers there. As Frey continued, a reporter cut across loudly with a question: "What's the plan here?"

"With regard to?" Frey responded. Then he added: "There is a lot of pain and anger right now in our city. I understand that ... What we have seen over the past several hours and past couple of nights here in terms of looting is unacceptable."

He defended the city's lack of engagement with looters — only a handful of arrests across the first two nights of violence — and said, "We are doing absolutely everything that we can to keep the peace." He said National Guard members were being stationed in locations to help stem looting, including banks, grocery stores and pharmacies.

On Friday morning, the Minnesota State Patrol arrested a CNN television crew as they reported on the unrest in Minneapolis. While live on air, CNN reporter Omar Jimenez was handcuffed and led away. A producer and a photojournalist for CNN were also led away in handcuffs.

CNN said on Twitter that the arrests were "a clear violation of their First Amendment rights" and called for their immediate release.

Thick smoke rose over the city as fires burned Friday morning. Firefighters worked to contain a number of fires as National Guard troops blocked access to streets where businesses had been damaged. They marched side by side and block by block as they expanded a perimeter around a heavily damaged area.

Protests first erupted Tuesday, a day after Floyd's death in a confrontation with police captured on widely seen citizen video. On the video, Floyd can be seen pleading as Officer Derek Chauvin presses his knee

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against him. As minutes pass, Floyd slowly stops talking and moving. The 3rd Precinct covers the portion of south Minneapolis where Floyd was arrested.

Walz earlier Thursday activated the National Guard at the Minneapolis mayor's request. The Guard tweeted minutes after the precinct burned that it had activated more than 500 soldiers across the metro area. A couple dozen Guard members, armed with assault-style rifles, blocked a street Friday morning near a Target store that has sustained heavy damage by looters.

The Guard said a "key objective" was to make sure fire departments could respond to calls, and said in a follow-up tweet it was "here with the Minneapolis Fire Department" to assist. But no move was made to put out the 3rd Precinct fire. Assistant Fire Chief Bryan Tyner said fire crews could not safely respond to fires at the precinct station and some surrounding buildings.

Earlier Thursday, dozens of businesses across the Twin Cities boarded up their windows and doors in an effort to prevent looting, with Minneapolis-based Target announcing it was temporarily closing two dozen area stores. Minneapolis shut down nearly its entire light-rail system and all bus service through Sunday out of safety concerns.

In St. Paul, clouds of smoke hung in the air as police armed with batons and wearing gas masks and body armor kept a watchful eye on protesters along one of the city's main commercial corridors, where firefighters also sprayed water onto a series of small fires. At one point, officers stood in line in front of a Target, trying to keep out looters, who were also smashing windows of other businesses.

Hundreds of demonstrators returned Thursday to the Minneapolis neighborhood at the center of the violence, where the nighttime scene veered between an angry protest and a street party. At one point, a band playing in a parking lot across from the 3rd Precinct broke into a punk version of Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." Nearby, demonstrators carried clothing mannequins from a looted Target and threw them onto a burning car. Later, a building fire erupted nearby.

But elsewhere in Minneapolis, thousands of peaceful demonstrators marched through the streets calling for justice.

Floyd's death has deeply shaken Minneapolis and sparked protests in cities across the U.S. Local leaders have repeatedly urged demonstrators to avoid violence.

"Please stay home. Please do not come here to protest. Please keep the focus on George Floyd, on advancing our movement and on preventing this from ever happening again," tweeted St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, who is black.

Erika Atson, 20, was among thousands of people who gathered outside government offices in downtown Minneapolis, where organizers had called for a peaceful protest. Many protesters wore masks because of the coronavirus pandemic, but there were few attempts at social distancing.

Atson, who is black, described seeing her 14- and 11-year-old brothers tackled by Minneapolis police years ago because officers mistakenly presumed the boys had guns. She said she had been at "every single protest" since Floyd's death and worried about raising children who could be vulnerable in police encounters.

"We don't want to be here fighting against anyone. We don't want anyone to be hurt. We don't want to cause any damages," she said. "We just want the police officer to be held accountable."

The group marched peacefully for three hours before another confrontation with police broke out, though details were scarce.

After calling in the Guard, Walz urged widespread changes in the wake of Floyd's death.

"It is time to rebuild. Rebuild the city, rebuild our justice system and rebuild the relationship between law enforcement and those they're charged to protect," Walz said.

Much of the Minneapolis violence occurred in the Longfellow neighborhood, where protesters converged on the precinct station of the police who arrested Floyd. In a strip mall across the street from the 3rd Precinct station, the windows in nearly every business had been smashed, from the large Target department store at one end to the Planet Fitness gym at the other. Only the 24-hour laundromat appeared to have escaped unscathed.

"WHY US?" demanded a large expanse of red graffiti scrawled on the wall of the Target. A Wendy's

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restaurant across the street was charred almost beyond recognition.

Among the casualties of the overnight fires: a six-story building under construction that was to provide nearly 200 apartments of affordable housing.

"We're burning our own neighborhood," said a distraught Deona Brown, a 24-year-old woman standing with a friend outside the precinct station, where a small group of protesters were shouting at a dozen or so stone-faced police officers in riot gear. "This is where we live, where we shop, and they destroyed it." No officers could be seen beyond the station.

"What that cop did was wrong, but I'm scared now," Brown said.

Others in the crowd saw something different in the wreckage.

Protesters destroyed property "because the system is broken," said a young man who identified himself only by his nickname, Cash, and who said he had been in the streets during the violence. He dismissed the idea that the destruction would hurt residents of the largely black neighborhood.

"They're making money off of us," he said angrily of the owners of the destroyed stores. He laughed when asked if he had joined in the looting or violence. "I didn't break anything."

The protests that began Wednesday night and extended into Thursday were more violent than Tuesday's, which included skirmishes between officers and protesters but no widespread property damage.

Protests have also spread to other U.S. cities. In New York City, protesters defied New York's coronavirus prohibition on public gatherings Thursday, clashing with police, while demonstrators blocked traffic in downtown Denver and downtown Columbus. A day earlier, demonstrators had taken to the streets in Los Angeles and Memphis.

In Louisville, Kentucky, police confirmed that at least seven people had been shot Thursday night as protesters demanded justice for Breonna Taylor, a black woman who was fatally shot by police in her home in March.

Anger over the killing also has spread in Africa, where the head of the African Union Commission on Friday rejected "continuing discriminatory practices against black citizens of the USA." In a series of tweets, Moussa Faki Mahamat urged the "total elimination" of all forms of racism in the U.S.

In Mississippi, Petal Mayor Hal Marx resisted calls to resign following his remarks about Floyd's death. The Republican on Twitter asked "Why in the world would anyone choose to become a police officer in our society today?" and in a follow-up tweet said he "didn't see anything unreasonable."

Amid the violence in Minneapolis, a man was found fatally shot Wednesday night near a pawn shop, possibly by the owner, authorities said.

Fire crews responded to about 30 intentionally set blazes on Wednesday, and multiple fire trucks were damaged by rocks and other projectiles, the fire department said. No one was hurt by the blazes.

The city on Thursday released a transcript of the 911 call that brought police to the grocery store where Floyd was arrested. The caller described someone paying with a counterfeit bill, with workers rushing outside to find the man sitting on a van. The caller described the man as "awfully drunk and he's not in control of himself." Asked by the 911 operator whether the man was "under the influence of something," the caller said: "Something like that, yes. He is not acting right." Police said Floyd matched the caller's description of the suspect.

The U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI in Minneapolis said Thursday they were conducting "a robust criminal investigation" into the death. Trump has said he had asked an investigation to be expedited.

The FBI is also investigating whether Floyd's civil rights were violated.

Chauvin, the officer who knelt on Floyd's neck, was fired Tuesday with three other officers involved in the arrest. The next day, the mayor called for Chauvin to be criminally charged. He also appealed for the activation of the National Guard.

Associated Press writers Steve Karnowski, Jeff Baenen and Doug Glass in Minneapolis, and Gretchen Ehke in Milwaukee contributed to this report.

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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. **PROTESTS RAGE FOR A 3RD NIGHT IN MINNEAPOLIS** Protesters torch a police station and cause damage elsewhere as violent demonstrations continued over the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who died in police custody.
2. **7 SHOT AT LOUISVILLE PROTEST** Police say none of their officers fired their weapons as hundreds of protesters turned out to demand justice for Breonna Taylor, a black woman fatally shot by police in her home in March.
3. **US-CHINA FALLOUT ESCALATES** The Trump administration may soon expel thousands of Chinese graduate students enrolled at U.S. universities.
4. **WHO PULLED OUT OF BIDEN'S VEEPSTAKES** Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada says that she's not interested in serving as running mate to the presumptive presidential nominee.
5. **SPELL 'KAROSHITHI'** That's the word that Navneeth Murali, an eighth grader from New Jersey, spelled correctly to win an online spelling bee to fill the void left by the canceled Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Australian court rules queen's letters can be made public

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Australia's highest court ruled on Friday to make public letters between Queen Elizabeth II and her representative that would reveal what knowledge she had, if any, of the dismissal of an Australian government in 1975.

The High Court's 6-1 majority decision in historian Jenny Hocking's appeal overturned lower court rulings that more than 200 letters between the now 94-year-old monarch of Britain and Australia and Governor-General Sir John Kerr before he dismissed Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's government were personal and might never be made public.

The only dismissal of an elected Australian government on the authority of a British monarch triggered a political crisis that spurred many to call for Australia to sever its constitutional ties with Britain and create a republic with an Australian president. Suspicions of a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency conspiracy persist.

Hocking, a Monash University academic and Whitlam biographer, said she expected to read the 211 letters at the National Archives of Australia in Canberra next week when a coronavirus lockdown is lifted.

She described as absurd that communications between such key officials in the Australian system of government could be regarded as personal and confidential.

"That they could be seen as personal is quite frankly an insult to all our intelligence collectively — they're not talking about the racing and the corgis," Hocking told The Associated Press, referring to the queen's interest in horse racing and the dog breed.

"It was not only the fact that they were described quite bizarrely as personal, but also that they were under an embargo set at the whim of the queen," she added.

Archives director David Fricker later said staff had begun assessing whether there was any information in the letters that should still be withheld. The archives have 90 business days — or more than four months — to do so.

Kerr dismissed Whitlam's reforming government and replaced him with opposition leader Malcolm Fraser as prime minister to resolve a month-old deadlock in Parliament. Fraser's conservative coalition won an election weeks later.

The archives has held the correspondence, known as the Palace Letters, since 1978. As state records, they should have been made public 31 years after they were created.

Under an agreement struck between Buckingham Palace and Government House, the governor-general's official residence, months before Kerr resigned in 1978, the letters covering three tumultuous years of Australian politics were to remain secret until 2027. The private secretaries of both the sovereign and the governor-general in 2027 still could veto their release indefinitely under that agreement.

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A Federal Court judge accepted the archives' argument that the letters were personal and confidential. An appeals court upheld that ruling in a 2-1 decision.

Buckingham Palace said in a statement that the High Court decision was a "legal matter in the Australian courts and we would not comment."

Dickie Arbiter, the queen's spokesman for 12 years until 2000, said the letters should not be made public in her lifetime.

"I would have thought that the right time for the release of these documents is on the demise of the crown," Arbiter told Nine Network television.

Hocking has been fighting since 2016 to access the letters written by Kerr to the queen through her then private secretary, Martin Charteris.

The British royal family is renowned for being protective of its privacy and keeping conversations confidential.

The family went to considerable lengths to conceal letters written by the queen's son and heir, Prince Charles, in a comparable case in Britain that was fought through the courts for five years.

Britain's Supreme Court ruled in 2015 that 27 memos written by Charles to British government ministers could be made public despite objections that their publication might damage public perceptions of the future king's political neutrality.

Years of dogged research by journalists and historians have pieced together answers to many of the questions surrounding how and why Whitlam's government was dismissed and who was behind it.

Kerr, who died in 1991, rejected in his memoirs media speculation that the CIA ordered Whitlam's dismissal over fears that his government would close the top secret U.S. intelligence facility that still exists at Pine Gap in the Australian Outback.

In the 1985 Hollywood spy drama "The Falcon and the Snowman," a CIA plot to oust Whitlam motivated a disillusioned civilian defense contractor played by Sean Penn to sell U.S. security secrets to the Soviet Union.

Australian rock band Midnight Oil also blamed "Uncle Sam" for Whitlam's downfall in the lyrics of its protest song "Power and the Passion."

The Australian Republic Movement, which campaigns for an Australian president to replace the British monarch as head of state, welcomed the ruling as a win for Australian sovereignty.

"These letters provide a crucial historical context around one of the most destabilizing and controversial chapters in Australian political history," the movement's Chair Peter FitzSimons said.

Philip Benwell, national chairman of the Australian Monarchist League and a vocal advocate of the British monarch remaining Australia's head of state, had warned before the High Court decision that releasing the letters would create a constitutional crisis "if the queen's personal opinions became known."

He said after the ruling that the letters' exposure will strengthen Australia's ties to the monarchy. "It will show that the queen had done everything that she could to protect the people's interests," Benwell said.

Punching through turmoil: Pro boxer helps medical staff cope

By JEROME PUGMIRE AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — Hassan N'Dam, former middleweight boxing champion of the world, wanted to repay the French hospital that cared for his father-in-law through his bout with COVID-19.

Perhaps with Champagne? Or chocolate? No, N'Dam thought: "These are things that won't last. I wanted to leave something quite memorable."

It occurred to him that he held the answer in his own hands — or rather, in his fists. He would give the staff at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges hospital boxing lessons, to help them relieve the tension of long shift work during the pandemic — "letting off steam, getting rid of all one's emotions."

"They have seen so many (difficult) things that they came here looking for something," said N'Dam, who wore a sky blue face mask as he spoke at the hospital. "Sometimes they came to laugh, to let off steam."

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Others came to discover something, others to learn, improve.”

The 36-year-old N'Dam, who represented Cameroon at the 2016 Olympic Games, has won 37 of 41 pro fights — 21 by knockout. His 30-minute training sessions have been immensely popular with the staff.

As a nurse in the intensive care unit, 27-year-old Marina De Carli has been on the front line of the pandemic since it hit France.

“In the ICU we see things that are not easy,” she said. “So it feels good to let the pressure drop a bit.”

Wearing camouflage-pattern shorts and a face mask, she threw punches into the burly boxer's hands during her fifth and final class.

“Advance, advance, advance, go back, go back, go back,” N'Dam calmly advised her.

Operating theatre nurses Kenza Benour and Nassima Guermat warmed up for their training by skipping rope — awkwardly, because their shoes were covered with blue plastic protective shields.

Guermat's strong left-right hook combinations pounded N'Dam's hand pads, as his wife looked on.

The hospital boxing bouts also gave N'Dam valuable time to see his father in law, Jean-Claude Valero, as he recovered from the virus. On Wednesday, Valero was well enough to sit and watch N'Dam in action.

Philippe Wodecke, 55, who works in part of the unit which treated Valero, was keen to learn from the ex-world champ. Dressed in crimson red tracksuit pants and wearing a T-shirt from the 2012 London Games, the orthopedic surgeon's pugilism belies his age.

Light on his toes, the stocky surgeon unleashes a quick four-punch combination that seems to surprise, and perhaps even impress N'Dam.

Wodecke's boxing career is unlikely to take off. But the workouts have been an invaluable help for him and his weary colleagues.

“A moment of escape, a moment of relaxation amid the torment,” Wodecke said. “He's done us a lot of good.”

Deborah Gouffran in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges contributed to this report.

Hello and welcome: Robot waiters to the rescue amid virus

By ALEKSANDAR FURTULA and RAF CASERT Associated Press

RENESSE, Netherlands (AP) — You can always count on a robot for perfect timing.

When Shaosong Hu saw robotic waiters serving food in China last fall, he knew exactly what he wanted for his restaurant in the Dutch beachside town of Renesse. He just didn't have a clue how useful they would prove.

The coronavirus pandemic has turned a whimsical idea into perhaps a window into a dystopian future where a human touch may make people cringe with fear, and a waiter clearing the table sends a customer tense with stress — only to be relieved by a soothing brush with plastic.

“They came in just ahead of that time,” said Hu's daughter Leah, who also works at the restaurant, the Royal Palace.

Now, his two shiny white-and-red robots glide across the dining area's floor where, once the restaurant reopens, they will be serving Chinese and Indonesian specialties like Babi Pangang and Char Siu at 15.5 euros (\$17) each.

“Hello and welcome” the robots say — in a voice best described as pre-programmed.

Their duties will include greeting customers, serving drinks and dishes and returning used glasses and crockery. It's unclear whether diners will be expected to tip.

One thing the robots will certainly do is see that social distancing rules are respected. “We will use them to make sure the 1.5 meters (5 feet) we need during the corona crisis sticks,” Leah Hu said.

“I've had negative reactions,” she said, “such as saying it makes it impersonal.” But it may prove just what customers crave when Dutch restaurants are allowed to reopen on Monday as lockdown restrictions are further eased.

In a stab at quasi-human panache, one robot wears a chiffon scarf around its neck. And the hunt is on to give the two human names, with a competition already underway on Instagram. “We don't have a fa-

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vorite yet. But the suggestion of Ro and Bot is out. We want to give them a normal name," said Leah Hu. Dutch restaurants have been hard hit by the crisis and have been closed for over two months. As of Monday, they will be allowed to reopen but with a maximum of 30 customers. That will force some layout adaptations in the Royal Palace where the robots' programmed floorplan may have to be changed at the last moment.

And in the southern Zeeland province, the Hus don't want to hear any complaints about the robots robbing young people of a job. They say it's hard enough anyway to find staff in a rural region without any major city close by.

"They help us with the work we do," said Leah Hu. "We are often busy and cleaning tables and the robots give us an extra hand." It also frees up the human staff for some more personal contact.

"We are not disappearing. We are still here. They will always need people in this industry," she said.

Adapting to the robots, even your own, remains a challenge. "For us, it is still trying to see what works," she said.

Casert reported from Brussels

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

Communion ritual unchanged in Orthodox Church despite virus

By ELENA BECATOROS and COSTAS KANTOURIS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — One by one, the children and adults line up for the centuries-old ritual of Holy Communion, trying to keep a proper social distance. The priest dips a spoon into the chalice of bread and wine, which the faithful believe is the body and blood of Christ, and puts it into the mouth of the first person in line.

Then, with a move that would alarm an epidemiologist, he dips the spoon back into the chalice and then into the next person's mouth.

Again and again, through the entire congregation.

Contrary to what science says, the Greek Orthodox Church insists it is impossible for any disease — including the coronavirus — to be transmitted through Holy Communion.

"In the holy chalice, it isn't bread and wine. It is the body and blood of Christ," said the Rev. Georgios Milkas, a theologian in the northern city of Thessaloniki. "And there is not a shred of suspicion of transmitting this virus, this disease, as in the holy chalice there is the Son and the Word of God."

This is proven, he said, through "the experience of centuries."

Scientists warn that shared utensils can spread the coronavirus, and they also point to outbreaks linked to religious services around the world.

A communal spoon presents "fairly significant dangers," said Dr. Nathalie MacDermott, an academic clinical lecturer for Britain's National Institute for Health Research at King's College London.

"The danger of transmitting any kind of respiratory viral pathogen or even bacterial infections is quite high with the sharing of utensils," she said. "And for it to be passed among what is probably a relatively large group of people means that all it would take is one person to have coronavirus at the back of their throat, which potentially is in their saliva as well."

The Holy Synod, the church's governing body, says any suggestion that illness or disease could be transmitted by Holy Communion is blasphemy, a stance echoed by the Church of Cyprus.

"Regarding the issue that is unjustifiably raised from time to time about the supposed dangers, which in these blasphemous views are said to lurk in the life-giving Mystery of Holy Communion, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece expresses its bitterness, deep sorrow and diametrical opposition," it said in a May 13 circular on social distancing measures in churches.

The Synod "underlines one more time to all those who, either due to ignorance or conscious faithless-

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ness, brutally insult all that is holy and sacred, the dogmas and the sacred rules of our faith, that Holy Communion is 'the medicine of immortality, antidote to not dying, but to living according to the teachings of Jesus Christ forever.'"

Whether Holy Communion should be changed or suspended for health reasons has become a hot button issue across much of the Christian Orthodox world, with churches generally refusing to bow to pressure from governments and scientists.

Some concessions were made in Russia. In mid-March, the Russian Orthodox Church released instructions on adjusting the sacrament during the pandemic. Priests were told to wear gloves when handing out the bread, to disinfect the spoon and to use disposable cups for the wine.

In Ethiopia, which has the largest Orthodox Christian flock outside Europe, the ritual is unchanged, as it is in the Georgian Orthodox Church.

In response to public pressure against using a common spoon, the Georgian church noted the tradition is thousands of years old.

"Throughout these years, there have been many cases of life-threatening infections, during which Orthodox believers did not fear but strived even harder to get Communion through a common chalice and a common spoon," it said in a statement.

In Greece, a firebrand priest, former Metropolitan Ambrosios, said he had excommunicated the education minister, prime minister and the civil protection deputy minister — the first for suggesting the coronavirus could be transmitted through saliva during Holy Communion, and the other two for closing churches during the lockdown. The Holy Synod did not back him up, however, saying only it had the authority to excommunicate.

Greece imposed a lockdown early on, a move credited with curbing infections. The country has reported 175 deaths and 2,900 confirmed cases.

But many of the faithful chafed under the lockdown that closed places of worship for all religions for about two months. It ran through Easter, the most important religious holiday for Christians, and the inability to attend services weighed heavily on many.

When it was lifted May 17, thousands flocked to church.

"The issue of Holy Communion in particular is the only red line of the church and of the faithful in our souls," said 19-year-old Michalis Gkolemis, attending services in Thessaloniki. "We don't say that Holy Communion is the cure for all diseases, from the flu, for example, but we say that you cannot get sick by receiving Communion. You can't catch a virus, something which isn't proven scientifically but exists through experience."

After ordering churches closed, the government has been more circumspect and has avoided the sensitive issue of Holy Communion. The limited spread of the virus also has reduced the risk of a renewed outbreak, at least for now.

For scientists, concern is tempered by knowing that opposing the powerful Orthodox Church, with a majority of Greeks as believers, could be counterproductive.

"This is a matter of public health concern," said Dr. Gkikas Magiorkinis, assistant professor of hygiene and epidemiology at the University of Athens. "As an epidemiologist, I would like to be able to reduce the risk of transmission."

But changing the minds of the faithful is "very difficult," he said. "It's a matter that can only be solved through discussion, and theological discussion rather than scientific discussion. Scientific discussion never helped, and it might have even worse results."

Discussions with the church were always open, said Magiorkinis, who also advises the government on the virus.

"Only the church can provide a solution," he said.

Kantouris reported from Thessaloniki. Associated Press writers Daria Litvinova in Moscow; Elias Meseret in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Sophiko Megrelidze in Tbilisi, Georgia; and Menelaos Hadjicostis in Nicosia, Cy-

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prus, contributed.

Travel disruptions challenge global transplant deliveries

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

PETAH TIKVA, Israel (AP) — Over the past two months, as air travel ground to a halt, Mishel Zrian has crisscrossed the Atlantic and the United States dozens of times, sleeping in empty airports and unable to return home to see his family in Israel, all in a race against time to deliver life-saving transplants.

Zrian is a courier hired by Israel's Ezer Mizion bone marrow donor registry, which has had to perform logistical acrobatics to get its transplants to their destinations amid the travel disruptions caused by the pandemic. The nonprofit, as well as others involved in coordinating transplants around the world, has been tested by the shortage of flights and restrictions on travel, forced to find creative solutions or risk the health of patients.

"It's been a struggle the entire time but at the back of our minds always is that the patient must receive this transplant or else he will die," said Bracha Zisser, director of Ezer Mizion, the world's largest Jewish bone marrow donor registry.

With the coronavirus upending air travel and countries shutting down borders to prevent the influx of infected travelers, airlines have been forced to drastically cut services, leaving those who still rely on commercial flights scrambling for ways around the logjam.

For those in need of a bone marrow transplant — usually cancer patients — finding the right DNA match is difficult and often requires the help of international donors.

Timing is critical. At the start of the transplant process, the patient's own bone marrow is removed; if the transplant is not provided within 72 hours, the patient could die.

Ordinarily, delivering a bone marrow transplant to a far-flung destination is simple. But according to the World Marrow Donor Association, donor registries and transplant centers around the world have been grappling with how to navigate the new rules under coronavirus restrictions.

In one case, an Italian military plane was called up to deliver a transplant from Turkey to a 2-year-old patient in Rome. Germany, Italy and the U.S. set up special exchange points at military bases to allow couriers to drop off and pick up transplants there rather than have them enter the country by way of civilian airports.

As flights to Israel became scarce, Ezer Mizion's transplants were sent to Europe via Belgium by cargo flights and then driven to their final destination. A daily commercial flight out of Israel to the U.S. has allowed the organization to continue its deliveries, but within the confines of the chaos wrought by the pandemic.

Zrian, the nonprofit's main U.S.-bound courier, left Israel for what was supposed to be a brief journey in mid-March, only to be told upon his return that he would need to remain in quarantine for 14 days, according to Israeli rules on all incoming travelers.

At that point, Ezer Mizion appealed to the Israeli Health Ministry and the National Security Council, and managed to secure Zrian special entry to the country, as long as he didn't leave the airport.

He is allowed to sleep in an airport lounge between flights and receive his deliveries without being forced to quarantine. With airport restaurants closed, Zrian subsists on fast food while in the U.S. When he returns to Israel, he gets to have more lavish meals at the airport lounge.

But he can't go home.

The 47-year-old hasn't seen his two teenage sons in more than 70 days, and his wife was only granted one airport visit during that time. In the U.S., he has been given special clearance to enter on the grounds that he is an essential worker.

Zrian, who works for courier company Royale International, has flown with his precious cargo more than 50 times since mid-March, often the only passenger on the plane and landing at deserted airports. While he sometimes sleeps at his destination, his life moves to the beat of his deliveries. He recently spent six straight nights on flights. He's been wearing the same pair of jeans for weeks, he said, washing them in hotel bathtubs when he gets the chance.

"I miss my family," he said. "But I always carry the transplant with me and I know I am doing the right

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thing.”

In one delivery, destined for Oslo, Zrian boarded a cargo flight to Belgium, where another courier was set to drive the transplant 14 hours to Norway. When pilots he encountered offered him a seat on a direct flight to Oslo, which would save several crucial hours, he jumped at the chance.

But with flights from Europe to Israel nearly at a standstill, Zrian had to make a roundabout journey through Frankfurt and then New York to be able to get back to Israel.

The drop in flights has also affected the U.S., where kidneys, the most common transplant in America, are often flown across the country and need to reach patients within 30 hours. The longer a kidney is out of a body, the more its condition deteriorates. Other organs typically travel on private planes.

According to Dorry Segev, a professor of transplant surgery at Johns Hopkins University, the travel disruption is likely leading to delays, which affects the quality of the kidney and could prompt some patients to postpone the care they need.

“We don’t have our commercial flight infrastructure in the United States, which kidney transplantation rides on the back of,” he said. “It’s very chaotic.”

Rick Hasz, of the Philadelphia-based Gift of Life Donor Program, said kidneys were still reaching their destinations, although with different preservation techniques and additional planning.

Zisser, of the Israeli nonprofit, said none of the dozens of deliveries made over the past two months has missed its deadline.

“The idea of saving a life was always in our hearts,” she said, “and we were willing to do everything for that.”

George Floyd protesters set Minneapolis police station afire

By TIM SULLIVAN and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Cheering protesters torched a Minneapolis police station Thursday that the department was forced to abandon as three days of violent protests spread to nearby St. Paul and angry demonstrations flared across the U.S over the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded for air as a white police officer kneeled on his neck.

A police spokesman confirmed late Thursday that staff had evacuated the 3rd Precinct station, the focus of many of the protests, “in the interest of the safety of our personnel” shortly after 10 p.m. Livestream video showed the protesters entering the building, where fire alarms blared and sprinklers ran as blazes were set.

Protesters could be seen setting fire to a Minneapolis Police Department jacket and cheering.

Late Thursday, President Donald Trump blasted the “total lack of leadership” in Minneapolis. “Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts,” he said on Twitter.

Protests first erupted Tuesday, a day after Floyd’s death in a confrontation with police captured on widely seen citizen video. On the video, Floyd can be seen pleading as Officer Derek Chauvin presses his knee against him. As minutes pass, Floyd slowly stops talking and moving. The 3rd Precinct covers the portion of south Minneapolis where Floyd was arrested.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz earlier Thursday activated the National Guard at the Minneapolis mayor’s request, but it wasn’t immediately clear when and where the Guard was being deployed, and none could be seen during protests in Minneapolis or St. Paul. The Guard tweeted minutes after the precinct burned that it had activated more than 500 soldiers across the metro area.

The Guard said a “key objective” was to make sure fire departments could respond to calls, and said in a follow-up tweet it was “here with the Minneapolis Fire Department” to assist. But no move was made to put out the 3rd Precinct fire. Assistant Fire Chief Bryan Tyner said fire crews could not safely respond to fires at the precinct station and some surrounding buildings.

Earlier Thursday, dozens of businesses across the Twin Cities boarded up their windows and doors in an effort to prevent looting, with Minneapolis-based Target announcing it was temporarily closing two dozen area stores. Minneapolis shut down nearly its entire light-rail system and all bus service through Sunday

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out of safety concerns.

In St. Paul, clouds of smoke hung in the air as police armed with batons and wearing gas masks and body armor kept a watchful eye on protesters along one of the city's main commercial corridors, where firefighters also sprayed water onto a series of small fires. At one point, officers stood in line in front of a Target, trying to keep out looters, who were also smashing windows of other businesses.

Hundreds of demonstrators returned Thursday to the Minneapolis neighborhood at the center of the violence, where the nighttime scene veered between an angry protest and a street party. At one point, a band playing in a parking lot across from the 3rd Precinct broke into a punk version of Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." Nearby, demonstrators carried clothing mannequins from a looted Target and threw them onto a burning car. Later, a building fire erupted nearby.

But elsewhere in Minneapolis, thousands of peaceful demonstrators marched through the streets calling for justice.

Floyd's death has deeply shaken Minneapolis and sparked protests in cities across the U.S. Local leaders have repeatedly urged demonstrators to avoid violence.

"Please stay home. Please do not come here to protest. Please keep the focus on George Floyd, on advancing our movement and on preventing this from ever happening again," tweeted St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, who is black.

Erika Atson, 20, was among thousands of people who gathered outside government offices in downtown Minneapolis, where organizers had called a peaceful protest. Many protesters wore masks because of the coronavirus pandemic, but there were few attempts at social distancing.

Atson, who is black, described seeing her 14- and 11-year-old brothers tackled by Minneapolis police years ago because officers mistakenly presumed the boys had guns. She said she had been at "every single protest" since Floyd's death and worried about raising children who could be vulnerable in police encounters.

"We don't want to be here fighting against anyone. We don't want anyone to be hurt. We don't want to cause any damages," she said. "We just want the police officer to be held accountable."

The group marched peacefully for three hours before another confrontation with police broke out, though details were scarce.

After calling in the Guard, Walz urged widespread changes in the wake of Floyd's death.

"It is time to rebuild. Rebuild the city, rebuild our justice system and rebuild the relationship between law enforcement and those they're charged to protect," Walz said.

Much of the Minneapolis violence occurred in the Longfellow neighborhood, where protesters converged on the precinct station of the police who arrested Floyd. In a strip mall across the street from the 3rd Precinct station, the windows in nearly every business had been smashed, from the large Target department store at one end to the Planet Fitness gym at the other. Only the 24-hour laundromat appeared to have escaped unscathed.

"WHY US?" demanded a large expanse of red graffiti scrawled on the wall of the Target. A Wendy's restaurant across the street was charred almost beyond recognition.

Among the casualties of the overnight fires: a six-story building under construction that was to provide nearly 200 apartments of affordable housing.

"We're burning our own neighborhood," said a distraught Deona Brown, a 24-year-old woman standing with a friend outside the precinct station, where a small group of protesters were shouting at a dozen or so stone-faced police officers in riot gear. "This is where we live, where we shop, and they destroyed it." No officers could be seen beyond the station.

"What that cop did was wrong, but I'm scared now," Brown said.

Others in the crowd saw something different in the wreckage.

Protesters destroyed property "because the system is broken," said a young man who identified himself only by his nickname, Cash, and who said he had been in the streets during the violence. He dismissed the idea that the destruction would hurt residents of the largely black neighborhood.

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"They're making money off of us," he said angrily of the owners of the destroyed stores. He laughed when asked if he had joined in the looting or violence. "I didn't break anything."

The protests that began Wednesday night and extended into Thursday were more violent than Tuesday's, which included skirmishes between officers and protesters but no widespread property damage.

Mayor Jacob Frey appealed for calm but the city's response to the protests was quickly questioned as things started spiraling into violence. "If the strategy was to keep residents safe — it failed," City Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, who is black, tweeted. "Prevent property damage — it failed." On Thursday, he urged police to leave the scene of the overnight violence, saying their presence brings people into the streets.

Protests have also spread to other U.S. cities. In New York City, protesters defied New York's coronavirus prohibition on public gatherings Thursday, clashing with police, while demonstrators blocked traffic in downtown Denver. A day earlier, demonstrators had taken to the streets in Los Angeles and Memphis.

In Louisville, Kentucky, police confirmed that at least seven people had been shot Thursday night as protesters demanded justice for Breonna Taylor, a black woman who was fatally shot by police in her home in March.

Amid the violence in Minneapolis, a man was found fatally shot Wednesday night near a pawn shop, possibly by the owner, authorities said.

Fire crews responded to about 30 intentionally set blazes, and multiple fire trucks were damaged by rocks and other projectiles, the fire department said. No one was hurt by the blazes.

The city on Thursday released a transcript of the 911 call that brought police to the grocery store where Floyd was arrested. The caller described someone paying with a counterfeit bill, with workers rushing outside to find the man sitting on a van. The caller described the man as "awfully drunk and he's not in control of himself." Asked by the 911 operator whether the man was "under the influence of something," the caller said: "Something like that, yes. He is not acting right." Police said Floyd matched the caller's description of the suspect.

The U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI in Minneapolis said Thursday they were conducting "a robust criminal investigation" into the death. President Donald Trump has said he had asked an investigation to be expedited.

The FBI is also investigating whether Floyd's civil rights were violated.

Chauvin, the officer who knelt on Floyd's neck, was fired Tuesday with three other officers involved in the arrest. The next day, the mayor called for Chauvin to be criminally charged. He also appealed for the activation of the National Guard.

Associated Press writers Steve Karnowski, Jeff Baenen and Doug Glass in Minneapolis, and Gretchen Ehlke in Milwaukee contributed to this report.

White House punts economic update as election draws near

By ANDREW TAYLOR, JOSH BOAK and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House has taken the unusual step of deciding not to release an updated economic forecast as planned this year, a fresh sign of the administration's anxiety about how the coronavirus has ravaged the nation just months before the election.

The decision, which was confirmed Thursday by a senior administration official who was not authorized to publicly comment on the plan, came amid intensifying signals of the pandemic's grim economic toll.

The U.S. economy shrank at a faster-than-expected annual rate of 5% during the first quarter, the Commerce Department reported Thursday. At least 2.1 million Americans lost their jobs last week, meaning an astonishing 41 million Americans have filed for unemployment benefits since shutdowns intended to prevent the spread of the coronavirus began in mid-March.

Trump argues that the economy will rebound later this year or in 2021 and that voters should give him another term in office to oversee the expansion. But the delay of the updated midyear economic forecast,

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typically released in July or August, was an indication that the administration doesn't want to bring attention to the pandemic's impact anytime soon.

"It's a sign that the White House does not anticipate a major recovery in employment and growth prior to the election and that it has essentially punted economic policy over to the Fed and the Congress," said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist for the consultant RSM.

The senior administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, maintained that the underlying economic data would be too uncertain to convey a meaningful picture about the recovery.

But the political stakes of a weakening economy are hard to overstate, especially in states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin that are critical to the president's reelection.

According to an AP-NORC poll conducted in May, 49% of Americans approve of how the president is handling the economy. That has dipped over the last two months, from 56% who said so in March.

Still, the economy remains a particular strong point for Trump. Before the outbreak began, and even as the virus started sending shock waves through the economy, approval of how he had handled the issue was the highest it's been over the course of his presidency.

Since then, views on the economy have reversed dramatically.

The May poll found that 70% of Americans call the nation's economy poor, while just 29% say it's good. In January, 67% called the economy good.

Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, and liberal economists swiftly seized on the report's delay to argue that Trump is seeking to avoid putting his administration's imprint on bad economic news in the months before the Nov. 3 vote.

"This desperate attempt to keep the American people in the dark about the economy's performance is not only an acknowledgement that Trump knows he's responsible for some of the most catastrophic economic damage in American history, but also a sign of how stunningly out of touch he is with hard working Americans," said Andrew Bates, a Biden campaign spokesman.

While the economic forecast is being delayed, updated information about the nation's budgetary situation will still be released as expected this summer, the senior administration official said. A significant decline in tax receipts, as well as outlays from almost \$3 trillion in coronavirus-related aid bills, is sure to produce a multitrillion-dollar government deficit for the budget year ending Sept. 30.

Paul Winfree, a former Trump White House director of budget policy, doubted that the holdup on the economic update was on Trump's radar.

"Honestly, I don't think the president thinks about the publication of the mid-session review and the politics around it," Winfree said.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, noted that the law requires the White House to update its budget forecast. That responsibility is even more important given the uncertainty in the economy and the trillions of dollars in aid that have already changed the trajectory of government spending, she said.

"By staying silent on how to reallocate those federal dollars under an unprecedented economic downturn, the executive branch is doing a disservice to taxpayers and avoiding tough discussions we need to have about the new fiscal reality," she said.

Jason Furman, who led the White House Council of Economic Advisers during the Obama administration, said the Trump administration pointing to economic uncertainty as the reason to put off the forecast doesn't hold weight.

Trump has repeatedly predicted improvement in the third and fourth quarters of this year, and the president just this week predicted 2021 is going to be "one of the best years we've ever had." White House senior adviser Kevin Hassett said earlier this week that a double-digit unemployment rate was possible in November.

"You have to make decisions on incredibly uncertain information right now," Furman said. "They are out on TV every day making economic forecasts and predictions about what's going to happen in the economy."

The Trump team's economic projections, like those from earlier administrations, have tended to be overly optimistic. Last year's review estimated that the economy would grow more than 3% last year, but the

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actual gains were a far more lukewarm 2.3%.

It similarly claimed that growth under Trump would cause the budget deficit to fall as a share of the economy. That estimate could never have anticipated the outbreak of the coronavirus that forced more than \$3 trillion in aid as the deficit is on course to reach new highs.

In 2017, the Trump administration criticized the Obama administration for rosy expectations of growth during the Great Recession more than a decade ago. An updated forecast in the mid-session review could make the Trump White House a similar target for criticism.

Jared Bernstein, a former economic adviser to Biden, said a timely update on the state of the economy is more important than ever.

"The idea that you'd abrogate that responsibility now is pretty serious fiscal malpractice," Bernstein said. "They don't like the numbers they'd have to write down. This is a White House that is in denial about the trajectory of the economy."

Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe and Emily Swanson in Washington contributed to this report.

North Carolina governor: RNC hasn't submitted safety plan

By JONATHAN DREW Associated Press

North Carolina's governor said Thursday that his administration hasn't received the written safety plan for the upcoming Republican National Convention requested by his health secretary in response to President Donald Trump's demands for a full-scale event.

Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, said during a media briefing that RNC organizers have yet to turn over written plans for how they envision safely holding the convention in Charlotte in August amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Top GOP officials countered in a letter that they need more guidance and assurances from Cooper.

North Carolina Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen sent a letter Monday to the top RNC organizer asking for the written plans after Trump demanded in a tweet that North Carolina guarantee a full-scale, in-person convention will be held. Cooper and Cohen say that they had discussed various scenarios with convention organizers but want their plan in writing.

"We're ready to hold the RNC convention in North Carolina in a safe way. And for weeks and months, the health experts in our office have had conversations with the people organizing the RNC about how to have it in a safe way," he said.

But despite the request Monday, Cooper said: "We've yet to see" a written safety plan from RNC organizers.

Cooper said his administration required a similar written plan from NASCAR ahead of its recent race in the Charlotte area that was held without fans. He said he's in similar discussions with sports teams including Charlotte's NFL and NBA teams.

Top GOP officials later released a letter they sent to Cooper on Thursday saying they need further direction and assurances from him to move forward. The letter also offers several proposed steps to screen and protect convention attendees' health.

"We still do not have solid guidelines from the state and cannot in good faith ask thousands of visitors to begin paying deposits and making travel plans without knowing the full commitment of the governor, elected officials and other stakeholders in supporting the convention," said the letter.

It was signed by Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel and Republican National Convention President Marcia Lee Kelly.

The letter, which doesn't represent a finalized safety plan, proposes steps including apps asking attendees daily health questions, taking attendees' temperature before they board transportation, health checks again at the NBA arena serving as the center of the convention and aggressive cleaning and sanitizing of public areas.

Trump threatened in a tweet Monday to move the convention unless Cooper guarantees a full-capacity gathering. Then on Tuesday, Trump reiterated the idea by saying he wanted an answer from Cooper

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within a week, or he'd be forced to consider moving the convention somewhere else. Florida and Georgia's governors have said they're interested in hosting

Asked about Trump's demand for an answer within a week, Cooper told reporters: "We're not on any timeline here."

Cooper has gradually eased business restrictions, with restaurants now allowed to offer limited indoor dining. But entertainment venues, bars and gyms remain closed under his current order that also caps indoor mass gatherings at 10 people.

Local Republican officials have noted that Trump isn't a party to the convention contract and doesn't appear to have the power to unilaterally move the event, which is scheduled to start in 90 days after two years of planning.

The county surrounding Charlotte has had the most virus cases of any in North Carolina, and the state is experiencing an upward trend in cases.

Follow Drew at www.twitter.com/JonathanLDrew.

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

UN chief warns leaders pandemic may cause historic famine

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. chief on Thursday warned the largest gathering of world leaders since the coronavirus pandemic began that it will cause "unimaginable devastation and suffering around the world," with historic levels of hunger and famine and up to 1.6 billion people unable to earn a living unless action is taken now.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also told the high-level meeting on measures to help low- and middle-income countries cope with fallout from the crisis that it could lead to "a loss of \$8.5 trillion in global output — the sharpest contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930s."

He called for immediate collective action in six critical areas: enhancing global financial liquidity; providing debt relief; engaging private creditors; promoting external finance; plugging leaks in tax evasion, money laundering and corruption; and adopting a recovery that tackles inequalities, injustices and climate change.

Nearly 50 world leaders spoke by video at the event along with economic experts, including the heads of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. But there were noticeable absences, among them the leaders of the world's two largest economies — the United States and China, which are engaged in escalating tensions over the pandemic and other issues, and Russia.

China's U.N. Mission said it didn't participate "due to a scheduling conflict" and submitted a written statement. The U.S. Mission did not respond to requests for a reason why it did not speak. Guterres told reporters later that neither country could participate at a high level, but "there is a commitment from both the United States and China to be involved in this process which we very much welcome."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a co-host of the event, said the U.N. wanted to bring dozens of global leaders and finance experts together because "we need to think outside the box" in dealing with the pandemic.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called for "a global recovery initiative" that links investment and debt relief to U.N. development goals for 2030, which include eliminating extreme poverty.

"Europe is ready to put on the table expertise and resources, with both traditional and innovative financing instruments," she said. "But ... it should be a green recovery, a digital recovery, a just and resilient recovery."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the world must "build back better," saying he believes "we can come through this crisis and achieve a strong, green and fair recovery."

Guterres said the "unprecedented human tragedy" behind the 5.5 million cases of COVID-19 and more

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than 350,000 deaths has been coupled with a devastating economic impact that has spurred his call since March for a relief package equivalent to more than 10% of the global economy.

"Developed countries have announced their own relief packages, because they can," he said. "But we have not yet seen enough solidarity with developing countries to provide them with the massive and urgent support they need."

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva warned that recent data suggests the global economy will shrink even more than the 3% it had projected. She said that "in just two months investors pulled more than \$100 billion out of emerging markets — more than three times larger than during the global financial crisis" in 2008.

Countries with weak economies and high debts from commodity exporters in sub-Saharan Africa to tourism-dependent small island economies in the Caribbean and elsewhere" are expected to suffer their worst economic performance in decades and a large decline in per capita income, Georgieva said.

World Bank Group President David Malpass said he worries April estimates that 60 million more people will be pushed into extreme poverty this year, raising the total toward 700 million, "will go higher."

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, speaking on behalf of the African Union, called on developed countries to meet commitments and "be innovative." He said developing country debts "are the foremost concern, especially to my continent, Africa," which is calling for a debt standstill for two years and more IMF special drawing rights.

African leaders also support Guterres' call for economic relief worth at least 10% of global GDP, which would mean over \$200 billion in additional support for Africa.

Fiji's prime minister, Voreqe Bainimarama, warned that the pandemic's economic impact is "widening the gap between the developing and developed worlds, between north and south."

"As economies of small island states are left reeling, our tourism revenue is gutted, and our lending capacity is limited. We cannot go at it alone," said Bainimarama, whose country relies on tourism for 40% of its economy.

Saying wealthy nations have already put \$8 trillion into their own economies for pandemic relief, he added: "Even the equivalent of one-half of one percent of this was dedicated to all the world's small island developing states, it would provide us with the vital support we need."

Guterres said working groups comprising governments, economic experts and others will now consider urgent actions in the six critical areas and report to a ministerial meeting at the end of July.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the groups are "essential" to recommit "ourselves financially (and) ... by inventing other forms of cooperation." He also stressed that "we must continue to innovate, again and again."

Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel told the leaders: "I hope a clear signal of solidarity will go out from this conference."

But she was cautious, saying Germany will examine at the end of the year whether further steps are needed on debt relief, and that IMF measures including additional special drawing rights "may be conceivable" to secure the financial liquidity of vulnerable countries.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, another major economic power, said the government has just established an emergency loan program of approximately \$4.5 billion over the next two years "to help maintain and revitalize economic activity in developing countries."

Police, experts condemn knee restraint used on George Floyd

By LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

Police around the nation and law enforcement experts on Thursday broadly condemned the way George Floyd, who died in Minneapolis police custody this week, was restrained by an officer who dug his knee into the man's neck, saying no circumstances warrant such a dangerous technique.

Deeply disturbing video shot by a bystander shows Floyd handcuffed, lying on his stomach and seemingly subdued as the officer trying to arrest him pressed his knee down on Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes.

Some police officials and experts said equally shocking was something not seen in the video: Other of-

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Officers on the scene apparently did not try to intervene even as Floyd repeatedly cried out that he couldn't breathe and moaned in pain.

"Any officer who abuses their power or stands by and allows it to happen does not deserve to wear the badge, period," Chicago Police Superintendent David O. Brown said.

Floyd, 46, was arrested Monday after an employee at a grocery store called police to accuse him of trying to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill. The cellphone video shows Floyd, who is black, face-down on the ground with his hands cuffed behind his back, as officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, uses the knee restraint on his neck.

Floyd's head is turned to the side and he does not appear to be resisting. As the minutes tick by and Chauvin continues to hold him down, Floyd's complaints about not being able to breathe stop as he falls silent and motionless. Toward the end of the video, paramedics arrive, lift a limp Floyd onto a stretcher and place him in an ambulance.

"He wasn't actively resisting, and he was saying he couldn't breathe," said Charles P. Stephenson, a former police officer and FBI agent with expertise in use-of-force tactics. "You have to understand that possibility is there (that Floyd couldn't breathe), and you release any kind of restriction you might have on an airway immediately."

Chauvin and the three other responding officers have been fired, and the FBI is investigating whether they willfully deprived Floyd of his civil rights. Chauvin has not spoken publicly, and his attorney has not responded to calls seeking comment.

Police recruits learn a variety of use-of-force techniques at the academy, all with the idea that any force employed may equal but not exceed the physical resistance offered by a suspect.

One technique is to restrain someone on the ground face-down, but officers are taught to press a part of the lower leg, such as the shin or top of the ankle, across the shoulders or the back. In some cases officers will "hog-tie" suspects' legs to prevent flight or violent resistance.

But "no police academy that we know of teaches a police officer to use their knee, to put it on their neck," said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, which researches and advises on police practices. "That's just not taught because that can impact their breathing and their carotid artery (a crucial vessel that supplies blood to the brain). So when police look at that video, they are shocked that those tactics were used."

What's more, officers are taught to get a suspect up from the ground as soon as possible, either sitting or standing, since lying on one's stomach can cause breathing problems, especially for larger people.

"If what we saw was a continuing, ongoing fight, I could see how a leg, for example, could slip to the back of the neck. But this is not what I'm seeing," said John Bostain, a former officer and president of Command Presence, which trains police around the country. "I'm seeing a fight that appears to be over."

Floyd's case and the recent shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia have once again laid bare the divide between minority communities and law enforcement that grew to a nationwide uproar following the officer killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown in 2014 and the death of Freddie Gray in police custody in 2015, among others. Videos from bystanders and police cameras have helped elevate such cases to national scrutiny.

Law enforcement officials often ask that people reserve judgment in such cases until all facts — what transpired before or after what a video shows — are known. But the Floyd case has drawn swift and widespread condemnation.

The Fraternal Order of Police, for example, issued a statement saying in part: "The fact that he was a suspect in custody is immaterial — police officers should at all times render aid to those who need it. Police officers need to treat all of our citizens with respect and understanding and should be held to the very highest standards for their conduct."

Law enforcement experts say tempers can flare when a suspect resists arrest, but it's incumbent upon fellow officers with cooler heads to defuse the situation and put a stop to excessive force.

But there's no sign from the video that any of the officers at the scene with Chauvin tried to intervene. For some that had chilling echoes of the police beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles in 1991 despite the

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presence of a supervising officer.

"That bothered me greatly," said Stephenson, the use-of-force expert. "They all have an affirmative duty and obligation to uphold the law and uphold the procedures and to stop any violation of law or excessive use of force that they're a witness to. ... It didn't look like those officers were making any effort to go over or say something or do anything."

Virus taking hold in rural, old plantation region of Alabama

By JAY REEVES and KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

HAYNEVILLE, Ala. (AP) — Sparsely populated Lowndes County, deep in Alabama's old plantation country, has the sad distinction of having both the state's highest rate of COVID-19 cases and its worst unemployment rate.

Initially spared as the disease ravaged cities, the county and other rural areas in the state are now facing a "perfect storm:" a lack of access to medical care combined with poverty and the attendant health problems, including hypertension, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease and diabetes, that can worsen the outcomes for those who become sick with the coronavirus, said Dr. Ellen Eaton.

"I think a lot of people fell into this idea that we were immune because we're not in tight spaces like in New York and New Jersey, and we're in wide-open areas," said Eaton, who specializes in infectious diseases at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

But no longer. Lowndes and nearby poor, mostly black counties in rural Alabama are facing an increase in confirmed infections. Their outbreaks are also affecting urban areas, since many of the sick need to be transferred to city hospitals.

Less than 30 miles (50 kilometers) from the white-domed Capitol in Montgomery, Lowndes lies along the highway where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. led voting rights marchers from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. Today, it has a population of 9,700, and 220 have now tested positive for the virus.

The surge in Lowndes and neighboring counties may be inextricably linked to their demographics — and thus their history as home to plantations where slaves grew the cotton that fueled the Confederacy. About 75% of Lowndes' population is African American, and nearly 30% live in poverty. Its jobless rate has surged to 26% as area manufacturing plants closed during the pandemic.

The problem can also be seen elsewhere in the rural Deep South, where a tally by John Hopkins University shows a heavy concentration of cases.

Black people have suffered disproportionately in the pandemic. An Associated Press analysis in April of available state and local data shows that nearly one-third of those who have died are African American, with black people representing about 14% of the population in the areas covered in the analysis.

As can be seen in Lowndes, some health conditions that exist at higher rates in the black community make African Americans more susceptible to the virus, and they also are more likely to be uninsured.

Alabama's figures reflect that national picture. About 27% of the state's 4.9 million residents are black, but African Americans represent 44% of the 590 who have died.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness and lead to death.

County administrator Jacquelyn Thomas used her fingers this week to count off five elderly Lowndes residents who've died of the disease recently. She fears what will happen as the state loosens restrictions even further, and the weather gets warmer.

"I worry about Lowndes County," said Thomas. "I worry about what's going to happen everywhere."

Nearly a third of the state's total cases came in the last two weeks as Gov. Kay Ivey loosened regulations meant to stop the spread of the coronavirus in order to revive the economy. The days since have included high school graduation ceremonies that drew thousands; packed beaches; reopened bars and churches; and plenty of bare faces unprotected by masks.

Dr. Scott Harris, the state health officer, said the state saw its highest number of new cases since the pandemic began in recent days.

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"We know a little bit of that has to do with increased testing, but I don't think that explains all of it," said Harris.

With caseloads increasing in areas including Lowndes County, which doesn't have a hospital, patients are seeking health care in cities like Montgomery, which Harris said appears to be having "widespread" community transmission of coronavirus on its own.

Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed announced last week that intensive care units in the city's hospitals were filled or nearly filled. While Harris said hospitals have the ability to increase ICU capacity if needed, city officials said it should be considered a warning sign of the virus's spread and urged people to be vigilant. Reed said he raised the alarm at the request of local health officials.

"It has not subsided. It hasn't plateaued," Reed said. "It's not over. We haven't won the battle with COVID-19 yet," Reed said.

While many in the area Lowndes aren't taking recommended steps to ward off disease, others are. Wearing a protective face mask at a convenience store gas pump, Marvin Johnson jumped in his car as soon as a masked stranger approached.

"I don't want to get sick," he said through a cracked window.

Shenae Harris also wore a mask, but she is worried that a lot of other county residents aren't covering their faces and aren't making any attempt to stay 6 feet (about 2 meters) away from others, as recommended.

"People are still having parties and get together," she said.

Dr. Karen Landers, the district medical officer for the state, said health officials aren't aware of any single place, like a nursing home, that is driving an increase in cases in the county.

But Thomas, the county administrator, sees other worrying signs in the poor communities around her. Like other places with high numbers of lower income residents, multiple generations of families often live in small homes in the county, she said. Young people who tend to take fewer precautions against the virus go home despite the risk of infecting parents and grandparents whose lives are more fragile, Thomas said.

"Once it does, it's too late," she said. "It's too late."

Chandler contributed from Montgomery, Alabama.

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

Rising US job losses stir fears of lasting economic damage

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and DAN SEWELL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The coronavirus crisis threw at least 2.1 million Americans out of work last week despite the gradual reopening of businesses around the country, stoking fears Thursday that the scourge is doing deep and potentially long-lasting damage to the U.S. economy.

Despite a few glimmers of hope, most of the latest economic news from around the globe was likewise grim, as some of the world's most populous countries reported rising infections and deaths. The confirmed U.S. death toll has surpassed 100,000, the highest in the world.

The latest job-loss figures from the U.S. Labor Department bring to 41 million the running total of Americans who have filed for unemployment benefits since the coronavirus shutdowns took hold in mid-March.

There were some encouraging signs: The overall number of Americans currently drawing jobless benefits dropped for the first time since the crisis began, from 25 million to 21 million. And first-time applications for unemployment benefits have fallen for eight straight weeks, as states gradually let stores, restaurants and other businesses reopen and the auto industry starts up factories again.

But the number of U.S. workers filing for unemployment benefits is still extraordinarily high by historical standards, and that suggests businesses are failing or permanently downsizing, not just laying off people until the crisis can pass, economists warn.

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"That is the kind of economic destruction you cannot quickly put back in the bottle," said Adam Ozimek, chief economist at Upwork.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 14.7% in April, a level not seen since the Depression, and many economists expect it will be near 20% in May.

On Wall Street, stocks that climbed for much of the day fell by the end of trading over concerns about rising U.S.-China tensions. After a plunge in February and much of March, the market has been recovering, most recently as investors move into stocks that would benefit most from a reopening economy.

The unemployment figures come amid an intensifying debate in Congress over whether to extend \$600 in extra weekly federal unemployment benefits, provided under rescue legislation passed in March but set to expire July 31.

Democrats have proposed extending the payments, while Republicans have argued that the extra money could discourage laid-off workers from returning to jobs that pay less than they are getting on unemployment.

Kelly Kelso, a 30-year-old roadie from Nashville, Tennessee, for the rock group Foreigner, got her first unemployment check last week after more than eight weeks of waiting. She said she is still receiving far less in benefits than the \$1,250 per week or more she made on tour.

Though Kelso is reluctant to leave the music industry, she said, "I have a cosmetology license. If all else fails, I could go back to doing hair."

Another looming storm cloud: Economists say the sharp loss of tax revenue for state and local governments is likely to compound the damage from the shutdowns by forcing additional public-sector layoffs in the coming weeks.

Those layoffs have just recently started showing up in the weekly jobless claims report. Washington state, for example, reported layoffs of government employees.

Job cuts also are appearing far beyond the initially hit industries such as restaurants and stores, a sign that the damage is spreading even as businesses reopen. Washington state said it saw layoffs in insurance, and New York state reported job cuts by information technology companies.

Economists say many of the jobs lost are never coming back, and double-digit unemployment could persist through 2021.

And as discouraging as the numbers are, the real picture may be worse. The government counts people as unemployed only if they're actually looking for a job, and many Americans probably see no point in trying when so many businesses are shut down.

Airlines and aircraft manufacturers are struggling after air travel plummeted early in the outbreak. Boeing is cutting more than 12,000 U.S. jobs through layoffs and buyouts, many expected to be in the Seattle area. European budget airline Easyjet said it will cut up to a third of its 15,000 employees. American Airlines plans to eliminate about 5,100 jobs.

Amtrak likewise announced it will lay off about 20% of its 18,000 workers amid a collapse in train ridership.

A number of European countries have strong safety-net programs that are underwriting the wages of millions of workers and keeping them on the payroll instead of adding them to the ranks of the unemployed. But the economic damage is mounting there, too.

Nissan is rolling back production in Spain in a move the government said could lead to 3,000 direct job cuts and thousands more losses at the automaker's suppliers. And French unemployment claims jumped 22% in April, with 843,000 more people seeking work.

Elsewhere around the world, India saw another record daily jump in coronavirus cases. Russia reported a steady increase in its caseload, even as Moscow and provinces across the vast country moved to ease restrictions in sync with the Kremlin's political agenda.

And South Korea reported dozens of new cases, all in the densely populated Seoul metro area, as officials scramble to stem transmissions linked to a massive e-commerce warehouse and avoid losing some of the hard-won gains that made it a model for the rest of the world.

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 5.8 million people and killed about 360,000, with the U.S.

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having the most confirmed cases and deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Europe has recorded about 170,000 deaths.

The true dimensions of the disaster are widely believed to be significantly greater, with experts saying many victims died without ever being tested.

Sewell reported from Cincinnati. Associated Press reporters from around the world contributed to this report.

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

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

Roughly 2.1 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week, a sign companies are still slashing jobs in the face of a deep recession even as more businesses reopen and rehire some laid-off employees. About 41 million people have applied for aid since the virus outbreak intensified in March.

President Donald Trump has declined to wear masks in public, but a key political ally of the president touted the importance of donning face coverings while touring hospitals. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, says "there should no stigma attached to wearing a mask."

The Boston Marathon has been canceled for the first time in its 124-year history. Organizers said Thursday that they instead will have a "virtual event" in which participants who verify that they ran 26.2 miles on their own will receive their finisher's medal.

Here are some of AP's top stories Thursday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow APNews.com/VirusOutbreak for updates through the day and APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak for stories explaining some of its complexities.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— More than 18,000 people in Nevada filed for unemployment last week, adding to the all-time-high 28.2% statewide unemployment in April. The governor announced casinos can reopen June 4.

— Washington state officials say the state has recovered \$300 million paid to criminals who used stolen personal information to file fraudulent unemployment benefit claims.

— But, but ... cartoons! The Oklahoma State Department of Education approved Saturday classes in the fall in case of another surge of coronavirus cases.

— More cities and states announced plans to reopen, including bars, nightclubs and amateur and professional sports in Georgia; outdoor dining, indoor shopping and sporting events without spectators as of June 15 in San Francisco; and outdoor dining, small social gatherings and manufacturing and retail businesses in Illinois. Hard-hit Chicago will take it slower than the rest of the state.

- South Korea reported its biggest jump in coronavirus cases in more than 50 days, a setback that could erase some of the hard-won gains that have made it a model for the rest of the world.

— Customs officials say they seized a shipment of unauthorized COVID-19 medication at the Port of Seattle. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Thursday the seizure involved 360 pills of Lianhua Qingwen arriving from Canada. Other shipments have been previously intercepted in Baltimore and Chicago.

— Great Clips has temporarily closed its salons in Springfield, Missouri, after receiving threatening messages following the news that two hairstylists at one of the locations tested positive for the coronavirus and may have exposed 140 customers.

— The coronavirus has taken a gruesome death toll on Italian priests. With more clergy dying yearly than ordained before the pandemic, priests in formation won't refill the ranks. Instead, they see a crucial opportunity to re-imagine the role of priests.

— Requiring patients to visit a medical office to get an abortion pill is needlessly risking their health during the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of physicians say in a lawsuit that seeks to suspend the federal rule.

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— Reporters from The Associated Press have spoken to more than two dozen athletes from around the globe to get a sense of how concerned they are about resuming competition amid the coronavirus pandemic. Most have questions about testing and potentially bringing the virus home to families.

— Broadcasting was once widely used in Latin America to teach basic math and literacy skills to rural children and adults. Amid the coronavirus lockdown, lessons on radio and TV are making a comeback, especially with the region's weak internet connectivity.

— Spain's more than 19,000 nursing home deaths are the most across Europe. It's led to soul-searching over its elder-care system, particularly public nursing homes operated by private firms that seek to turn profits quickly by cutting staff, expenses and, some say, care to the bone.

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:

— 14 million: The U.N. World Food Program is warning that at least 14 million people could go hungry in Latin America as the coronavirus pandemic rages on. The new projections represent a startling increase, more than four times the 3.4 million who experienced severe food insecurity in 2019.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **FUTURE OF DINING:** Some restaurant owners are seeking to welcome back in-person dining and adhere to social distancing rules. One Parisian restaurant is trying out enclosing each diner at a table in clear plastic shields suspended from the ceiling.

— **ONE GOOD THING:** If it hadn't been for Igor Loparic and his charity, many in the northern Croatian Istria region would've had a harder time coping with the crisis brought on by the coronavirus.

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

Trump escalates war on Twitter, social media protections

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump escalated his war on Twitter and other social media companies Thursday, signing an executive order challenging the lawsuit protections that have served as a bedrock for unfettered speech on the internet.

Announced with fanfare, the president's action yet appeared to be more about politics than substance. He aims to rally supporters after he lashed out at Twitter for applying fact checks to two of his tweets.

Trump said the fact checks were "editorial decisions" by Twitter amounting to political activism and that such actions should cost social media companies their liability protection for what is posted on their platforms.

Trump, who personally relies heavily on Twitter to verbally flog his foes, has long accused the tech giants in liberal-leaning Silicon Valley of targeting conservatives by fact-checking them or removing their posts.

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"We're fed up with it," Trump said, claiming his order would uphold freedom of speech.

Technology industry groups disagreed, saying it would stifle innovation and speech on the internet. And the U.S. Chamber of Commerce objected, "Regardless of the circumstances that led up to this, this is not how public policy is made in the United States."

The executive order directs executive branch agencies to ask independent rule-making agencies including the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission to study whether they can place new regulations on the companies — though experts express doubts much can be done without an act of Congress.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said in a statement: "This debate is an important one. The Federal Communications Commission will carefully review any petition for rulemaking filed by the Department of Commerce."

Companies like Twitter and Facebook are granted liability protection under Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act because they are treated as "platforms," rather than "publishers," which can face lawsuits over content.

A similar executive order was previously considered by the administration but shelved over concerns it couldn't pass legal muster and that it violated conservative principles on deregulation and free speech.

"They've had unchecked power to censor, restrict, edit, shape, hide, alter virtually any form of communication between private citizens or large public audiences," Trump said of social media companies as he prepared to sign the order. "There is no precedent in American history for so small a number of corporations to control so large a sphere of human interaction."

Trump and his campaign reacted after Twitter added a warning phrase to two Trump tweets that called mail-in ballots "fraudulent" and predicted "mail boxes will be robbed." Under the tweets, there's now a link reading "Get the facts about mail-in ballots" that guides users to a page with fact checks and news stories about Trump's unsubstantiated claims.

Trump accused Twitter of interfering in the 2020 presidential election and declared "as president, I will not allow this to happen." His campaign manager, Brad Parscale, said Twitter's "clear political bias" had led the campaign to pull "all our advertising from Twitter months ago." In fact, Twitter has banned political advertising since last November.

Late Wednesday, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey tweeted, "We'll continue to point out incorrect or disputed information about elections globally."

On the other hand, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg told Fox News his platform has "a different policy, I think, than Twitter on this."

"I just believe strongly that Facebook shouldn't be the arbiter of truth of everything that people say online," he said.

The president's critics, meanwhile, scolded the platforms for allowing him to put forth false or misleading information that could confuse voters.

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, a Democrat and advocate for internet freedoms, said Trump was "desperately trying to steal for himself the power of the courts and Congress. ... All for the ability to spread unfiltered lies."

Trump's proposal has multiple, serious legal problems and is unlikely to survive a challenge, according to Matt Schruers, president of the Computer and Communications Industry Association, a Washington-based organization that represents computer and internet companies.

It would also seem to be an assault on the same online freedom that enabled social media platforms to flourish in the first place — and made them such an effective microphone for Trump and other politicians.

"The irony that is lost here is that if these protections were to go away social media services would be far more aggressive in moderating content and terminating accounts," Schruers said. "Our vibrant public sphere of discussion would devolve into nothing more than preapproved soundbites."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said it was "outrageous" that while Twitter had put a fact-check tag on Trump's tweets asserting massive mail-in election fraud, it had not removed his tweets repeating a debunked conspiracy theory that a TV news host had murdered an aide years ago.

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The president and fellow conservatives have been claiming, for years, that Silicon Valley tech companies are biased against them. But there is no evidence for this — and while the executives and many employees of Twitter, Facebook and Google may lean liberal, the companies have stressed they have no business interest in favoring one political party over the other.

The trouble began in 2016, two years after Facebook launched a section called “trending,” using editors to curate popular news stories. Zuckerberg met with prominent right-wing leaders at the time in an attempt at damage control, and in 2018, Facebook shut down the “trending” section.

In August 2018, Trump accused Google of biased searches and warned the company to “be careful.” Google pushed back sharply, saying Trump’s claim simply wasn’t so, and experts suggested his comments showed a misunderstanding of how search engines work.

Last year, Trump again blasted social media companies after Facebook banned a slew of extremist figures including conspiracy peddler Alex Jones from its site and from Instagram.

Meanwhile, the companies are gearing up to combat misinformation around the November elections. Twitter and Facebook have begun rolling out dozens of new rules to avoid a repeat of the false postings about the candidates and the voting process that marred the 2016 election.

The coronavirus pandemic has further escalated the platforms’ response, leading them to take actions against politicians — a move they’ve long resisted — who make misleading claims about the virus.

Last month, Twitter began a “Get the Facts” label to direct social media users to news articles from trusted outlets next to tweets containing misleading or disputed information about the virus.

As the White House claimed that Trump was the subject of a fact check but Chinese disinformation about the coronavirus was not, Twitter moved Thursday to add a warning to a March tweet from a Chinese government spokesman falsely claiming the U.S. military spread the virus.

Even as he and his supporters complain of bias on the platform, Trump has used Twitter to build a potent and vocal online following. The president’s account currently has more than 80 million followers.

Trump’s success on social media suggests that his proposal may be more about politics than an actual interest in regulation, according to Rutgers University media professor John Pavlik, who studies the impact of technology on society and government.

Pavlik said that by trying to intimidate the platforms now, he’s seeking to control how the 2020 campaign plays out online and “about appealing to his base.”

AP writers Amanda Seitz, Barbara Ortutay and David Klepper contributed.

White House punts economic update as election draws near

By ANDREW TAYLOR, JOSH BOAK and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House took the unusual step on Thursday of deciding not to release an updated economic forecast as planned this year, a fresh sign of the administration’s anxiety about how the coronavirus has ravaged the nation just months before the election.

The decision, which was confirmed by a senior administration official who was not authorized to publicly comment on the plan, came amid intensifying signals of the pandemic’s grim economic toll.

The U.S. economy shrank at a faster-than-expected annual rate of 5% during the first quarter, the Commerce Department reported Thursday. At least 2.1 million Americans lost their jobs last week, meaning an astonishing 41 million Americans have filed for unemployment benefits since shutdowns intended to prevent the spread of the coronavirus began in mid-March.

Trump argues that the economy will rebound later this year or in 2021 and that voters should give him another term in office to oversee the expansion. But the delay of the updated midyear economic forecast, typically released in July or August, was an indication that the administration doesn’t want to bring attention to the pandemic’s impact anytime soon.

“It’s a sign that the White House does not anticipate a major recovery in employment and growth prior to the election and that it has essentially punted economic policy over to the Fed and the Congress,” said

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Joe Brusuelas, chief economist for the consultant RSM.

The senior administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, maintained that the underlying economic data would be too uncertain to convey a meaningful picture about the recovery.

But the political stakes of a weakening economy are hard to overstate, especially in states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin that are critical to the president's reelection.

According to an AP-NORC poll conducted in May, 49% of Americans approve of how the president is handling the economy. That has dipped over the last two months, from 56% who said so in March.

Still, the economy remains a particular strong point for Trump. Before the outbreak began, and even as the virus started sending shock waves through the economy, approval of how he had handled the issue was the highest it's been over the course of his presidency.

Since then, views on the economy have reversed dramatically.

The May poll found that 70% of Americans call the nation's economy poor, while just 29% say it's good. In January, 67% called the economy good.

Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, and liberal economists swiftly seized on the report's delay to argue that Trump is seeking to avoid putting his administration's imprint on bad economic news in the months before the Nov. 3 vote.

"This desperate attempt to keep the American people in the dark about the economy's performance is not only an acknowledgement that Trump knows he's responsible for some of the most catastrophic economic damage in American history, but also a sign of how stunningly out of touch he is with hard working Americans," said Andrew Bates, a Biden campaign spokesman.

While the economic forecast is being delayed, updated information about the nation's budgetary situation will still be released as expected this summer, the senior administration official said. A significant decline in tax receipts, as well as outlays from almost \$3 trillion in coronavirus-related aid bills, is sure to produce a multitrillion-dollar government deficit for the budget year ending Sept. 30.

Paul Winfree, a former Trump White House director of budget policy, doubted that the holdup on the economic update was on Trump's radar.

"Honestly, I don't think the president thinks about the publication of the mid-session review and the politics around it," Winfree said.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, noted that the law requires the White House to update its budget forecast. That responsibility is even more important given the uncertainty in the economy and the trillions of dollars in aid that have already changed the trajectory of government spending, she said.

"By staying silent on how to reallocate those federal dollars under an unprecedented economic downturn, the executive branch is doing a disservice to taxpayers and avoiding tough discussions we need to have about the new fiscal reality," she said.

Jason Furman, who led the White House Council of Economic Advisers during the Obama administration, said the Trump administration pointing to economic uncertainty as the reason to put off the forecast doesn't hold weight.

Trump has repeatedly predicted improvement in the third and fourth quarters of this year, and the president just this week predicted 2021 is going to be "one of the best years we've ever had." White House senior adviser Kevin Hassett said earlier this week that a double-digit unemployment rate was possible in November.

"You have to make decisions on incredibly uncertain information right now," Furman said. "They are out on TV every day making economic forecasts and predictions about what's going to happen in the economy."

The Trump team's economic projections, like those from earlier administrations, have tended to be overly optimistic. Last year's review estimated that the economy would grow more than 3% last year, but the actual gains were a far more lukewarm 2.3%.

It similarly claimed that growth under Trump would cause the budget deficit to fall as a share of the economy. That estimate could never have anticipated the outbreak of the coronavirus that forced more

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than \$3 trillion in aid as the deficit is on course to reach new highs.

In 2017, the Trump administration criticized the Obama administration for rosy expectations of growth during the Great Recession more than a decade ago. An updated forecast in the mid-session review could make the Trump White House a similar target for criticism.

Jared Bernstein, a former economic adviser to Biden, said a timely update on the state of the economy is more important than ever.

"The idea that you'd abrogate that responsibility now is pretty serious fiscal malpractice," Bernstein said. "They don't like the numbers they'd have to write down. This is a White House that is in denial about the trajectory of the economy."

Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe and Emily Swanson in Washington contributed to this report.

'Feisty' 103-year-old survives virus, celebrates with beer

WILBRAHAM, Mass. (AP) — "Feisty" is the way Shelley Gunn describes her 103-year-old grandmother.

That quality shone through earlier this month when the Massachusetts woman's beloved centenarian grandmother, Jennie Stejna, came back from the brink of death to survive a bout with COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus that has ravaged older Americans.

"She always had that feisty fighting spirit," Gunn, who recently moved to Easton from Washington state, told *The Enterprise* of Brockton. "She didn't give up."

Three weeks ago, Stejna was the first person to test positive for the coronavirus at her nursing home, Life Care Center of Wilbraham.

The outlook was grim. As Stejna's condition worsened, Gunn, her husband, Adam, and 4-year-old daughter, Violet, called to say what they thought were their final goodbyes. Gunn thanked Stejna for everything she had done for her. When Adam Gunn asked if Stejna was ready to go to heaven, she replied, "Hell, yes."

But on May 13, Gunn got the news that Stejna had recovered.

"We're truly very thankful," Gunn said.

To celebrate, Stejna enjoyed an ice cold beer, something she loved but hadn't had in a long time, Gunn said.

Stejna has two children, three grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

Missouri Great Clips sites close after virus-related threats

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

O'FALLON, Mo. (AP) — Great Clips has temporarily closed its salons in Springfield, Missouri, after receiving threatening messages following the news that two of its hairstylists who tested positive for the coronavirus might have exposed 140 clients to the illness.

Great Clips Inc., which has thousands of franchises in the U.S. and Canada, said in a statement Thursday that its locations in Springfield decided to close after "repeated threats."

"To protect the safety of everyone, the local franchisees made the decision to temporarily close salons in the Springfield area," the statement read. "They are working closely with law enforcement officials as the officials conduct a thorough investigation of these threats."

It wasn't immediately clear how many stores were closed or when they'll reopen. The company didn't respond to emails seeking further information.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department announced last week that a hairstylist at Great Clips served 84 clients over eight days in mid-May while experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus.

A co-worker of that stylist is now sick, and the health department said 56 other clients were potentially exposed by the second stylist from May 16 to May 20. The health agency said both of those stylists tested positive.

The stylists and all of their clients wore face masks, health officials said. All of the clients were being tested and Goddard said some results were expected to be announced Friday.

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Springfield police spokeswoman Jasmine Bailey said the first threat came from a Facebook message to an employee on Saturday. The second threat was phoned to a salon Wednesday.

Bailey said that in both cases, the messages "were threatening to shut the place down" because the stylists potentially exposed people to the virus. She declined to give further details.

Bailey said it was too soon to know if the threats came from the same person.

Salons were allowed to reopen in Missouri under Gov. Mike Parson's order that went into effect May 5, despite concerns from some about the close proximity required for barbers and hairstylists to work with their clients.

In Michigan, an appeals court on Thursday ordered a barber to close and to stop defying that state's coronavirus restrictions. The barber, 77-year-old Karl Manke, said he didn't intend to comply.

Greene County, which includes Springfield, has had 128 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and seven deaths during the pandemic, according to the Springfield-Greene County Health Department.

About 27,000 Missourians applied for unemployment benefits last week, according to data released Thursday. Nationally, about 2.1 million Americans applied for benefits, a sign that companies are still slashing jobs, even as more businesses reopen and rehire some laid-off employees.

Mayor Quinton Lucas announced updated guidelines that relax rules for businesses, the Kansas City Star reported. The new guidance begins Sunday and expires July 5.

Lucas said during a news conference that his order means any Kansas City business can reopen unless barred by state guidelines. He said there is no limit on the size of outdoor gatherings, but indoor gatherings must not exceed 50% of a building's capacity.

Also in Kansas City, about 30 protesters outside the Jackson County Courthouse staged a "die-in" to raise concerns about evictions during the pandemic.

Tenants urged Presiding Circuit Court Judge David Byrn to extend protections to renters, the Kansas City Star reported. Earlier Thursday, Lucas said his staff had also contacted Byrn's office, pushing for an extension of the court's eviction moratorium.

Deaths from the coronavirus in Missouri have topped 700. The state health department on Thursday cited 11 new COVID-19 deaths, bringing the total to 707. It also reported 181 new confirmed cases, bringing the state's total to 12,673.

Parson said he was extending the first phase of his reopening plan through June 15. It was originally scheduled to expire Sunday. He said the decision was not because of any setback but to ensure that the state is ready to move to the next phase.

The first phase of the plan requires social distancing, typically 6 feet of space, though with some exceptions. Some businesses also are required to put limits on indoor occupancy. The governor has not outlined what the next phase will entail.

Check out more of the AP's coronavirus coverage at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, May 29, the 150th day of 2020. There are 216 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 29, 1988, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev opened their historic summit in Moscow.

On this date:

In 1765, Patrick Henry denounced the Stamp Act before Virginia's House of Burgesses.

In 1914, the Canadian ocean liner RMS Empress of Ireland sank in the St. Lawrence River in eastern Quebec after colliding with the Norwegian cargo ship SS Storstad; of the 1,477 people on board the Em-

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press of Ireland, 1,012 died. (The Storstad sustained only minor damage.)

In 1917, the 35th president of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, was born in Brookline, Massachusetts.

In 1943, Norman Rockwell's portrait of "Rosie the Riveter" appeared on the cover of The Saturday Evening Post.

In 1953, Mount Everest was conquered as Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tensing Norgay of Nepal became the first climbers to reach the summit.

In 1954, English runner Diane Leather became the first woman to run a sub-five-minute mile, finishing in 4:59.6 during the Midland Championships in Birmingham.

In 1973, Tom Bradley was elected the first black mayor of Los Angeles, defeating incumbent Sam Yorty.

In 1985, 39 people were killed at the European Cup Final in Brussels, Belgium, when rioting broke out and a wall separating British and Italian soccer fans collapsed.

In 1995, Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman to serve in both the House and the Senate, died in Skowhegan, Maine, at age 97.

In 1998, Republican elder statesman Barry Goldwater died in Paradise Valley, Arizona, at age 89.

In 2008, the Vatican issued a decree stating that anyone trying to ordain a woman as a priest and any woman who attempted to receive the ordination would incur automatic excommunication. Actor-comedian Harvey Korman, Emmy winner for "The Carol Burnett Show," died in Los Angeles at age 81.

In 2009, a judge in Los Angeles sentenced music producer Phil Spector to 19 years to life in prison for the murder of actress Lana Clarkson. Jay Leno hosted "The Tonight Show" on NBC supposedly for the final time, giving up his desk to Conan O'Brien. (After a stint in prime time, Leno returned to "Tonight" in March 2010, stepping down again in February 2014.)

Ten years ago: Dennis Hopper, the high-flying Hollywood wildman whose memorable career included an early turn in "Rebel Without A Cause" and an improbable smash hit with "Easy Rider," died in Los Angeles at age 74. Philadelphia's Roy Halladay threw the 20th perfect game in major league history, beating the Florida Marlins 1-0.

Five years ago: The Obama administration formally removed Cuba from the U.S. terrorism blacklist. Nigeria's new president, Muhammadu Buhari, was sworn in with a pledge to tackle the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram "head on." Veteran character actress Betsy Palmer, 88, died in Danbury, Connecticut.

One year ago: In his first public remarks on the Russia investigation, special counsel Robert Mueller said charging President Donald Trump with a crime was "not an option" because of federal rules, but he emphasized that the investigation did not exonerate the president. A 2-year-old girl was struck in the head by a foul ball off the bat of Chicago Cubs outfielder Albert Almora Jr. in a game against the Astros in Houston; an attorney for the girl's family later said she had suffered a skull fracture. (The Astros and other teams extended protective netting further down the left-field and right-field lines later in the season.) A San Diego hospital revealed that a baby girl had been born in December, 23 weeks and three days into her mother's pregnancy, weighing just 8.6 ounces; the girl, believed to be the world's tiniest surviving newborn, went home months later as a healthy infant weighing 5 pounds.

Today's Birthdays: Former Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent is 82. Motorsports Hall of Famer Al Unser is 81. Actor Helmut Berger is 76. Rock singer Gary Brooker (Procol Harum) is 75. Actor Anthony Geary is 73. Actor Cotter Smith is 71. Singer Rebbie (ree-bee) Jackson is 70. Movie composer Danny Elfman is 67. Singer LaToya Jackson is 64. Actor Ted Levine is 63. Actress Annette Bening is 62. Actor Rupert Everett is 61. Actor Adrian Paul is 61. Singer Melissa Etheridge is 59. Actress Lisa Whelchel is 57. Actress Tracey Bregman is 57. Rock musician Noel Gallagher is 53. Singer Jayski McGowan (Quad City DJ's) is 53. Actor Anthony Azizi is 51. Rock musician Chan Kinchla (Blues Traveler) is 51. Actress Laverne Cox is 48. Rock musician Mark Lee (Third Day) is 47. Cartoonist Aaron McGruder ("The Boondocks") is 46. Singer Melanie Brown (Spice Girls) is 45. Rapper Playa Poncho is 45. Latin singer Fonseca is 41. Actor Justin Chon (TV: "Deception"; "Dr. Ken") is 39. NBA player Carmelo Anthony is 36. Actor Billy Flynn is 35. Actor Blake Foster is 35. Actress Riley Keough is 31. Actor Brandon Mychal Smith is 31. Actress Kristen Alderson is 29. Actress Lorelei Linklater is 27.

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Thought for Today: "What makes us discontented with our condition is the absurdly exaggerated idea we have of the happiness of others." — French saying.

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